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Grandeur to mark Jana Sena's 12th Formation Day in Pithapuram

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Preparations for the 12th formation day of the Jana Sena Party (JSP) are in full swing, with the celebrations set to take place on March 14 in Pithapuram. The event holds special significance as it marks the first major gathering of the party since coming to power, with Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan leading the

Pithapuram, where Pawan Kalyan secured his MLA seat, has been chosen as the venue, and the celebrations will be held in Chitrada village. Party leaders and workers are actively involved in the arrangements, creating a charged atmosphere across the region. Several committees have been formed to oversee the event, with more leaders being added to ensure smooth execution.

Nadendla Manohar, who chairs the party's political affairs committee, is overseeing the preparations, while Kakinada MP Uday Srinivas is closely monitoring the arrangements. With

Kumaradhara-

Pasupudhara Theertha

Mukkoti on March 14

PNS TIRUMALA

PNS ANAKAPALLI

State Home and Disaster Management

underscored the urgency of expedit-

ing investigations into crimes against

women and children to ensure strict

and timely punishment for offenders.

Addressing a women's awareness pro-

gram organized by the district police

in celebration of International

Women's Day, she flagged off district-

wide campaign chariot aimed at edu-

introduced the Shakti app, a digital

platform designed to support women

in distress by providing immediate

access to emergency services via the

112 helpline. She assured that response

teams would reach urban areas with-

in 5-10 minutes and rural locations

within 10-15 minutes. Reaffirming the

government's zero-tolerance stance on

crimes against women and children,

she emphasized the establishment of

fast-track courts to ensure justice is

Sukla Paksha

Mar 10 07:45 AM

Mar 11 08:14 AM

to Mar 11 08:14 AM

to Mar 12 09:11 AM

Mar 12 02:15 AM

to Mar 13 04:05 AM 03:23 PM to 04:52 PM

09:28 AM to 10:57 AM

03:10 PM to 04:53 PM

12:26 PM to 01:55 PM

12:33 AM to 02:15 AM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 12:02 PM to 12:49 PM

Updated: March 10, 2025 5:00 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Sunny

Humidity: 54%

Sunrise: 6:17 AM

Sunset: 6:16 PM

Temp: 36°°

delivered within three months.

TODAY

Dwadashi:

Trayodashi

Nakshatram:

Ashlesha Magha:

Rahukalam:

Varjyam:

Gulika:

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham

During the event, Minister Anitha

cating and empowering women.

ministers, MLAs, and party activists deeply engaged, the town is already witnessing an electrifying buildup.

Jana Sena flags and banners have been prominently displayed across the Godavari districts for the past week, adding to the excitement. The Chitrada area is abuzz with party workers making final arrangements, reflecting the enthusiasm among grassroots supporters

and senior leaders alike. A dedicated control room has been set up in Pithapuram to coordinate the large-scale preparations. Uday Srinivas and Nadendla Manohar recently inaugurated the facility, underscoring the party's commitment to organizing the event seamlessly. Given the overwhelming response, organizers anticipate a turnout

execution.

exceeding one million people. In a unique outreach effort, Jana Sena leaders have launched a door-to-door campaign to personally invite women to the celebration. Specially designed stickers are being used as part of the initiative, with the party's Veera Mahilas wing playing a key role in the drive. Nadendla Manohar unveiled the invitation materials at the Kakinada control room, signalling the party's focus on inclusivity in its celebrations.

Pithapuram, where Pawan Kalyan secured

his MLA seat, has been chosen as the venue,

and the celebrations will be held in Chitrada

village. Party leaders and workers are

actively involved in the arrangements,

region. Several committees have been

formed to oversee the event, with more

leaders being added to ensure smooth

creating a charged atmosphere across the

With the JSP securing a 100% strike rate in the recent elections and Pawan Kalyan assuming office as Deputy Chief Minister, the party's rank and file are gearing up for what promises to be a landmark event in Pithapuram.

42 Telugus of 540 Indians rescued from cyber slavery in Thailand

PNS HYDERABAD

The sacred Kumaradhara-Pasupudhara Theertha Mukkoti is set to take place Hundreds of young Indians, in Tirumala on March 14. For safety lured by the promise of lucrareasons, devotees who are elderly, tive jobs abroad, found themphysically challenged, obese, suffering selves trapped in cyber scam from chronic illnesses, or children below 10 years of age will not be per-mitted to trek the Theertham path. centres in Thailand. Thanks to the intervention of Union Minister of State for Home To prevent traffic congestion and Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, ensure a smooth pilgrimage, the Indian government has APSRTC will arrange buses to transsuccessfully arranged for their

port devotees from the Gogarbham rescue and repatriation. Dam to Papavinasanam Dam.
Pilgrims will be allowed to trek A total of 540 individuals were identified as captives in the Theertham from 5 AM to 12 these cyber fraud operations, noon on March 14. Srivari Sevaks of which 42 belong to will provide Annaprasadam, butter-Telangana and Andhra milk, and water to devotees at Pradesh. The Indian author-Papavinasanam Dam starting from ities have now initiated spe-

cial repatriation flights, each 5 AM. For the safety of pilgrims, doctors, paramedical staff, and carrying 270 people. ambulances will also be deployed at The first group of rescued victims was moved to Myawaddy district in Myanmar under Army pro-**HM** stresses swift justice for crimes against women & children

Delhi on Monday. The second flight carrying the remaining 270 victims is scheduled to arrive in India on Tuesday.

Investigations have revealed that these victims were deceived by local agents promising jobs in Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar. Upon arrival, they were sold to cyber scam centres, where they were forced to participate in online fraud operations. Those who refused to comply were subjected to brutal torture, including electric shocks. The victims were forced to engage in financial scams and online fraud under the threat of violence.

A harrowing case that brought attention to the issue involved Madhukar Reddy, a young man from Rangapet village, Manakondur mantection before being trans-ported to Mae Sot in was trapped in one such Thailand. They were then cyber scam centre. His plight put on a special flight to gained media attention, izens abroad.

prompting immediate action from the Union Minister.

Upon learning of the situation, Sanjay Kumar directly appealed to the Indian Ministry of External Affairs and alerted Indian diplomatic missions in Myanmar and Thailand. The Myanmar government deployed its army to raid the cyber scam centres, successfully rescuing the trapped Indians. With diplomatic coordination, arrangements were made for their return to India, facilitated by the Indian government's emergency response efforts.

As the first batch lands in Delhi, the nation watches closely as the remaining victims prepare to return home safely on Tuesday.

vail across Coastal Andhra This large-scale rescue effort highlights the danger of Pradesh and Rayalaseema for the next seven days, with similar human trafficking linked to conditions observed over the cybercrime and the imporpast 24 hours. The highest tance of government interrecorded temperature on Sunday was 39.5 degrees Celsius at

Free electric bus services launched in Mangalagiri

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Education, IT, and Electronics, Nara Lokesh, inaugurated free electric bus services in the Mangalagiri constituency on Monday at his residence in Undavalli. This initiative is aimed at easing transportation for residents from remote areas, enabling hassle-free access to AIIMS hospital and the Lakshminarasimha

Swamy temple.

Acknowledging the transportation challenges faced by the public, Minister Lokesh requested Mega Engineering & Infrastructure Ltd (MEIL) to provide buses under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) ini-tiatives. Responding positively, MEIL Foundation donated two state-of-the-art Olectra 7-meter electric buses, valued at Rs2.4

Coastal AP to see

rise in mercury

on March 12, 13

The upper air cyclonic circulation over the northeast Equatorial Indian Ocean and

adjoining southeast Bay of Bengal has now shifted over the Equatorial Indian Ocean and

adjoining southwest Bay of

Bengal at an altitude of 1.5 km

above mean sea level, the

Meteorological Centre reported

According to the daily weath-

er report, maximum tempera-

tures in Coastal Andhra Pradesh

and Rayalaseema are expected to

be 2-4 degrees Celsius above nor-

mal on March 12, 13, and 14.

However, no significant change

in temperatures is anticipated on

Dry weather is likely to pre-

PNS ■ GUNTUR

on Monday.



One bus will operate between Mangalagiri bus station and AIIMS via NRI Junction and the DGP office, while the other will ply between Mangalagiri bus station and the Panakala Swamy temple. The AIIMS-bound bus will run from 6 AM to 6 PM, and the temple-bound service will operate from 7 AM to 8 PM, offering free rides to passengers. park assist systems (RPAS), these buses promise a safe and

Each bus has a seating capacity of 18 passengers and can travel up to 150 km on a single charge. Equipped with advanced safety features such as digital instrument panels, electronic hydraulic power steering (EHPS), real-time vehicle tracking systems (VTS), and reverse

Speaking at the event, KV Pradeep, Chairman and Managing Director of Olectra Greentech Limited, expressed pride in supporting AIIMS and the Lakshminarasimha Swamy temple through this CSR initia

"These buses will not only provide an efficient transport solution but also contribute to a cleaner, greener Andhra Pradesh. Olectra remains committed to revolutionizing public transport and fostering a sustainable future for India," he said.

The launch event saw the presence of AIIMS Director Shanta Singh, Deputy Director Shashikanth, Lakshmi-narasimha Swamy Temple Executive Officer A. Koti Reddy, TTD Board member Tammishetti Janaki Devi, and various local party leaders.

Minister Mandipalli meets Speaker Ayyanna

PNS VIJAYAWADA

During the ongoing budget session on Monday, State Minister for Transport, Youth, and Sports, Mandipalli Ram Prasad Reddy, met with Speaker Ch. Ayanna Patrudu, Deputy Speaker Raghurama Krishnam Raju, and other ministers and MLAs to discuss the upcoming sports competitions and cultural programs scheduled from March 18 to

Minister Ram Prasad Reddy emphasized the significance of organizing these events for assembly members by expressing his enthusiasm for reviving traditional practices. The meeting focused on arrangements for sports competitions



and cultural activities, ensuring participation from both male and female MLAs.

For male MLAs, competitions will include cricket, volleyball, and badminton, while female MLAs will compete in badminton, throwball, tug-ofwar, and 100-meter sprints. Cultural activities discussed included songs, plays, skits, dance performances, and solo acts. The minister encouraged everyone to participate with

enthusiasm. He also announced that a prize distribution ceremony will be held on the evening of March 20 by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu. All MLAs are invited to take part

in these events.

Govt to seek...

Continued from Page 3

The Minister slammed the tricts by the previous dispensation to divert people's attention from various protesting sections and said the TDP-led

According to Satya Prasad,

officials are working on methods to procure and utilise donations. He alleged that the previous government focused more on building its party offices than collectorates.

"unscientific" division of disgovernment in the state is rectifying the alleged flaws which emerged from the earlier process.

Rammohan Naidu pushes for fishing harbour, jetties in Srikakulam

PNS SRIKAKULAM

Union Minister of Civil Aviation Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu has formally appealed to Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal for the development of a fishing harbour and two fishing jetties in Srikakulam district. In a letter addressing the matter, Naidu underscored the district's vast 197-kilometre coastline and the urgent requirement for enhanced fishing infrastructure to support the local fishing

community. Highlighting of numerous villagers on the fishing industry for their livelihood, Naidu urged the central government to initiate necessary measures to strengthen their facilities. He proposed the establishment of a fishing harbour at Bhavanapadu village in Santhabommali mandal, along with the construction of fishing jetties at Manchineellapeta in Vajrapukotturu mandal and Kalingapatnam in Gara mandal. Naidu further noted that over

home to fishermen, many of whom are compelled to migrate to other states in search of better opportunities due to inadefishing infrastructure Stressing the economic significance of the proposal, he emphasized that setting up a fishing harbor and jetties would generate employment, boost the local economy, and curb migration for livelihoods. If approved, the initiative is

230 villages in the district are

expected to significantly strengthen the fisheries sector in Srikakulam, ensuring long-term economic stability and sustainable development for the region's fishing community.

AP govt's failures

YSRCP State Coordinator Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy has called for a united stand against the coalition government through the 'Yuvata Poru' protest on March 12. In a teleconference with party leaders, student and youth wing representatives, and prominent educationists from 13 universities across the state, he accused the government of betraying students and unemployed youth. He criticized its failure to address fee reimbursement, unemployment allowances, and medical college privatiza-tion, vowing to fight until

these issues are resolved. Under the leadership of YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, YSRCP plans to intensify the movement. On March 11, 'Yuvata Poru' posters will be unveiled at universities to highlight the current government's weakened education system in contrast to the progress made during YS Jagan's tenure.

Sajjala instructed party cadres to educate students and youth about these setbacks. On March 12, largescale rallies will be held across universities and colleges, demanding action. YSRCP members and the public will submit memoranda to district collectors. He emphasized meticulous planning and collaboration with affiliated groups to ensure a successful protest that pressures the government.
YSRCP Ger

General Secretary Chevireddy Bhaskar Ředdy reinforced the call, urging massive participation to rebuke the government and assuring state-level support. The party remains committed to mobilizing youth and students to fight for their rights and hold the government accountable.

'Yuvata Poru' to confront 4 NDA MLC candidates...

Continued from Page 3

Several prominent leaders were present during the nomination process. State Minister Human Resource Development Nara Lokesh, State Agriculture Minister K. Achchennaidu, State Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh, and legislator P. Vishnu Kumar Raju attended B. Ravichandra's

nomination filing. B.T. Naidu's date Somu Veerraju's nominanomination was supported by the same ministers, along with legislators Palla Srinivasa Rao and P. Vishnu Kumar Raju. Kavali Greeshma's nomination was accompanied by Nara Lokesh, legislators K. Lalitha Kumari and Vemireddy Whip P. Anuradha. BJP candiauthorities.

tion was backed by State Minister Satyakumar Yadav, Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh, and legislators Palla Srinivasa Rao and P. Vishnu Kumar

The nomination process Prashanthi Reddy, and proceeded smoothly under the Legislative Council Chief supervision of the election

AP govt gears up to restore...

Continued from Page 3

Beyond beach development, the government has its sights set on unlocking new tourism potential. Senior legislator Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy proposed the expansion of tourism in the Velaanginimatha region of Koduru, Nellore district. Recognizing the existing resorts and untapped potential of Koduru Beach, Durgesh assured that the government is committed to its further development.

Another major initiative on the tourism. Plans include the develophorizon is the creation of a Buddhist circuit, which has received backing from the central government. This project aims to draw spiritual and cultural tourists to Andhra Pradesh, reinforcing the state's diverse tourism appeal. In anticipation of increased footfall, the government has set an ambitious target of adding 50,000 hotel rooms to cuits. accommodate visitors.

roadmap for tourism, featuring a blend of beach, water, and adventure along the Godavari, Krishna,

ment of beach sports like volleyball and a variety of water-based adventure activities. As part of this vision, the state has identified seven anchor hubs and 25 thematic circuits, with Visakhapatnam, Srikakulam, Kakinada, Nellore, and Machilipatnam being developed as major beach cir-

Further expanding its tourism port-Durgesh outlined a dynamic folio, the government is also working

Konaseema, and backwaters, promising visitors a unique experience blending natural beauty with cultural her-

itage.
With these ambitious initiatives, Andhra Pradesh is positioning itself as a premier tourist destination, balancing ecological sustainability with world-class amenities. As Rushikonda Beach prepares to once again raise the Blue Flag, it symbolizes a broader commitment to preserving natural beauty while driving economic growth through tourism.

GO issued for additional financial aid for housing beneficiaries

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Housing, Information and Public Relations Kolusu Parthasarathy has said that the State government has issued orders to provide additional financial assistance to SC, ST and BC housing beneficiaries. To this effect a GO RT No 9, was issued on Monday.

Under the initiative, beneficiaries from SC and BC categories will receive an additional ?50,000, while ST beneficiaries will receive ?75,000, and PVTGs will receive ?1,00,000. This additional assistance will apply to benAdditional assistance will apply to those who have already been granted houses under **PMAY, PM Janman schemes**

eficiaries who have already been ment will be ?1.80 lakh, which granted houses under the PMAY (Urban) BLC-1.0, PMAY (Rural) -1.0, and PM Janman schemes.

Additionally, the government will provide zero-interest loans of up to ?35,000 to SHG members and free sand for construction. An amount of ?15,000 will be allocated for transportation charges for the sand. The total unit cost provided by the govern-

includes this additional financial assistance.

As part of the Swarn Andhra Vision @ 2047, the State government has decided to construct permanent houses for the poor belonging to SC, ST and BC communities, aiming for the goal of Housing for All by 2029. To achieve this goal, the State government has initiated several measures to

effectively utilise the Central government's housing schemes.

Since coming to power, the government has completed the construction of 1.25 lakh houses under various schemes, including PMAY (Urban) BLC-1.0, PMAY (Rural) -1.0, and PM Janman.

The Minister stated that there are still 7.25 lakh houses yet to be completed. Under the direction of CM Chandrababu Naidu, 3.00 lakh houses are set to be completed by June this year, with the remaining houses scheduled for completion by March next year.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

No. SE/IC/EhrIDBIATO. 1/F-TN. 23/24-25 to 31/2024-25, Dt. 07.03.2025
This office tender notice No. SE/IC/EhrDBIATO. 1/F-TN.23/24-25 to 31/2024-25, dt. 07.03.2025 for having 9 works Strengthening of Protection of Eroded banks Canals and Drains in, W.G.District for an amount of Rs. 1829.23 Lakhs, in Last date/Time for receipt of tenders 24.03.2025 upto 3.00 PM. Further details can be seen www.apeprocurement.gov.in. Contact Phone Nos.08812-220108/9440814836. Sdl- Superintending Engineer, Irrigation Circle, Eluru R.D.No: 15450/GLWDWT191/2021-22, Dt 10.03-2025

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH ROADS & BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

NIT No.09/MDR/CE(MDR)/2024-25, Dt. 06.03.2025
Online tenders are invited for 2 Nos. of works for Rs. 6.08 Crores under MDR Upgradation

of District and other roads in Guntur District & 1 no of work for Rs.3.84 Crores under Eluru Smart city Corporation Limited funds in Eluru District. Tenderers can download the tender schedules & have further details visit: www.apeprocurement.gov.in from 3.00 PM on 13.03.2025 onwards. Sd/- Chief Engineer (R&B), MDR & NABARD R.O.No. 15444/CLWDVT/1/1/2821-22, Dt.10.83.2825

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'WHAT WORKS ON STAGE ISN'T THE SAME AS WHAT WORKS ON SCREEN'

Sankalp Reddy of *Ghazi* fame joins hands with Gopichand for a period **DRAMA**



QUOTE OF THE DAY the pioneer Revanth criticised the Rs 46 crore Formula E event, calling it a waste of money. But now, he is spending Rs 200 crore on the Miss World event. If Formula E was corruption, then what is this? What benefits will Miss World bring to Telangana? At least Formula E generated massive investments and created jobs. What will the Miss World event bring? If he thinks that the Rs 46 crore spent on Formula E was corruption, how will he arrange Rs 1 lakh crore for the Olympics?

- KT Rama Rao, BRS MLA

Steps taken to tide over water crisis

NTR District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmisha has assured that proactive steps are being taken to address potential drinking water shortages during the summer. He directed officials to continuously monitor the water supply and swiftly resolve any challenges to ensure uninterrupted access to drinking water for the public. With support from donors, the district administration is setting up cool water supply centres at key locations. On Monday, a cool buttermilk supply centre was inaugurated at the Collectorate's Pingali Venkayya..

Principal among 10 held for paper leak

The police have arrested 10 people, including the principal of a private college, in connection with the leak of a B.Ed. examination question paper. Addressing the media on Monday, SP Satish Kumar said that a special team, led by DSP Murali Krishna and Pedakakani CI Narayana Swamy, was formed to investigate the case. The team successfully arrested 10 individuals involved in the leak. The issue came to light when the question paper for the Perspective in Child Development examination of the..

Massive AI talent gap looms in India

India is poised to become a global Al talent hub, but a looming skill gap threatens to hinder its progress, with a new study by Bain & Company revealing that the country's Al sector could face a professionals by 2027. The report highlighted the urgent need for India to reskill and upskill its workforce to meet the growing demand for AI expertise. "India has a unique opportunity to position itself as a global Al talent hub. However, by 2027, the job openings in Al are...

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'I am not retiring from ODI format'

India skipper Rohit Sharma has dismissed the speculations about his career after winning the ICC Champions Trophy (CT), saying that he is not quitting the ODI format anytime soon. Since the tour of Australia, speculations were rife about Rohit's future in the team as well as his position as captain but a match-winning 76 in the final against New Zealand on Sunday has given him a new lease of life. "I am not going to retire from this (ODI) format. Going forward please don't spread rumours," Rohit said...

CM pushes for perfect services 'Amaravati loans exempt from AP debt limits'

Govt exploring work-from-home options, with 1.72 lakh staff expressing interest

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has underscored the need for 100% quality in government services, ensuring complete satisfaction among beneficiaries. He stressed that there should be no complaints regarding the conduct of officials and employees.

During a review meeting on the implementation of government schemes and programs, the Chief Minister emphasized improving service delivery and gauging public perception.

He announced plans to conduct weekly reviews of four departments, covering 16 departments in total. This week's review included Revenue Services, Hospital Services, Temple Services, and Municipal Services.

Assessing hospital services, Naidu noted that 68.6% of patients reported the availability of doctors, while 71.7% expressed satisfaction with doctors' behaviour, and 65.6% were content with staff conduct. Cleanliness and availability of prescribed medications received a satisfaction rating of around 65%, signalling the need for improvements. In municipal services, 67% of

respondents confirmed daily waste collection, though some areas faced disruptions due to staff shortages, which officials assured were being

Regarding revenue services, enue services to boost public confi-

 Weekly reviews planned for 16 departments, with four departments assessed this week

Hospital services report 68.6% doctor availability and 71.7% satisfaction with doctors' behaviour

Municipal services show 67% daily waste collection, but some areas face staff shortages

Revenue services highlight 24.95% of complaints about additional passport fees transparency concerns

• Temple services see 70% convenience in visit timings and 81% satisfaction with offerings Survey reveals 9.05 lakh

respondents with less than Intermediate education and 10.73 lakh with diplomas or higher

> Mana Mitra programme offers 200 services via WhatsApp, with a push for digital literacy

> > CM advocates increased use of technology for police patrols and sanitation improvements

24.95% of respondents stated they dence. Feedback on temple servicwere charged additional fees for es showed that 70% of devotees passport applications without prior could visit temples at their preferred notice, while 40.61% received timetimes, and 63% were satisfied with ly notifications from village revenue infrastructure and amenities. officers. About 63.33% confirmed Additionally, 81% confirmed that that their applications were investiofferings were fresh and of good gated. The CM called for greater transparency and efficiency in rev-

Naidu suggested implementing a volunteer system to enhance services and ensure the respectful treatment of devotees.

The government is exploring work-from-home arrangements along with neighbourhood and coworking spaces.

A survey covering 2.68 crore people among village and ward secretariat staff revealed that 82.06 lakh individuals have been surveyed so far. Of these, 1.72 lakh expressed interest in work-fromhome options, while 20.43 lakh stated they would consider it under suitable conditions.

The survey also highlighted varying educational backgrounds, with 9.05 lakh respondents having less than intermediate education and 10.73 lakh holding diplomas or higher qualifications. The Chief Minister directed officials to explore the establishment of work-fromhome centres in villages and provide necessary training for eligible individuals.

Naidu also reviewed the Manamitra program, which offers 200 services via WhatsApp. He stressed the need for digital literacy training and online accessibility for all services to curb bureaucracy and corruption. Additionally, he advocated for greater use of drone technology in police patrols and sanitation work, urging officials to maximize technological advancements for improved efficiency and

On the final day for filing nomina-

tions, four candidates from the

coalition formally submitted their papers for the election of five

Members of the Legislative Council

(MLC) to be elected by the Andhra

Pradesh Legislative Assembly on ree candidates

the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and

one from the Bharatiya Janata Party

(BJP) filed their nominations. The

TDP candidates include B.

Ravichandra, B.T. Naidu, and Kavali

Greeshma, while BJP's nominee is

also submitted a second set of nom-

PNS VIJAYAWADA

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The loans secured from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for the development of Amaravati will not be counted under Andhra Pradesh's Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) limits, Union Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary has clarified.

In a written response to a question raised by a YSR Congress Party member in the Lok Sabha on Monday, the minister explained that borrowings from these international financial institutions for Amaravati's infrastructure projects would not be considered part of the state's debt. He further stated that a special assistance grant of ₹2,500 crore had been sanctioned to address urgent infrastructure needs

in the region.

Chaudhary outlined that the World Bank and ADB had approved loans totaling ₹6,700 crore for the Integrated Urban 10% of the overall project cost. He emphasized that the utilization of funds would be strictly monitored according to the conditions laid out Development Program and the Capital City Sustainable Development Program. The World Bank loan became effective on January 22, while the ADB loan came into effect on February 10. However, he noted that the funds were yet to be disbursed.

The minister also highlighted that a maximum of ₹1,500 crore would be provided as special assistance or grants to Andhra Pradesh, capped at

4 NDA MLC candidates file papers

Janasena Party candidate

The nomination papers were

Konidela Nagababu had submitted

Officer and Assistant Secretary of

his nomination earlier, on Friday.

raised by a YSR Congress Party member in the Lok Sabha on

Monday, Union Minister of State for inance Pankaj Chaudhary explainec that borrowings from these international financial institutions for Amaravati's infrastructure projects would not be considered part of the state's debt.

at the time of loan approval.

The clarification assumes significance in the wake of ongoing discussions regarding the state's financial commitments and the feasibility of continuing Amaravati's development amid fiscal constraints. With the exemption of these loans from the FRBM limits, Andhra Pradesh is expected to have greater financial flexibility in executing its capital city projects.

Land for 13 institutions in Amaravati cancelled

Pradesh Cabinet Subcommittee has revoked land allocations for 13 insti-Secretariat on Monday, is part of a broader review of land allotments made between 2014 and 2019.

The meeting was attended by ministers P Narayana, P Keshav, K Durgesh, K Ravindra, and TG Bharat, along with Municipal Department Secretary S Suresh Kumar, CRDA Commissioner Kanna Babu, and other officials. Following discussions, the subcommittee decided to retain allocations for 31 institutions

while modifying allocations for 16 others. Additionally, two institutions will be relocated to different sites, while 13 allocations were completely revoked.

Speaking to the media after the meet-Ministers Naravana and Keshav criticised the previous YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led govern-ment for allegedly stalling Amaravati capital project. Minister Narayana highlighted that tenders worth Rs 43,000 crore had

been issued before the YSRCP came to power, with Rs 9,000 crore of work In a major decision, the Andhra completed. He noted that after the coalition government assumed office, it took eight months to clear legal tutions in Amaravati. The move, hurdles before issuing fresh tenders

> Minister Narayana further stated process to the election code. Minister P Keshav emphasized

that Amaravati's development is being

Minister Narayana further stated that once the CRDA authority approves the revised allocations, agreements will be signed with institutions, and construction work in Amaravati will commence soon. He attributed delays in the tendering process to the election code.



now selected for project execution.

that once the CRDA authority approves the revised allocations, agreements will be signed with institutions, and construction work in Amaravati will commence soon. He attributed delays in the tendering

funded through land sales rather than public funds. He praised Chief Minister

Chandrababu Naidu's vision for a self-sustaining capital and refuted claims that Rs 1 lakh crore was needed for its construction. Keshav also accused the previous administration of misleading the public and using the capital issue for political gains. With the revised land allocations, the government aims to expedite Amaravati's development while ensuring transparency in the

process.



CID issues notices to Vijayasai

PNS GUNTUR

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has issued notices to former Member of Parliament V. Vijayasai Reddy, directing him to appear for questioning on Wednesday at 11 AM.

The notices cite multiple sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), including 506 (criminal intimidation), 384 (extortion), 420 (cheating), 109 (abetment), 467 (forgery), and 120(B) (criminal conspiracy), along with section 34. CID officials reportedly served the notices through the department's Superintendent of Police.

The summons are said to stem from a complaint filed by individuals from Hyderabad. However, details regarding the specific allegations remain unclear. The timing of the notices has sparked political discussions, especially in the wake of Vijayasai Reddy's recent resignation from both the YSR Congress Party and his Rajya Sabha membership.



the Legislative Council, R. Vanitha Govt to seek donations to build

Somu Veerraju. All four candidates handed over to the Returning

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Revenue Minister is experiencing fiscal stress.

The previous YSRCP government divided existing districts into governance close to people

collectorates and revenue divisional offices will be built, including



As the finances of the state are under donors to build the offices," Satya Prasad told the House.

Posani gets bail

Rani, at the state assembly building.

Following a thorough review of the

documents, the Returning Officer

administered the necessary oaths as

per Article 173 (A) of the Indian

Continued on Page 2

PNS NARASARAOPET

Constitution.

offices in new dists: Anagani YSRCP leader and film actor

Anagani Satya Prasad on Monday informed the Assembly that the state government will seek donations from the public to build collectorate and revenue divisional offices in the newly carved out districts as the state

23 smaller ones in 2022, for taking "In the newly formed districts,

AP govt gears up to restore Blue Flag at Rushikonda Beach



tehsildar offices wherever required. pressure, we will take the help of

Posani Krishna Murali was granted bail by the Narasaraopet district court on Monday. The court approved his bail on the surety of two persons after he was produced following the com-

pletion of police custody.

Posani was arrested based on a complaint filed by TDP activist Kotta Kiran, who accused him of using disparaging language against TDP leaders Chandrababu Naidu, Nara Lokesh, and Pawan Kalyan. The Narasaraopet police had brought him from Rajampet subjail on a PT warrant before present-

ing him in court.

Duplicate voter card numbers a legacy issue: EC sources

PNS NEW DELHI

Amid opposition allegations of manipulation of electoral rolls, sources in the Election Commission Monday said the matter related to duplicate voter identity card numbers is a "legacy issue" with such cards being issued even between 2008 and 2013 when the BJP-led NDA was not in power.

The EC had in the past during annual electoral roll updation also been directing states to remove all discrepancies in elector photo identity card (EPIC). The poll body had recently clarified that irrespective of EPIC number, an elector can cast a vote only

at their designated polling station. To allay any apprehensions, all cases of duplicate EPIC number will be resolved within three months time sion on voter lists.

मारत निवाचन आयाग **ELECTION COMMISSION**

by ensuring a unique EPIC number to the existing electors having duplicate EPIC number and for future electors as well, the EC had said. The issue of duplicate numbers

found echo in Parliament on Monday with Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi demanding a discussion in the House on the issue of voter lists on which several political parties have raised certain questions. Raising the issue during Zero Hour, Gandhi said the entire opposition has been demanding a discus-

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Visakhapatnam's scenic Rushikonda Beach is set to reclaim its prestigious Blue Flag certification, marking a significant milestone in Andhra Pradesh's tourism development. Minister for Tourism, Culture, and Cinematography Kandula Durgesh announced the government's determined efforts to reinstate the coveted eco-label, assuring that necessary steps are being taken to meet international environmental and safety standards.

Addressing the Assembly on Monday, Durgesh highlighted that encroachments under the previous administration had temporarily cost the beach its Blue Flag status. However, the government has been actively working to rectify these setbacks through stringent clean-up drives and the promotion of environmental education. He emphasized

that the removal of unauthorized structures and a renewed focus on sustainability are central to this

A key factor in the state's broader tourism strategy is the relaxation of Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) norms, which, according to Durgesh, have been a roadblock to development. "Andhra Pradesh's most

centered around Visakhapatnam, and their expansion will significantly boost the tourism sector," he

Officials recently conducted an audit of Rushikonda Beach, expressing satisfaction with the ongoing scheduled for the 18th of this month, of a comprehensive approach to

prominent tourist destinations are and following its completion, the tourism infrastructure. To this end, government plans to hoist the Blue

The government's commitment to enhancing tourism extends beyond Rushikonda Beach. Addressing concerns about the development of Ramapuram Beach near Cheerala, improvements. Another audit is Durgesh underscored the necessity

Durgesh highlighted that

Durgesh, Minister for Panchayati Raj

and Forests Pawan Kalyan, and Minister for Endowments Anam Ramnarayan Reddy. The committee has sought collaboration with the Water Resources Department to ensure seamless exe-

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu

has established a cabinet subcom-

mittee on tourism, comprising

cution of cross-departmental initia-Durgesh also stressed the importance of integrating key sectors, including electricity and infrastruc-

ture, to create a robust foundation for tourism growth. The state is actively promoting public-private partnerships, with

Continued on Page 2





encroachments under the previous administration had temporarily cost the However, the government to rectify these setbacks through stringent clean-up drives and the promotion of environmental

recent investor summits in Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, and New Delhi receiving encouraging



Steps taken to tide over potable water crisis in summer: NTR DC

NTR District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmisha has assured that proactive steps are being taken to address potential drinking water shortages during the summer. He directed officials to continuously monitor the water supply and swiftly resolve any challenges to ensure uninterrupted access to drinking water for the public.

With support from donors, the district administration is setting up cool water supply centres at key locations. On Monday, a cool buttermilk supply centre was inaugurated at the Collectorate's Pingali Venkayya Meeting Hall in collaboration with the Apadbandhu Trust, aimed at providing relief to visitors, officials, and staff.

Dr. Lakshmisha detailed the existing infrastructure to mitigate water shortages, highlighting that the district has 286-gram panchayats and 794 residential areas equipped with 19 comprehensive protected water supply schemes, 366 protected water supply schemes, 63 small protected schemes, and 439 direct pump-



donors, the district administration is setting up cool water supply centres at key locations. On Monday, a cool buttermilk supply centre was inaugurated at the Collectorate's Pingali Venkayya Meeting Hall in collaboration with the Apadbandhu Trust, aimed at providing relief to visitors, officials, and staff

ing schemes. Additionally, instructed to deploy water 7,917 hand pumps and water tankers in areas experiencing supplied through 44 governshortages. Special attention is ment and 594 private RO also being given to ensuring that livestock have access to plants contribute to meeting the district's needs. drinking water.

To strengthen water avail-Efforts are underway to ability, measures such as flushestablish cool water supply centers at bus stands, hospitals, ing, desilting, and deepening bore wells are being carried out. Officials have been and major intersections. Officials have been advised to

required. Awareness campaigns on heat-related health risks will be conducted at the village and ward secretariat levels, and government hospitals are making arrangements to pro-

vide immediate treatment for heatstroke victims. Dr. Lakshmisha also emphasized that government offices are ensuring adequate drinking water supply for both staff and visitors during the summer

District Revenue Officer M. Lakshminarasimharao, Apadbandhu Trust Chairman Sravan, DMHO Dr. M. Suhasini, and DRDA PD K. Srinivasarao were present at the

Sribharat endorses maritime trade reforms, calls for boost to infra

The Vizag MP advocates for dredging subsidies and domestic shipbuilding to enhance India's trade competitiveness

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

Visakhapatnam MP Sribharat has emphasized the need for significant enhancements to India's maritime infrastructure, highlighting the importance of adapting to the evolving landscape of international trade. During the parliamentary debate on the Bills of Lading Bill, 2024 on Monday, Sribharat endorsed the Bill, stressing its role in providing a robust legal framework for modern trade.

Sribharat reiterated the NDA government's commitment to strengthening the maritime sector, citing achievements such as the doubling of cargo handling capacity at major ports and the improved global ranking of Indian ports. However, he also raised critical concerns about the challenges facing the sector, particularly the rising freight costs that are impacting India's trade competitiveness. To address this, Sribharat proposed reducing shipping expenses and developing domestic shipbuilding clusters to reduce dependence on for-



The MP also highlighted the issue of port infrastructure, noting the depth limitations at Indian ports, which range between 14 to 16 meters, insufficient for accommodating mega vessels requiring an 18meter draft. He proposed a dredging subsidy for major ports, including the Visakhapatnam Port Trust (VPT), to attract larger vessels

and develop transhipment hubs. Sribharat further emphasized the potential of cruise tourism, noting the Rs 100 crore investment in the Vizag cruise terminal. However, he pointed out the

subsidy for major ports, including the Visakhapatnam Port Trust (VPT), to attract larger vessels and develop transhipment hubs lack of an e-visa facility at VPT, a service available at other

major ports, and urged the rel-

evant ministry to address this

The MP also highlighted the issue of port infrastructure,

noting the depth limitations

at Indian ports, which range

accommodating mega vessels

requiring an 18-meter draft.

between 14 to 16 meters,

He proposed a dredging

insufficient for

Sribharat also underscored Andhra Pradesh's commitment to collaborating with the central government to advance maritime trade. He praised the state's 975 km coastline and 14 minor ports, highlighting the immense growth potential of its maritime sector. By addressing freight costs, boosting shipbuilding, and improving port infrastructure, Sribharat believes India can become a global ship-

North Andhra's healthcare system in shocking collapse

Public trust plummets as neglect and infrastructure failures expose a system in crisis

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

A chilling exposé reveals that North Andhra's public healthcare system is spiralling into a devastating crisis, leaving the region's most vulnerable populations at grave risk. A confluence of survey results and heart-wrenching personal accounts paints a grim picture of a medical network teetering on the brink of collapse, sparking widespread outrage and demands for immediate

blow to public confidence. critical aspects of healthcare delivery, including staff conduct, medication availability, and hospital hygiene, revealed satisfaction levels plummeting below the crucial 80 per cent threshold in multiple key areas. This statistical indictment is tragically mirrored by a series of harrowing incidents that underscore the systemic failures plaguing the region's medical infrastructure.

One particularly shocking case involved a pregnant woman from Mirthivalasa village, Mentada mandal. After admitted Gajapathinagaram regional hospital on February 4 with severe pelvic pain, she was callously transferred to Ghosa Hospital in Visakhapatnam without a proper examination. In a shocking display of negligence, she was forced to deliver her baby in an ambulance, a stark testament to the substandard maternal care provided by government-run clinics for a fee.

crisis, children from tribal villages in Daraparthi panchayat, Srungavarapukota mandal, were struck with acute fevers. With scant local medical resources, their distraught parents were forced to

children nearly 10 kilometres to a regional hospital. Only after media intervention highlighted their desperate plight was medical assistance finally secured.

Reports indicate that

numerous primary health centres across S. Kota, Vepada, Gantyada, Pedamajjipalem, Andra, Challapeta, and Boddam are struggling to meet the basic needs of patients, particularly in treating common illnesses like malaria. Severe short-A recent Interactive Voice ages of essential medications Response System (IVRS) poll, are causing immense hardship conducted between late among residents. This defi-January and early February, ciency was starkly illustrated has delivered a devastating when a woman seeking pain relief for a wrist injury at Regional Government Hospital was told painkillers were unavailable, forcing her to purchase them from a private pharmacy for Rs. 3,000, revealing a critical breakdown in the medical supply chain.

Beyond supply shortages, patients consistently report inprofessional conduct from hospital staff. Common grievances include rushed examinations, prescriptions based on information from auxiliary staff rather than doctors, and pharmacies dispensing fewer medications than prescribed.

The Arogyasri programme, intended to provide subsidised surgical procedures, is also reportedly failing to deliver on its promise. Patients allege that no surgeries are being conducted under the scheme. Alarmingly, some doctors are accused of refusing to perform procedures in government hospitals, only to offer the same services at their private

Another concerning trend Adding to the escalating is the growing fear among expectant mothers. Many have shared accounts of verbal abuse and neglect from doctors and hospital staff, claiming that the emotional trauma inflicted by their treatment was more severe than their transport their critically ill physical ailments.

Integrated collectorate offices to be built with donors' support

Revenue division offices and tahsildar offices to come up wherever necessary

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Minister for Revenue,

Monday from members Kuna

Ravi Kumar, Bonela Vijayachandra, Palle Sindhura

Reddy and Prashanthi Reddy

regarding the construction of

Bonela

integrated collectorate offices. Registration and Stamps, Anagani Sathya Prasad, has Additionally, he announced stated that plans are underway the construction of revenue to establish collectorates in the division offices and tahsildar newly formed districts. He offices wherever necessary. was responding to questions in the Legislative Assembly on

Highlighting the State's financial constraints, he mentioned that efforts are being made to initiate construction projects with the support of donors. The Deputy Speaker, Raghurama Krishna Raju, has already proposed a plan for the construction of a collectorate office in the West Godavari district. The proposal includes reclaiming encroached land for the construction and suggests sharing the costs equally between donors and the State govern-

Sathya Prasad indicated



offices would be pursued in other locations with donor assistance. However, he noted that officials are currently studying how to collect funds from donors and allocate those expenses effectively. He criticised the previous government for prioritising the construction of party offices over new collectorate offices, asserting that they failed to

The Minister also condemned the previous administration for reorganisation of districts in a manner that

consider the needs of the

diverted public attention from the ongoing protests by various communities. He reaffirmed that the current government is working to rectify the shortcomings that occurred during the district reorganisation under the previous administration.

Committed to rectify injustices faced by women, tribal communities: Min

Govt taking comprehensive measures for overall development

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Minister for Tribal Welfare and Women & Child Welfare, Gummadi Sandhya Rani, of the coalition government in the Assembly on Monday, aimed at empowering women, promoting tribal welfare, and enhancing education, health and infrastructure. The Minister stressed the commitment of the coalition government to rectify the injustices faced by women, tribal communities and impoverished individuals due to the negligence of the previous government. She stated that the current administration is taking comprehensive measures for overall development.

The Minister highlighted that the previous government had severely undermined nutritional programmes and essential provisions like drinking water

and sports materials. However, within just nine months of the coalition government taking office, these resources have been restored for all students.

For the financial year 2025 26, the government has allocated ?4,332 crore for women's welfare. The investment subsidy for women has been increased from 35 per cent to 45 per cent, providing greater industrial opportunities. Furthermore, ?60 crore has

been allocated for gratuity payments to Anganwadi and Asha workers. The government has approved ANM posts in 544 SC and ST residential schools. To enhance the development of tribal villages, ?2,373 crore has

been earmarked for constructing roads and bridges in 2,191 The coalition government has also allocated ?8,159 crore

specifically for tribal welfare

initiating the establishment of five mega food parks in tribal villages with an investment of supplies. The previously suspended Ambedkar Videsi Vidya Deevena scheme has been revived. Additionally, Rs 2,373 crore has been allocated to provide essential amenities for drinking water in 16,816 vil-

since assuming office. For preg-

nant women, the government is

The construction of the Paderu Medical College has been allocated Rs 500 crore, and a new process for directly crediting RTF funds to college management accounts has been introduced. Efforts are being made to ensure quality food and nutritional support for every student, with a systematic supply of clean drinking water planned for 16,816 tribal vil-

CM to attend workshop

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Minister Chief Chandrababu Naidu will participate in a workshop on 'Population Dynamics and Development' on Tuesday. The workshop will take place at SRM University, commencing at 10 AM Minister is expected to be pre-

sent at the event at 4.30 PM. The event is organised by the Andhra Pradesh Planning Department, featuring contributions from international and national experts on population management.

Following the workshop, the Chief Minister will inaugurate the CV Raman Block and Ganga Hostel buildings constructed on the campus of SRM University. The officials said that this event aims to address critical issues related to population dynamics and its impact on development, encouraging dialogue among experts and policy-

BC welfare: Focus on creating self-sufficiency, says Minister

Current budget allocates a record Rs 33,878.45 crore

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Addressing the members in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly on Monday, Minister for BC significant budgetary allocations and initiatives aimed at enhancing the welfare of BC communities. She said that the welfare of BCs is a top priority for the government. "BCs are the backbone of society,' she said, reflecting Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's vision for their

empowerment. During discussions on the budget, Minister Savitha announced that the current budget allocates a record ?33,878.45 crore for BC welfare, thanking the Chief Minister and Finance Minister P Keshav for their support. She stated that the government is focused not just on providing resources, but also on creating self-sufficiency through various initiatives, including mini-dairies and generic medical

shops. Savitha highlighted plans to establish cooperative credit societies for various communities, including Arya Vaishya, Kshatriya, Kamma and Reddy, enhancing economic opportunities for BCs. She mentioned that quality meals will be provided to students in welfare hostels, using high-quality rice starting next academic year.

Savitha criticised the previous government, led by YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, for



allegedly deceiving BC communities and imposing hardships, including increased electricity charges and neglect of essential services. She expressed concern over wrongful cases filed against BC leaders by the previous government. The Minister also announced free coaching for BC candidates in preparation for upcoming exams, stressing the government's commitment to education. She reiterated the government's plans to ensure 34 per cent reservation for BCs in nominated posts and local bodies.

Expressing satisfaction over the allocation of three out of five Legislative Council seats to BC candidates, she praised the Chief Minister's commitment to uplifting marginalised communities.

Further, Minister Savitha reaffirmed the coalition government's dedication to BC welfare and development, promising ongoing support and initiatives aimed at fostering a brighter future for these

Tribal communities protest for employment rights

PNS ANAKAPALLI

Tribal communities in the remote hilltop hamlets of Neeredu Banda, Jeelugulova, and Sompurambanda in Anakapalli district staged a poignant protest on Monday, holding aloft leaves to symbolise their desperate struggle for survival amid a persistent lack of employment opportunities. The villages, nestled within the Ravikamatham mandal's

Cheemalapadu panchayat, are home to 160 people across 28 families, primarily dependent on traditional Podu cultivation of millets, turmeric, cashew, ginger, and crushed grains.

Despite 14 families possessing Recognition of Forest Rights (ROFR) pattas, which legally entitle them to 150 days of work annually under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural **Employment Guarantee Scheme** (MGNREGS), the villagers



report that no employment has been provided within their set-

The scheme, designed to curb migration among Particularly

trek to the plains in search of labour. "We are entitled to work in our villages, but they refuse," said Kilo Kumari, one of the protesters. "They offer only a paltry Rs 20 for travel, which is nowhere near enough. We are left with no choice but to migrate, leaving our

(PVTG), has been rendered ineffective in these isolated

regions, forcing villagers to

undertake an arduous eight-km

VIMS becomes first Govt hospital in AP to perform liver transplant

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

The Visakha Institute of Medical Sciences (VIMS) has set a new benchmark by becoming the first government hospital in Andhra Pradesh to successfully perform a liver transplant. Until now, such complex procedures were predominantly coninstitutions.

The surgery was carried out by a team of skilled doctors at achievement in public healthcare. The donor was a man from Srikakulam district who was

declared brain-dead on March 2. His family was sensitised about the importance of organ donation, and they generously agreed to contribute to saving lives. The liver was retrieved and transplanted into a 40-year-old patient in need.

The organs of the donor were harvested and transportducted in private healthcare ed to VIMS on March 3. The recipient, who had been registered on the Jeevandan portal due to severe liver damage, was VIMS, marking a significant next in line for transplantation as per the portal's priority guidelines. The transplant procedure was meticulously executed by a

Health Minister congratulates the doctors



multidisciplinary team, including experts in surgical and medical gastroenterology, anaesthesia, and general medi-

Post-surgery, the medical team, under the leadership of VIMS Director Dr. K. Rambabu, closely monitored the patient's progress, ensuring a smooth recovery. The recipient remained under observation for a week and has since fully recuperated.

Commending the remarkable achievement, Health Minister Anagani Satya Kumar Yadav took to social media platform 'X' to congratulate the doctors for successfully executing the State's first government-sector liver transplant. He also lauded the dedication of VIMS Director Dr. K. Rambabu for coordinating the effort and expressed gratitude to the donor's family for their selfless decision during a

Dr. Rambabu emphasised that liver transplantation is a highly complex procedure requiring specialised tests and

time of grief.

continuous medical supervision to prevent infections. He extended his appreciation to the medical team and acknowledged the support of Special Chief Secretary (Health, Medical & Family Welfare) M.T. Krishna Babu and Director of Medical Education DSVL Narasimham for encouraging VIMS to undertake this significant medical advancement. VIMS has paved the way for advanced organ transplanta-tion services within government hospitals, offering hope to many patients in need of lifesaving procedures.

he pioneer



Principal among 10 held for Arrangements for JSP plenary inspected B.Ed. question paper leak

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The police have arrested 10 people, including the principal of a private college, in connection with the leak of a B.Ed. exami-

nation question paper.

Addressing the media on Monday, SP Satish Kumar said that a special team, led by DSP Murali Krishna and Pedakakani CI Narayana Swamy, was formed to investigate the case. The team successfully arrested 10 individuals involved in the leak.

The issue came to light when the question paper for the Perspective in Development examination of the B.Ed. course was found circulating on social media. Acting on this, ANU's PG and professional examination coordinator, Manna Subba Rao, complained to the Pedakakani police station on March 7

According to the SP, four of the arrested individuals are from Odisha and were running a B.Ed. coaching centre. They allegedly conspired with Sayyad



Guntur SP Satish Kumar said, four of the arrested individuals are from Odisha and were running a B.Ed. coaching centre. They allegedly conspired with Sayyad Rafig Ahmad, the Principal and Director of Vivekananda College of Education, who leaked the guestion paper at around 1:20 pm on March 7, just before the exam began

Rafiq Ahmad, the Principal and Director of Vivekananda College of Education, who leaked the question paper at around 1:20 pm on March 7, just before the

The arrested individuals have been identified as Sayyad Rafiq

Ahmad, Dupati Suresh Kumar,

Dhara Swarna Raj, Santhosh

Kumar Sahu, Bishnu Prasad Patro, Sukanth Behara, Purushottam Pradhan, Dhiren Kumar Sahu, Priyabathro, and

Minister for Civil Supplies and JSP Political Affairs Committee Chairman Nadendla Manohar, along with SP G Bindu Madhav, inspected the arrangements for the Jana Sena Party's plenary at

The plenary, marking the party's 12th foundation day, is scheduled for March 14 at Chitrada village on the outskirts of Pithapuram. During the inspection, Manohar reviewed the preparations with the SP and suggested key improvements. He directed officials to ensure smooth traffic management on the national highway, as the venue is located nearby.

He stated that the JSP is planning a massive public meeting to commemorate the occasion, with several prominent political leaders expected to attend. A 25-member committee has been formed to oversee arrangements and ensure the event's success.

PNS KAKINADA

Senior Telugu Desam Party leader and former MLA SVSN Varma has reaffirmed his commitment to the party, stating that he understands the situation and will continue to stand

Following the TDP high command's decision to deny him an MLC ticket, Varma

Varma reaffirms loyalty to TDP despite MLC ticket denial

convened a meeting with his followers in Pithapuram to discuss the development.

Addressing the issue, he remarked, "Politics comes with challenges, and we must

have worked Chandrababu Naidu for 23 years, collaborating on many fronts. My family and I will always follow the guidance of Chandrababu Naidu and Nara

remain steadfast in their sup-



He urged party workers to port for the TDP.



PNS RAJAHMUNDRY

District Collector P Prasanthi has directed officials to ensure that industries strictly adhere to safety guidelines to prevent accidents.

The Industrial Safety Committee and the 16th DIEPC Committee meeting were held on Monday under the chairmanship of the

Collector. Reviewing the decisions taken in the previous meeting, she stated that a Central team would visit East Godavari district in April under the Growth Hub programme.

conduct mandatory inspections in industries dealing with hazardous waste every month, every three months, and every six months, depending on the risk level. "Alarm and sensor

Follow safety standards in industries: EG Collector

devices in these industries must function properly," she

Expressing concern over the lack of comprehensive data on industries, she questioned the delay in issuing permits and directed that a detailed report on pending applications be placed before the committee. She stressed that should through a single-window sys-

Highlighting the district's business potential, she noted that industries such as organic cashew processing, handloom textiles, tribal products, ornamental plants, and flowerbased products offer significant opportunities. She added that an action plan was being prepared to boost these sectors.

She also made it clear that a district-level committee, comprising members from seven departments, must ensure strict enforcement of industri-

The Collector further based services. revealed that a team from the Central Government's Water would visit Visakhapatnam, Vijayanagaram, Anakapalle, at the meeting.

and East Godavari districts to assess industrial and service sector opportunities.

Additionally, she informed that NITI Aayog would visit East Godavari in April to study potential growth hubs in sectors such as nursery-based value-added services, micro plants, ornamental plants, tile manufacturing, organic cashew

District Industries Officer V. Raman and Industries Deputy Chief Inspector R. Tirumala Rao were among those present

15 injured as private travels bus overturns



Fifteen people were injured when a private travel bus overturned near ASRIMS Hospital on Monday. According to police, the bus, operated by Yolo Private Travels, was en route from Visakhapatnam to Guntur with 42 passengers

The accident occurred on the national highway, leaving degrees of injuries. The injured passengers hail from Guntur, Visakhapatnam, Anakapalli areas. Eluru rural

police and NH patrolling per-

sonnel quickly responded to the scene, rescuing the passengers and ensuring their safe evacuation. The injured were later admitted to the Government General Hospital (GGH) for treatment.

Transport Minister M. Ramprasad Reddy, responding to the incident, directed officials to take necessary measures to prevent such accidents and ensure proper medical

Minister for Housing K. Parthasarathy expressed shock over the accident and inquired with officials about the condition of the injured passengers.

Govt betrayed students, youth, alleges Sailajanath

PNS ANANTAPUR

Former Minister Sake Sailajanath has accused the coalition government of betraying students and youth, announcing a statewide 'Yuvata Poru' protest by YSRCP on March 12. He criticized the government's policies on education and healthcare, alleging that privatizing medical colleges, rejecting new medical seats, and neglecting the fee reimbursement scheme have put students at a severe disadvantage. Despite outstanding dues of ?3,900 crore, the government allocated only ?2,600 crore, he pointed out.

Sailajanath questioned the government's failure to provide promised jobs, unemployment allowances, and the Mega DSC recruitment for 16,000 teacher posts, challenging its claim of creating 20 lakh jobs. He accused Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu of prioritizing business interests over public welfare, undermining the fee reimbursement scheme introduced by Dr. YS Rajasekhara Reddy and inued by YS Jagan N Reddy, which had benefited lakhs of students. He also slammed the scrapping of the 'Amma Vodi' scheme in favour of the unfulfilled 'Talliki



YSRCP government left the state with ?14 lakh crore in debt, Sailajanath clarified that the actual figure was ?7 lakh crore. He demanded the immediate release of unemployment benefits and the long-overdue DSC He further condemned the

government for halting the establishment of 17 new medical colleges, a ?8,000 crore initiative launched under YS Jagan, despite borrowing ?1.19 lakh crore in the past nine months. While five colleges are already operational, he criticized the administration for refusing to fund the remaining institutions.

Expressing solidarity with protesting Anganwadi workers, he reaffirmed YSRCP's support for their demands, as well as those of ASHA workers and volunteers. He accused the coalition government of failing to deliver on its election promises within its first year in power.

YSRCP slams TDP-led NDA govt for false cases against Dalit activist

PNS NARASARAOPET

Former Minister Vidadala Rajini has accused the coalition government of targeting YSRCP cadres, particularly Dalit youth and social media activist Dodda Rakesh Gandhi, by implicating them in false

Speaking to the media on Monday after visiting Rakesh at Narasaraopet jail, Rajini condemned the government's actions as a political vendetta against marginalized communities. She criticized the coalition for its inability to accept dissent and accused it of suppressing those who highlight its

Rajini alleged that the government's primary focus seems to be implementing its so-called "Red Book" agenda rather than fulfilling its promises. She pointed out that in the nine months since assuming office, the coalition has failed to deliver on its much-touted "Super Six" or "Super Seven" schemes. Instead, she claimed, it has been relentlessly harassing YSRCP supporters, with Rakesh's case serving as a prime example.

According to Rajini, TDP MLA Pattipati Pullarao pressured the police into filing a fabricated case against Rakesh. The complaint, lodged by an individual named Basha, alleges that on March 6, Rakesh, along with Phaneendra Nagishetti and Damishetti Koteshwar, attacked and threatened him near Chilakaluripeta's Kala Mandir Centre.

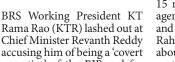
However, Rajini asserted that CCTV footage and other evidence prove the allegations



Former health minister Rajini alleged that the government's primary focus seems to be implementing its so-called "Red Book" agenda rather than fulfilling its promises. She pointed out that in the nine months since assuming office, the coalition has failed to deliver on its much-touted "Super Six" or "Super Seven" schemes. Instead, she claimed

false. At the time of the alleged incident, Rakesh was at a residence in Guntur, Phaneendra was at a salon, and Koteshwar was working in Hyderabad. Despite this, the police registered a case under serious sections of the law.

She further criticized law enforcement for manipulating legal provisions to target YSRCP activists. She noted that courts had previously dismissed similar cases filed under BNS 111, leading the police to resort to non-bailable charges. She warned that such misuse of power would erode public trust in the police and reaffirmed that YSRCP has submitted evidence to the courts to challenge the wrongful charges.



Rama Rao (KTR) lashed out at Chief Minister Revanth Reddy accusing him of being a 'covert operative' of the BJP and for 'betraying' Telangana's inter-

PNS HYDERABAD

Addressing the media at the BRSLP office, KTR said that

15 months indicate a hidden agenda aligned with the BJP and pointed to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's recent remarks about "BJP agents" within his party. "Rahul's comments in

Rajasthan were a direct reference to Revanth," KTR said. Citing a post-budget meeting between Revanth and Prime

tioned the secrecy surrounding their talks

"Revanth met Modi with 11 proposals, but what was the real agenda? Why was Minister Sridhar Babu asked to step out? Telangana's people want to know



He accused Revanth of failing to secure any tangible benefits for Telangana despite his frequent trips to New

> Confirming that BRS chief K. Chandrasekhar (KCR)

session, KTR dismissed Revanth Reddy's stature in comparison. "KCR operates on a different level. Revanth isn't even a fraction of him," he quipped, reaffirming BRS's commitment to fighting for Telangana's interests both within and outside the Assembly.

Challenging the Chief

Vandanam' promise.

reservations, KTR demanded that he take concrete action instead of making empty promises. "If Revanth genuinely cares for BCs, let him launch an indefinite hunger strike in Delhi for 42% reservations. Telangana's BC youth will ensure he doesn't back out," he declared.

SP stresses need for helmet awareness

PNS KURNOOL

District Superintendent of Police (SP) Vikrant Patil has stressed the importance of raising awareness among bikers about wearing helmets and strictly following traffic rules.

The SP flagged off a helmet awareness rally at Kondareddy Buruju Centre on Monday. Awareness about helmet usage is being spread through 15 auto-rickshaws equipped with a public address system.

Speaking on the occasion, the SP emphasized that all necessary steps are being taken to regulate traffic and enforce traffic rules in the town. He highlighted that the auto union voluntarily organized a one-day awareness rally with 15 autos displaying banners urging bikers to wear helmets.
SP Vikrant Patil stated that

the autos will move through crowded areas of Kurnool town, using a public address system to educate residents on the importance of wearing helmets.

Expressing gratitude to the Kurnool Auto Union, the SP revealed that, with support from socially responsible donors, four advanced digital banners have



been installed at key locations such as Bellary Crossroads and bus stands. These digital displays highlight the life-saving benefits of helmets and the dangers of driving under the influence of

Additionally, radium jackets

and 125 movable barricades have been provided to traffic police officers on night duty to enhance road safety measures.

SP Vikrant Patil expressed concern over minors causing accidents while driving, which leads to distress for their parents. He urged all motorists to wear helmets and adhere to traffic

rules to prevent accidents. Additional SP (Admin) Hussain Peera, AR Additional SP Krishna Mohan, DSPs, and other officials were present at the

Differently-abled woman presents pencil sketch to Eluru Collector



PNS ELURU

A differently-abled woman presented a pencil sketch to District Collector K. Vetri Selvi on Monday, expressing her gratitude for the support extended to her.

The sketch, a finely detailed portrait of the Collector, was created by Battula Anju, a visually impaired woman. Anju had secured a job at a job mela organised on January 29 in coordination with the AP Skill

Development Corporation, aimed at providing employ-ment opportunities for educated women. As a token of appreciation, Anju gifted the handdrawn sketch to Collector Vetri Selvi, a gesture that moved everyone present. The intri-cately crafted artwork captivated all, earning praise for her talent and perseverance. Collector Vetri Selvi was deeply touched by the thoughtful gesture and congratulated Anju for her artistic skills and resilience





Veni, Vidi, Vici...

Team India lifts Champion's trophy after its convincing win over New Zealand

n a moment of glory that will be etched in the annals of cricketing history, Team India triumphed over New Zealand by four wickets to claim the prestigious ICC Champions Trophy in Dubai. It was a victory built on sheer determination, extraordinary skill, and unwavering composure under pressure. The win not only solidifies India's dominance in the white-ball game but also reaffirms cricket's role as a unifying force in the country.

From the very first match of the tournament, India exuded an aura of invincibility. The final against New Zealand was no exception. Restricting the Kiwis to a manageable 251-7, the Indian bowling attack—led by the mesmerising spin quartet of Kuldeep Yadav, Varun Chakravarthy, Axar Patel, and Ravindra Jadeja—choked the opposition with relentless precision. Their 38 overs were a masterclass in control, stifling the run flow and forcing mistakes from the New Zealand batters.

Despite an early setback with Virat Kohli's dismissal, Rohit Sharma took charge, setting the tone with a swashbuckling 76. His aggression ensured that India never fell behind the asking rate. KL Rahul, displaying nerves of steel, finished the chase with calculated precision, epitomizing India's new-found ability to remain composed in high-pressure situations.

Cricket in India is more than just a sport—it is a cultural phenomenon that binds people across diverse backgrounds. From the bustling streets of Mumbai to the remote villages of Jharkhand, the game ignites passion, fosters a shared national identity, and transcends all barriers of class, religion, and language.

This Champions Trophy victory serves as yet another reminder of the unifying power of cricket. The entire nation erupted in celebration, as millions came together to revel in the team's success. This win is not just about silverware-it is about inspiring a generation, bringing people together in collective joy, and reinforcing the sport's unparalleled significance in the Indian ethos.

Winning an ICC event is always a morale booster, and this triumph will serve as a catalyst for greater success. For Team India, it instills belief and momentum as they gear up for future global tournaments. Rohit Sharma's leadership, the resurgence of spin dominance, and the depth in both batting and bowling ensure that India will remain a formidable force in world cricket.

Beyond the current squad, this victory will inspire countless young cricketers who dream of donning the blue jersey. Seeing their heroes lift the Champions Trophy will fuel aspirations across the country, encouraging budding cricketers to work harder and aim for the grandest stages.

Accolades pours from all quarters on team India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the Indian cricket team and said they have played wonderfully through the tournament. Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said India's run in the Champions Trophy was marked by brilliant individual performances. Former Delhi CM and AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal also extended his congratulations to the Indian

This Champions Trophy triumph is a testament to India's cricketing excellence and a harbinger of more success to come. The synergy between experienced stalwarts and young stars showcases a team that is built for sustained dominance.

As India basks in the glory of yet another ICC triumph, one thing is certain-this victory is not just about cricket, but about a nation united by its love for the game, standing tall on the world stage, and looking ahead to an even brighter future.

Massive. You can't even sell anything in India... They have

agreed, by the way, they want to cut their tariffs way down

now because somebody is finally exposing them for what

DONALD J TRUMP. PRESIDENT OF THE USA

Leaderspeak

India charges us massive tariffs.

they have done.



India Braces for Impact as Trump's Reciprocal Tariffs Take Effect on April 2

With key sectors like pharmaceuticals and automobiles at risk, India could face an annual trade loss of up to \$7 billion. There is an urgent need to find a diplomatic solution before it escalates into a full-fledged trade war

S President Donald Trump's announcement of reciprocal tariffs on India, set to take effect on April 2, has caused serious concern in New Delhi. India's high import taxes on American goods have long been a contentious issue, now straining trade relations further.

This move is not without consequences. It puts key exports such as jewelry and pharmaceuticals at risk, potentially leading to a significant annual loss of up to \$7 billion for India. The looming question is: How much will this trade war cost India? Can New Delhi negotiate a way out before the damage is done? This million-dollar question keeps policymakers and trade experts on edge, underscoring the gravity of the situation.

India currently imposes much higher import taxes on US products than the US does on Indian goods, with a gap exceeding 10 percentage points. If the US lowers these tariffs, India's exports to the US could decline by \$2 Billion to \$7 Billion in the financial year 2025-26, according to India Ratings and Research.

India maintains a trade surplus of over \$36 Billion with the United States. The share of Indian exports to the US rose from 16.9 per cent in 2019-20 to 17.7 per cent in 2023-24, which may have prompted tariff actions by the Trump administration.

During his campaign, Trump criticised Indian tariffs on several US exports and suggested the possibility of imposing reciprocal taxes on Indian goods.

He believes it is time for the US to use tariffs to establish fairer trade. "Under the Trump administration, you will pay a tariff, and in some cases, the cost will be passed on to consumers," he stated, insisting that the US will no longer tolerate unfair trading practices.

India imposes tariffs as high as 100 per cent on certain US products, creating what the Trump administration views as an unfair trade system. On April 2, reciprocal tariffs will take effect, meaning that any tariffs imposed by India will be matched by the

Additionally, if India uses non-monetary barriers to limit US market access, the US. will implement similar restrictions.

A report by Crisil Intelligence warns that



these reciprocal tariffs could significantly harm India's exports, which contribute about 22 per cent of the country's GDP. Coupled with the challenges posed by slowing global trade growth and rising economic uncertainties, this situation could further strain India's economy. In response, the Commerce and Industry Ministry has initiated stakeholder consultations to assess the potential impact of increased US tar-

According to a recent Crisil Intelligence report, India's wide tariff gap with the US could have serious consequences if the US moves to equalise tariffs. Bloomberg economists echo this concern, noting that India's economy may face significant set-

Industry and trade experts in India argue that certain top exports-such as automobile parts, electronics, textiles, diamonds, jewelry, chemicals, and pharmaceuticalscould be severely affected if the US imposes restrictions. The most vulnerable sectors include chemicals, metal products, and jewelry, followed by automobiles, pharmaceuticals, and food products. Furthermore,

President Trump penalises US. companies employing imported talent, India's outsourcing and IT services industry could face significant constraints.

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal began his US visit on Monday to meet with the new US Trade Representative, Jamieson Greer, who is overseeing the implementation of Trump's tariff plan. Greer was also part of Trump's first administration, which targeted China and, in doing so, opened export opportunities for India, particularly in the electron-

Despite these tariff disputes, the United States remains India's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade reaching \$118.2 Billion in the 2024 fiscal year. India main-

tained a trade surplus of \$36.8 Billion during this period. Trump has criticised India for imposing 100 per cent tariffs on automobiles, claiming such trade imbalances have allowed foreign countries to take advantage of the US for decades.

Like with other trade partners, the Trump administration intends to use tariffs as leverage to expand market access for American goods in India.

New Delhi must act quickly to address this challenge. One option is to engage in negotiations and lower tariffs. Both sides aim to increase market access, reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers, and deepen supply chain integration.

India should focus on bilateral negotiations to lower tariffs and diversify its export mar-

This strategy could help India navigate the impending trade challenges more effectively. A balanced, give-and-take approach will be key to overcoming this situation.

(The author is a popular columnist. Views expressed are

The Unmatched Multitasking Skills of Women

SECOND **Opinion**

ccelerate Action, the theme of this year's International Women's Day is both timely and vital. It is of the utmost importance to take a moment to contemplate the unique skills that women possess, which even the most advanced AIdriven robots cannot replicate. Even though artificial intelligence (AI) has revolutionised sectors by simplifying jobs and increasing productivity, it

is still incapable of matching the nuanced and deeply human multitasking talents that women easily demonstrate daily. Women can accomplish several tasks with empathy, emotional intelligence, and adaptability, which are attributes that no algorithm can completely replicate. Women can perform multiple tasks simultaneously.

Multitasking encompasses not only the simultaneous execution of many tasks but also the capacity to manage diverse jobs with effortless proficiency. In both professional and domestic settings, women manage multiple tasks, including swift decision-making, emotional acumen, and innovative problem-solving. In the professional environment, women frequently lead high-stakes projects, coach peers, and manage team relationships while also addressing personal obligations. Within the household, they effortlessly transition between roles as carers, financial strategists, educators, and providers of emotional support. Their capacity



understand, much less to implement. One of the defining strengths of women's multitasking abilities is their agility in decision-making, even in the most unpredictable situations. AI operates within predefined parameters and algorithms, excelling in structured environments where data is abundant. However, real life is often chaotic, requiring decisions to be made with incomplete information, intuition, and adaptabilityqualities that women exhibit daily. Consider a nurse in a hospital emergency room who is simul-

taneously monitoring multiple patients, making split-second decisions, and comforting distressed families. Her ability to assess a patient's condition, liaise with doctors, and offer emotional support all at once goes beyond mere task execution—it embodies human instinct, prioritisation, and care. No AI-driven robot can truly replace such intricate decision-making layered with empathy. While AI can enhance efficiency, automate routine tasks, and provide datadriven insights, it lacks the human touch that is central to multitasking.

AI-driven robots may be able to perform designated tasks in controlled environments, but they do not possess the depth of human interaction, compassion, or intuition required in complex, real-world situations. Women's multitasking is not just about efficiency but also about the ability to connect, empathise, and inspire—traits that no AI can

to sustain equilibrium in these intersecting replicate. While we are moving further into an era driven the multitasking abilities of women; rather, it should be to improve such abilities with technology while ensuring that their human strengths continue to be prioritised. India offers countless examples of women who exemplify unparalleled multitasking abilities in varied fields.

> To cite a few, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, the founder of Biocon, Chanda Kochhar, the former CEO of ICICI Bank, Dr N. Kalaiselvi, Secretary, DSIR and Director General, CSIR, Dr. Tessy Thomas, the first woman to lead an Indian missile project and hundreds of others. As we celebrate International Women's Day 2025, it is essential to recognise that while AI can augment specific tasks, it can never replicate the intricate multitasking abilities of women. Women's ability to think, feel, and act simultaneously with an unparalleled blend of intuition, intelligence, and empathy remains their superpower—one that even the most advanced robots cannot

> 'Accelerate Action' should not be about replacing human capabilities with AI but about leveraging technology to enhance and support women's indispensable contributions to society. The future of progress lies not in automation alone but in the harmonious coexistence of human intelligence and technology, with women leading the way in shaping a world that values both efficiency and empathy.

(The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies; views are personal)

Letters to the Editor

Freebies or political bribes?

Madam — The newly formed Delhi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government approved the Mahila Samridhi Yojana on Women's Day, providing ₹2,500 to women from economically weaker sections. With a budget allocation of ₹5100 Crores, women earning up to ₹2.5 Lakh annually and aged 18-60 years are eligible. But one thing I am unable to understand is what crime those women have done who are above 60 years or those who earn more than ₹2.5 Lakhs. Why didn't you specify these conditions in the manifesto? Didn't you know it was a ploy to garner votes that would-

n't be fulfilled after you win the elections? Though we should not forget that PM Modi started this 'revadi' war of free LPG, free PDS, free housing, free MODI care, and free "Samman" of ₹6000 to Kissans. Actually, the freebie culture is the biggest drain on taxpayers' money. It is open bribery. The politicians are feeding parasites, which will harm the country. There will be no funds for development. Why not the Election Commission (EC) stop this malpractice for free and fair elections? Whatsoever, when the opposition distributes freebies, it's called 'loot' in the name of the Gandhi-Nehru family, but when the BJP distributes freebies, it's called 'seva'. In reality, all governments are going back, but how will the country progress? We will never be a developed nation as people make the nation, and our people vote for a five kg ration and ₹2500. BIDYUT KUMAR CHATTERJEE | FARIDABAD

India wins Champions Trophy

Madam- Apropos to "Champions bring the trophy home! Jai Ho," published on March 10, 2025. India clinched a thrilling four-wicket win over New Zealand to clinch the marquee ICC event for a record-breaking third time. Under Rohit Sharma's captaincy, Team India has now won the Asia Cup, ICC T20 World Cup and ICC Champions Trophy and overall this is the seventh ICC white ball trophy for Team India.

When pace sensation Bumrah was ruled out for the Champions Trophy, it was believed that it was going to be a huge setback for Team India, but without him and only Shami to spearhead the pace attack, our fast bowling arsenal looked really thin, but our spin quartet bowled like a well-oiled machine, turning the screws on opposition batsmen with relentless precision.

Our batting line-up was versatile and reliable, and everyone chipped in to the tournament with four allrounders; our team's balance was perfect. And just to remember that players like Pant, Jaiswal and Arshdeep could not even get a game in the tournament goes to show the depth of our talent pool. The Indian team is now second place in the ICC Trophies

list behind Australia, with only the ICC WTC trophy missing from the cabinet. The men in blue have once again proved that they have what it takes to win! BAL GOVIND | NOIDA

Conflict in Syria

Madam — At a time when Muslims around the world are observing the holy month of Ramadan, Syria has witnessed another wave of violence that has claimed hundreds of lives in just the last two days. The humanitarian situation remains critical with widespread displacement, heavily damaged infrastructure and nearly 15 million people in need of humanitarian support

Dead bodies lying in streets are suggesting a danse macabre in the coastal region of the country, particularly in Latakia and Tartus provinces. This is the deadliest sectarian conflict since the overthrow of Bashar al-Assad in December 2024. Though the interim government has blamed the killing of two Syrian defence personnel in an ambush in Latakia province by Assad militia remnants for triggering the violence, the deep involvement of the army in violent retaliation against Alawites and Christians, who largely support Assad, proves that this violence has been engineered by the interim government led by Ahmed al-Sharaa itself.

Besides this escalated violence being a serious jolt to peace efforts in the country, the way all ethnic groups are reluctant to shun violence, the future of stability and peace appears to be bleak in the country. Partitioning Syria into two separate nations based on the Sunni and Shiite populations holds the key to the solution to this problem. MANOJ PARASHAR I GHAZIABAD

OPPOSITION CRITICISES GOVERNMENT

The main opposition party, Congress, on Tuesday questioned the government's decisions and accused it of putting the economy in crisis. They said that the economy is being overtaken by a crisis created by the government. Congress launched a scathing attack on the government by targeting the increasing prevalence of gold loans in the country. Congress general secretary and communication in-charge Jairam Ramesh, citing the Reserve Bank of India's February data, said that a massive jump of 71.3 per cent has been seen in gold loans. Ramesh also said on X. "India's economy is caught in a crisis created by the government. The macroeconomic slowdown that continues till 2024 has led to a 300 percent jump in gold loans in the last five years. The gold loan figure has crossed the level of ₹1 Lakh Crore for the first time.

Bank loans have slowed down in every sector from housing to cars, but crisis loans like gold loans are at their peak. Not only this, the report of Niti Aayog shows that gold loans account for 40 per cent of all loans issued to

women. The number of women taking loans by pledging gold has increased by more than 22 percent in the last five years.

Should it be considered that the Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme, launched with great fanfare by the Narendra Modi government, has proved to be a 'complete failure' like demonetisation and the 'Make in India' initiative? Rising prices, falling private investment, and rising unemployment issues are badly affecting the common people. Perhaps due to these reasons. gold loans have become a big failure.

The gold kept in homes is taken out only in case of emergency. This is not just an allegation of the opposition, but RBI also seems to be unhappy and concerned with this trend. That is why RBI is planning to implement a strict underwriting process for gold loans, to ensure ethical business practices and financial stability. This includes better background checks of borrowers and monitoring of the end use of funds to prevent irregularities found in recent

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

Spiralling food subsidy: The urgent need for reform

FIRST Olumn

India's food subsidy bill continues to rise despite budget projections suggesting otherwise. Without structural reforms in procurement and distribution, the financial strain on the exchequer is set to escalate, raising concerns about the long-term sustainability of India's food security programmes

n the Union Budget for 2025-26, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has allocated ₹203,420 Crore for food subsidy which is a marginal three per cent increase from the revised estimate (RE) for the current financial year (FY) at ₹197,000 Crore. The RE for FY 2024-25 by itself is lower than the budget estimate (BE) of ₹205,250 Crore she had fixed while presenting that budget on July 23, 2024.

Food subsidy payments during FY 2023-24 and FY 2022-23 were ₹211,394 Crores and ₹287,000 Crore respectively. From these numbers, one gets a sense that since FY 2022-23, food subsidies have been on a downward trajectory. This may not reveal the true picture.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), the Centre asks the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and other state agencies to procure food and organize its distribution to around 820 Million people for free. The entire cost i.e. MSP (minimum support price) paid to farmers plus handling and distribution cost (HDC) is reimbursed to the FCI or other state agencies as a subsidy. The money comes from the Union Budget's allocation for 'food subsidy'.

While, the PMGKAY has been in force since

While, the PMGKAY has been in force since January 1, 2023, before that, the Centre was giving food to 820 Million persons (seven kg of cereals per person per month to 120 Million poorest of the poor persons covered under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana or AAY families and five kg of cereals per person per month to the remaining 700 million) at a heavily subsidized price of ₹2/3/1 per kg for wheat/rice/coarse cereals under the National Food Security Act (NFSA).

In addition, since April 2020, it has been giving five kg of food per person per month for "free" to all 820 Million beneficiaries under PMGKAY to mitigate the consequences of Covid-19 pandemic. From January 1, 2023, it merged the free part of PMGKAY with the regular food security schemes under NFSA. This arrangement will continue for five years till the end of CY 2028 as per the announcement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in November 2023. Against this backdrop, FY 2022-23 was an unusual year as 700 Million beneficiaries got five kg of cereals each per month for free under the PMGKAY. In addition, during April - December 2022, they got five kg of cereals each at a throwaway price of ₹3/kg and ₹2/kg for rice and wheat, respectively under the NFSA.

Likewise, beneficiaries under the AAY received five kg each per month under PMGKAY throughout the FY plus seven kg a month at ₹3/2/kg for rice/wheat during April - December 2022 under the NFSA. It was a doubling of the quantity supplied at throwaway/zero price during nine months of the FY that contributed to an unusually high subsidy outgo of ₹287,000 Crore. During FY 2023-24, the 'double quantity' effect was not present as



five kg a month supplies to all beneficiaries at ₹3/2 per kg under the NFSA were withdrawn. This should have led to a massive reduction in subsidy outgo from the FY 2022-23 level. But, that didn't happen. The payments during FY 2023-24 were substantial at ₹211,394 Crores. A hike in MSP of all 14 Kharif crops by 5-10 per cent announced in June 2023, besides an increase in HDC, led to higher subsidy payment.

Look at things from another angle. While, presenting the budget for FY 2023-24, Sitharaman had kept the BE for food subsidy at ₹197,000 Crore. Against this, RE turned out to be ₹14,394 Crore more indicating that the potential savings in subsidy due to dissipation of 'double quantity' effect were partially offset by increase in MSP and other costs associated with distribution of food.

Coming to FY 2024-25, the FM has put the RE for the year at ₹197,000 Crore which is even lower than the BE of ₹205,250 Crore. This is anomalous. Only a month before the presentation of the bud-



get for FY 2025-26, the prevailing situation was pointing towards a slippage of around ₹20,000 Crore from the BE. The higher subsidy requirement of about ₹225,000 Crore was expected primarily due to the rising costs of holding on to a huge stockpile of rice, besides the increase in MSP of wheat and rice.

Then, as part of the cen-

tral pool stock, the FCI was holding around 50 Million ton including 34 Million ton of rice and 16 Million ton of wheat (this stock excluded 34 Million ton of rice receivable from millers). The stock was against the buffer of 21.41 Million ton for January 1. Put simply, the stock holding was four times what was required.

At a fundamental level, the problem lies in the government using state agencies not just to meet

food requirements under the PMGKAY but also to extend price support to farmers. Under what has come to be known as 'open-ended' procurement, it buys from farmers unlimited quantities at MSP. For the last many years, the FCI has been procuring over 50 Million tons of rice every year even while supplying around 36 - 38 Million tons under PMGKAY to the states.

This mismatch has inevitably led to a huge pileup of stocks and associated high carrying costs which bloats the subsidy bill. The Centre has pinned its hope of trimming subsidy (as per RE) on liquidating its burgeoning stocks. But, given the situation on the ground, this seems unlikely. Till about a month back, response to the open market sale of rice by FCI from its stocks was poor with only 0.7 million tons of rice sold at the subsidised rate of ₹28/kg (during 2023-24 also, the agency could sell only 0.1 million tons).

A recent order from the food ministry let state governments and their corporations purchase up to 1.2 million tons of rice, and ethanol distilleries

buy up to 2.4 million tons at a reduced rate of ₹22.55/kg - a 20 per cent discount from the earlier price of ₹28/kg - won't make any dent on the mammoth stocks.

The actual subsidy outgo during FY 2024-25 will be close to ₹225,000 Crore instead of ₹197,000 Crore being the RE given in the budget. Considering that the agencies will be saddled with high stocks even during FY 2025-26 and further annual increase in the MSP and HDC (in the past, MSP of paddy and wheat has been increasing 6 - 7 per cent in kharif and rabi seasons annually and this trend is expected to continue), it is unlikely that subsidy payments will be contained within the budgeted level of ₹203,420 Crore. Far from a declining trend that the figures mentioned in the budget would seem to suggest, food subsidy has actually been on a rising trajectory and this trend will continue in the future as well. How the Scheme has been crafted, an escalating trend is inevitable. The coverage of PMGKAY is 'universal' (820 Million beneficiaries and at least 100 Million waiting to be included), assurance of giving them 'free' food eternally, purchase of 'unlimited' quantum of food from farmers at MSP resulting in high stocks with FCI and agencies and associated high carrying cost, reimbursement of handling and distribution cost to them on 'actual' basis and pilferage of subsidised food.

Conclusion

The trajectory of food subsidy in India is not on a downward slope, as the budget figures might suggest, but rather on a continuous rise due to the structural inefficiencies within the system. The universal coverage of PMGKAY, along with the open-ended procurement of food grains at MSP, has resulted in excessive stock accumulation, driving up costs related to storage, handling, and distribution.

Despite attempts to trim the subsidy bill through stock liquidation, market demand has remained weak, making a significant reduction in expenditure unlikely.

Moreover, factors such as annual increases in MSP and handling costs, as well as the Supreme Court's directive to include an additional 100 million beneficiaries under food security programs, will only exacerbate the financial burden.

While the budgeted estimate for FY 2025-26 has been set at ₹203,420 Crore, the actual expenditure is expected to exceed this projection, just as it has in previous years.

Unless the government undertakes fundamental reforms, such as rationalising procurement, improving targeting mechanisms, and curbing inefficiencies, food subsidy will continue to spiral upwards.

(The author a policy analyst. The views expressed

Trump's reciprocal tariffs and the US trade deficit: A deeper look

uring a recent meeting, US President Donald Trump praised Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, calling him "a great leader." However, in the same breath, Trump announced reciprocal tariffs on India, labelling the country as the "tariff king" and "a hard place to do business." He blamed India's high tariffs for the growing trade deficit between the two nations.

Trump's proposed reciprocal tariff policy means that the US will impose equivalent tariffs on countries that charge higher tariffs on American exports. He argues that the US trade deficit stems from high tariffs imposed by other countries on US goods. The US exports goods worth approximately \$2 Trillion globally while importing around \$3.3 Trillion, leading to a trade deficit of about \$1 Trillion. The US has a trade deficit with 57 countries, a trade surplus with 39, and negligible trade with 122. But is high tariffs the primary cause of this deficit?

US Trade Deficit with Major Countries

The United States has significant trade deficits with several countries, with China leading the list at a deficit of \$300 Billion, resulting from \$148 Billion in exports and \$448 Billion in imports. Mexico follows with a trade deficit of \$157 Billion, as the US exports \$323 Billion while importing \$480 Billion. Vietnam ranks third, with a deficit of \$109 Billion, based on \$10 Billion in exports and \$119 Billion in imports. Other major trade deficit partners include Germany (\$86 Billion), Canada (\$78 Billion), Japan (\$75 Billion), and Ireland (\$66 Billion). South Korea (\$55 Billion), Taiwan (\$50 Billion), and India (\$47 Billion) also contribute to the overall trade imbalance. Additional countries with notable trade deficits include Italy (\$46 Billion), Thailand (\$43 Billion), Malaysia (\$28 Billion), Switzerland (\$25 Billion), and Indonesia (\$18 Billion). The remaining nations on the list are Austria and France, each with a \$14 Billion deficit, Cambodia (\$12 Billion), Sweden (\$10 Billion), and Slovakia (\$8 Billion). These figures highlight the countries where the US imports significantly more than it exports, contributing to its overall trade deficit.

Is High Tariff the Reason for the US Trade Deficit?

China, the country with which the US has the highest trade deficit, has an effective tariff of just 3.07 per cent and a Most Favored Nation (MFN) tariff of 3.09 per cent. Despite accusations of unfair trade practices and currency manipulation, China has successfully positioned itself as the "factory of the world," offering competitively priced goods.

Mexico, the second-largest contributor to the US trade deficit, is deeply integrated with the US economy. Under the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), most US products enter Mexico duty-free, provided they meet rules-of-origin requirements.

Despite this tariff-free access, the US still records a \$157 Billion trade deficit with Mexico, showing that tariffs are not the root cause.

Vietnam has emerged as a manufacturing powerhouse, with its exports tripling from \$124 Billion in 2012 to \$384 Billion in 2022. Yet,

ANANT SWARUP

its effective tariff rate stands at just 1.07 per cent, with an MFN rate of 4.98 per cent. The growth of Vietnam's exports is primarily due to low labour costs, streamlined supply chains, and favourable trade agreements rather than high tariffs.

Similarly, Germany, which exports and imports roughly \$1.6 of goods annually, has an effec-.44 per cent, almost the same as

Trillion worth of goods annually, has an effective tariff of 1.44 per cent, almost the same as the US's 1.54 per cent. Despite these comparable rates, the US still has an \$86 Billion trade deficit with Germany.

This raises the question: if high tariffs were

This raises the question: if high tariffs were the primary cause of trade deficits, why does the US have such a significant gap with Germany? Among the 20 countries with which the US has the highest trade deficits, only South Korea (8.88 per cent effective tariff) and India (11.36 per cent effective tariff) impose relatively higher tariffs. However, many of these countries themselves have global trade deficits, meaning other nations successfully export to them-even when the US struggles.

The Real Cause of the US Trade Deficit

The primary reason for the US trade deficit is not high tariffs abroad, but rather the changing structure of the US economy. Over time, the US has shifted away from low-cost, labour-intensive manufacturing, outsourcing these industries to other countries while focusing on high-tech and specialised production.

Moreover, many US multinational corporations manufacture abroad and re-import goods, which increases the trade deficit. However, the royalties and profits earned by these companies are not factored into trade deficit calculations.

Additionally, the US services trade is often overlooked. In 2022, the US exported \$900 Billion worth of services while importing \$671

Billion, resulting in a \$200 Billion services trade surplus-which offsets part of the goods deficit. Economic research has shown that imposing high tariffs does not necessarily boost manufacturing or enhance economic integration.

While it may be a politically attractive move, trade wars often lead to long-term economic damage. Trump's decision to escalate tariffs will shape global trade dynamics in the coming years, and its real impact remains to be seen.

Conclusion

The US trade deficit is a complex issue influenced by multiple factors beyond high tariffs. While President Trump has targeted countries like India for their tariff policies, data shows that the largest trade imbalances exist even with nations that have low tariffs, such as China, Mexico, and Germany.

This suggests that tariffs are not the primary cause of the deficit. Instead, the shift in the US economy toward high-tech industries, outsourcing of manufacturing, and global supply chain strategies play a more significant role.

Additionally, US multinational corporations manufacture goods abroad and re-import them, further widening the trade gap.

The services sector, which generates a trade surplus for the US, is often overlooked in trade deficit discussions. Economic research suggests that imposing high tariffs does not necessarily revive domestic manufacturing but can lead to broader economic consequences.

As Trump's tariff policies unfold, their longterm impact on global trade and the US economy remains uncertain.

In 2023, the US-India bilateral trade in goods and services stood at \$190.08 Billion (\$123.89 Billion in goods and \$66.19 Billion in services trade). That year, India's merchandise exports to the US stood at \$83.77 Billion, while imports were \$40.12 Billion, leaving a trade gap of \$43.65 Billion in favour of India.

The country's services export to America was \$36.33 Billion in 2023, while imports were aggregated at \$29.86 Billion. The trade gap (difference between imports and exports) was \$6.47 Billion in favour of New Delhi.

During 2021-24, America was the largest trading partner of India. The US is one of the few countries with which India has a trade surplus. India has received \$67.8 Billion in foreign direct investments from America during April 2000 and September 2024.

Thus India will have to diversify its export basket and reduce its American-centric approach to tide over the loses that might result from the Trump imposed tariffs.

(The author is former Additional Secreatry, Department of Commerce; views are personal)

Holistic approach to overcoming addiction

VALLURI

arilal Gandhi was addicted to alcohol. He tried in vain to give up drinking but could never kick the habit and eventually succumbed to the lethal disease called alcoholism. He became a quotidian smoker.

Gandhiji's son was also said to have committed adultery and for a brief turned an apostate as he got converted to Islam to be known as Abdullah Gandhi.

Tobacco and excessive consumption of alcohol lead to severe physical and psychological disorders. It has a deleterious and debilitating effect on the human body. Any individual can be addicted to sex, substance, food (bulimia),

ed to sex, substance, food (builmia), cinema, television, or even social media. Such addictions weaken our resolve diminish our aura and deplete our physical and mental energy.

Addiction is a compulsive, chron-

ic, physiological, or psychological need for a habit-forming substance, behaviour, or activity having harmful physical, psychological, or social effects and typically causing well-

defined symptoms (such as anxiety, irritability, tremors, or nausea) upon withdrawal or abstinence.

Talking of smoking, some lawmakers came up with outlandish theories stating that there is inadequate Indian evidence to correlate tobacco and cancer.

WHO estimates that tobacco caused 8.5 Million deaths in 2024 and over 100 million deaths over the 20th century. Similarly, the United States Centres for Disease Control and Prevention describes tobacco as "the single most important preventable risk to human health in developed countries and important cause of premature death worldwide."

Smoking is a major risk factor for heart attacks, strokes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) including emphysema and chronic bronchitis and cancer (particularly lung cancer, cancers of the larynx and mouth, and pancreatic cancer).

Cigarettes sold in underdeveloped countries tend to have higher tar content and are less likely to be filtered, potentially increasing vulnerability to tobacco smoking-related diseases in these regions.

Given this grim scenario, how does one quit smoking and or those addicted to Bacchus, give up drinking? It is recommended to take up courses in the Art of Living to combat these addictions.

We need to breathe properly to increase our Prana level to combat these addictions. The pivot of the Art of Living Courses is the unique breathing technique called the Sudarshan Kriya.

Sudarshan Kriya harmonises the rhythms of the body and emotions and puts them back in tune with the rhythms of nature.

Being in sync, we feel positive about ourselves, love flows naturally in all relationships (say what was lacking between Gandhiji and his son Harilal Gandhi).

Sudarshan Kriya's technique enables us to skillfully use the breath to feel positive about ourselves and our lives and start having control over our

emotions. It reinforces the default rhythm within an individual and negative emotions of discontent and unhappiness get

of discontent and unhappiness get purged.

Regular practice of Sudarshan Kriya,

pranayama, yoga, and meditation brings about a 360-degree change in the personality of an addict or a person who is only looking back in anger.

A renowned cardiologist from Hyderabad, Dr Ramachandra of Sri Sri Holistic Hospitals recommends Sudarshan Kriya to all his patients for a quick rehab. Further, he opines this breathing technique is almost akin to

hyperventilation and relaxes an individual tremendously. Regular practice of this breathing technique infuses energy, prana, and optimism and puts a person in an auto mode

(default mode of nature).

We are cannonaded with almost 60,000 thousand thoughts a day. Most of them are negative in nature. Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar says breath is like a string and your mind is like a kite. Proper breathing ensures you float and do not

Proper breathing ensures you float and crash land in the journey of your life.
So let us breathe our problems away.

Conclusion

In a world where addiction to substances and behaviors can erode physical and mental wellbeing, finding effective ways to reclaim control is essential. Harilal Gandhi's struggles serve as a stark reminder of how unchecked dependencies can lead to suffering, not just for the individual but for their loved ones as well.

The impact of smoking, alcoholism, and other addictions is undeniable, with grave consequences on health and longevity. Yet, amidst this challenge, hope lies in adopting holistic wellness practices. Sudarshan Kriya, pranayama, yoga, and meditation offer scientifically backed methods to counter addiction and regain inner harmony.

These techniques not only cleanse the body and mind but also foster emotional resilience, allowing individuals to break free from destructive

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

MONEY MATTERS



Gold falls Rs 150 to Rs 88,750 per 10g

or the third day in a row, gold prices retreated by Rs 150 to Rs 88,750 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday amid a weak trend in the overseas markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had settled lower at Rs 88,900 per 10 grams on Friday. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity slipped by Rs 150 to Rs 88,350 per 10 grams from the previous close of Rs 88,500 per 10 grams. Silver prices also declined by Rs 250 to Rs 99,250 per kg, snapping the four-day winning run. Comex gold futures for April delivery fell 0.32 per cent to USD 2,904.80 per ounce in the international markets. Meanwhile, spot gold also fell 0.13 per cent to USD 2,905.31 per ounce. "Gold and silver saw profit-taking from recent highs due to a rebound in US bond yields. The US administration's decision to delay Mexico tariffs by a month added to the cautious sentiment. However, a weakening dollar, which fell to a five-month low and recorded its worst weekly decline since November 2022, provided tailwinds for gold and silver," Rahul Kalantri, VP Commodities, Mehta Equities Ltd, said. Silver futures for May delivery traded lower at USD 32.80 per ounce.



Al Express expands fleet to 100 planes

ir India Express now has 100 planes in its fleet by inducting another Boeing 737-8 aircraft, which operated Aits first flight on Bengaluru-Hindon route. In a release on Monday, the airline said it will be operating over 500 daily flights by the end of this month across a fast-expanding network of 54 destinations across India, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. From a fleet of 26 Boeing 737 NGs and 28 A320 aircraft in January 2022, when the airline was taken over by the Tata Group, the carrier's has almost doubled its fleet to 100 aircraft, according to the release. The 100th aircraft, featuring 'Chittara' tail art inspired by Karnataka's traditional mural painting, was flagged off by the airline's Managing Director Aloke Singh at Bengaluru's Kempegowda



Infosys Finacle modernises Chola's operations

nfosys Finacle on Monday announced the successful migration of Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company's operations to the Finacle treasury solution. According to a release, the move will centralise treasury management on a unified web-based platform for Chola. It however, did not divulge the financial details of the contract. Infosys Finacle is part of EdgeVerve Systems, a wholly-owned product subsidiary of Infosys. "This cloud-based transformation emphasises Chola's commitment to creating future-ready, digital-first treasury offerings that streamline treasury operations, enhance automation and effectively manage risks and compliance while ensuring financial prudence and stability, the release said. With Finacle Treasury, Chola now has end-toend coverage for operations across the entire treasury lifecycle, managing various liabilities and investment portfolios. This includes a diverse range of borrowing and funding sources. The non-banking financial company has also streamlined its fund transfer process, allowing faster and more efficient management of loans, market borrowings, securitisation, and interest and tax adjustments

Will push for comprehensive trade partnership with India

New Zealand PM ahead of visit

PNS NEW DELHI

Ahead of his trip to India, New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon has said that he will push for a comprehensive economic partnership with New Delhi and will explore ways to

strengthen bilateral security ties. Luxon is visiting India from March 16 to 20 in what will be his first trip to the country as the prime minister.

He will be accompanied by one of the largest delegations a New Zealand prime minister has ever travelled with.

The delegation will comprise ministers, senior business leaders, a community delegation of prominent Kiwi Indians and several parliamentarians.

'We're going to do everything we can to push trade really, really hard," Luxon told New Żealand media on Sunday.

"What I'm looking for is just a much more comprehensive economic partnership and how we'd move that forward," he said, adding, "I am determined that we are going to change the trading relationships with India big time."

In New Delhi, Luxon will hold wide-ranging talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi to explore areas of cooperation, deepen political and security ties and strengthen the economic

"India is an important power in the Indo-Pacific and I will discuss with Prime Minister Modi what more we can do together to maintain peace and prosper-

ity in our region," the New Zealand PM said. Luxon said travelling with a senior business delegation will help increase trade and business opportunities and promote New Zealand as an investment desti-

"The large and growing Indian diaspora make significant contributions to New Zealand. I am pleased to be travelling with a first-of-its-kind community delegation, to highlight the importance of the people to people links we share, and to profile the best and brightest among Kiwi-Indians," he said.

Luxon will deliver the inaugural address at the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi on

"New Zealand's relationship with India is more important than ever at this time of geopolitical uncertainty. I am confident my visit will achieve a step change in our engagement, as we continue to strengthen our mutual security and prosperity," Luxon said.

The New Zealand PM said strengthening ties with India is a key priority for him. "Since coming into office, I have signalled that strengthening our relationship with India is a key

priority for my government."
"We've already made incredible progress over the last year as we invest in building a broadbased, sustainable relationship with India, the world's fastestgrowing major economy, and the place from which six per cent of

New Zealand's population claim their heritage," he said.

The New Zealand PM hoped his visit will further strengthen the close links between the two Luxon will also visit Mumbai

from March 19 to 20 before returning to Wellington.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Monday said Prime Minister Modi will host a lunch in honour of the visiting dignitary. Luxon will also call on President Droupadi Murmu.

Luxon's visit underscores the longstanding and enduring ties between India and New Zealand, the MEA said.

"It reaffirms the continued commitment of both countries to further strengthen the bilateral relationship across all sectors and deepen our close people-to-



Money 08

Govt to set up SPV for making aircraft in India. says Union Min

The government is in the process of setting a special purpose vehicle for making regional transport aircraft, Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu said on Monday as he asserted that necessary policies are in place for India to manufacture planes and

Replying to questions in the Rajya Sabha, the minister highlighted the steps taken by the government to promote aircraft component manufacturing and MRO (Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul) activities, including having a uniform IGST rate.

India is one of the world's fastest growing civil aviation markets and domestic carriers have placed orders for more than 1,500 planes as they expand their fleets to meet ris-

ing air traffic demand.
"We have changed the thought process that we have when it comes to manufacturing of aircraft. We are saying that India is at the stage right now

where we can manufacture, we can design and we can maintain an aircraft," Naidu said.

Elaborating about the way forward, the minister said the government has adopted a holistic approach and is in the process of setting a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for manufacturing regional transport

"We have a plan to create an SPV for five years, which is going to bring in all the necessary stakeholders... study the existing picture in the country and create a road map...," he said and added that the idea is to make the aircraft in five years.

As the government pushes ahead with the Make In India initiatives, the TDP leader also emphasised that states are the key players.

While stressing that skilling is also important, Naidu mentioned that there are 38 working FTOs (Flying Training Organisations) and the focus is to create an ecosystem for manufacturing aircraft com-

Assam presents Rs 2.63 lakh cr budget

Offers sops to youths, tea garden workers



The Assam government on Monday presented a Rs 2.63 lakh crore budget for the 2025-26 fiscal, offering sops to jobless graduates and tea garden workers while suggesting to exempt professional tax on a section of the salaried class in the state where assembly polls are due

With a deficit of Rs 620.27 crore, this is the last full Budget of the Himanta Biswa Sarma-led second BJP government.

Finance Minister Ajanta Neog tabled a Rs 2.63 lakh crore Budget for the next financial year that proposed no new tax for the general public but gave additional relief to nearly 1.5 lakh salaried people.

Neog announced extending tax holiday for green tea leaves for two more years to alleviate the challenges faced by the industry, while offering a onetime cash benefit of Rs 5,000 to 6.8 lakh garden workers.

Assembly elections in Assam are likely to take place during March-April next year.

Neog announced a flagship scheme 'Chief Minister's Jibon Prerana' to financially support the graduates for one year during their job search period.

This initiative is not an unemployment allowance, but motivational support (Prerana) to help them prepare for competitive exams, interviews and entrepreneurial pursuits. I am

month to the graduates passing out in 2025 from government universities/colleges of Assam, she added.

Under the same scheme, the government seeks to provide a one-time Rs 25,000 grant to the research scholars of state and central government universities. This assistance will be Rs 50,000 for 'divyang' (people with disabilities) research scholars, Neog said. The government will launch the scheme in October 2025, around six months before the state goes to polls, and allocated Rs 25 crore for its implementation.

Emphasising that no additional tax is imposed on the public, Neog said the budget proposes exemption on professional tax for individuals earning up to Rs 15,000 per month.

"This will benefit more than 1.43 lakh taxpayers/families and boost their purchasing capacity," she said

Neog also proposed to slash the electricity rate by Re 1 per unit for Jeevan Dhara and domestic consumers up to 120 units in a month, giving relief to 48 lakh consumers out of the total 68 lakh.

"We shall provide Rs 300 crore targeted subsidy this year. If the Assam Power Distribution Company Limited (APDCL) continues to show the positive trend of revenue, I shall consider further reduction in tariff," she

Massive AI talent gap looms in India

Budget: Aim is to create one crore 'Lakhpati Didis', says CM Fadnavis

PNS MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Monday said his government will focus on the 'Lakhpati Didi' scheme to ensure creation of one crore beneficiaries. The scheme was launched by

the Union government in 2023 and recognises women members of SHGs, who have an annual income of at least Rs 1 lakh from agriculture, animal husbandry, and small industries, as 'Lakhpati will focus on women empowerment through the Lakhpati Didi scheme. We aim to create one crore women beneficiaries with annual income of Rs 1 lakh. This lakh this year," he said.



dence for women and foster a circular economy. Over 23 lakh women have benefitted so far, with plans to add another 24

women beneficiaries earning Rs 8,000- Rs10,000 monthly, creating a robust network of selfreliance, the CM added. Incidentally, on Saturday,

PNS NEW DELHI

scheme.

Department of

Pharmaceuticals has sought

expressions of interest from

interested entities for project

funding under the PRIP

The Promotion of

Research and Innovation in

Pharma MedTech sector

(PRIP) scheme has been

launched by the Department

of Pharmaceuticals to trans-

form India into a global powerhouse for R&D in the

The scheme was notified

on August 17, 2023, with a

Pharma MedTech sector.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi took part in the 'Lakhpati Didi Sammelan' in Navsari in Gujarat where he spoke on the success of the scheme and exuded confidence that the target of five crore beneficiaries nationwide would be achieved in the time to

Speaking to reporters after the state budget was presented in the assembly, the CM also underscored the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in agriculture. "AI can revolutionize farming.

testing to flower stages. It can reduce costs and improve productivity. We have introduced schemes to facilitate this transformation" Fadnavis

crore is focused on accelerat-

ing investments in the R&D

ecosystem within the sector.

Pharmaceuticals invites

Expressions of Interest (EoI)

from interested entities --

proprietary firm or partner-

ship firm or limited liability

partnership, startups or a

company /Group of compa-

nies registered in India for

project funding under the PRIP scheme, it stated.

designed to provide you with

an opportunity to co-shape

India's journey towards

becoming an R&D innova-

tion hub, by soliciting your

"This EoI has been

Department

Sitharaman presents Manipur budget envisaging Rs 35,104 cr expenditure

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday tabled in the Lok Sabha the Manipur budget for 2025-26, envisaging an expenditure of Rs 35,103.90 crore, up

from Rs 32,656.81 crore in the current financial year. Manipur is currently under the

President's Rule. The total receipts have been pegged at Rs 35,368.19 crore, up

from Rs 32,471.90 crore in 2024-25. According to documents, the capital outlay has been increased by 19 per cent to Rs 7,773 crore over the current financial year

Manipur's budget provides for over Rs 2,000 crore under

ending March 2025.

Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) and Rs 9,520 crore for social sector

For relief and rehabilitation

for internally displaced persons, Rs 15 crore has been provided for temporary shelter to them; Rs 35 crore towards housing for dis-

placed people, Rs 100 crore for relief operation, and Rs 7 crore for compensa-

A budgetary allocation of Rs 2,866 crore for 2025-26 has been made towards incentives for police personnel posted in sensitive areas.

Sitharaman tabled the supple-

mentary demands for grants in respect of Manipur for the year

of impact across global markets. Addressing the AI talent shortage requires a multi-

pronged approach -- companies

must move beyond traditional

hiring practices and prioritise

continuous upskilling initia-

tives to cultivate internal talent.

"The AI talent shortage is a

Prices of veg, non-veg thali decline 5 pc in Feb: Crisil

total financial outlay of Rs 5,000 crore, of which Rs 4,250 inputs," it added.

Govt invites proposals for

funding under PRIP scheme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The cost of vegetarian and nonvegetarian thali declined by 5 per cent on-month in February due to lower vegetable and broiler prices, an arm of domestic rating agency Crisil said on Monday. Onion, potato and tomato prices were down 7 per cent, 17 per cent and 25 per cent on-month, respectively, amid fresh arrivals, said Crisil Market Intelligence and Analysis in its

monthly 'Roti Rice Rate' report. Also, broiler prices declined by an estimated 5 per cent onmonth because of lower demand amid bird flu scare in Southern India, it said.

"For the vegetarian thali, the decline was driven by lower veg-



etable prices, particularly of onions, tomatoes and potatoes, while for a non-vegetarian thali, the cost eased with a decrease in broiler prices," said Pushan Sharma, Director- Research, Crisil Intelligence.

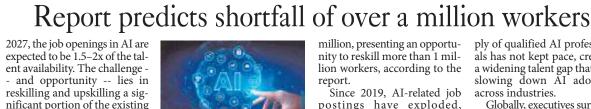
On an annual basis, the cost of a home-cooked vegetarian thali declined 1 per cent in February, while that of a nonvegetarian thali grew by about 6 per cent, the report said.

PNS NEW DELHI

India is poised to become a global AI talent hub, but a looming skill gap threatens to hinder its progress, with a new study by Bain & Company revealing that the country's AI sector could face a shortfall of over a million skilled professionals by 2027.

The report highlighted the urgent need for India to reskill and upskill its workforce to meet the growing demand for AI expertise.

"India has a unique opportunity to position itself as a global AI talent hub. However, by



nificant portion of the existing talent base on emerging tech-nology tools and skillsets," said Saikat Banerjee, Partner and leader in Bain & Company's AI, Insights, and Solutions practice



India's AI sector could surpass 2.3 million job openings by 2027 while the AI talent pool is expected to grow to around 1.2

million, presenting an opportunity to reskill more than 1 million workers, according to the

Since 2019, AI-related job postings have exploded, increasing by 21 per cent annually, while compensation for these roles has risen by 11 per cent each year.

Despite this surge in demand and attractive salaries, the sup-

ply of qualified AI professionals has not kept pace, creating a widening talent gap that risks slowing down AI adoption across industries.

Globally, executives surveyed cited a lack of in-house AI expertise as a major obstacle to implementing generative AI technologies. This shortage is projected to persist through at least 2027, with varying degrees

significant challenge, but not invincible. Addressing it requires a fundamental shift in how businesses attract, develop, and retain AI talent. Companies need to move beyond traditional hiring approaches, prioritise continuous upskilling, and foster an innovation-driven ecosystem," Banerjee said.

what's brewing?

SALMAN KHAN'S *SIKANDAR* TEASES A **IGH-ENERGY HOLI TRACK** *BAM BAM BHOLE*

he much-anticipated Salman Khan-starrer Sikandar is gearing up for a grand release, and to add to the excitement, the teaser of its Holi song Bam Bam Bhole was unveiled on Monday. The track promises a vibrant and energetic celebration, perfectly in sync with the festival of colors.

Setting the stage for a thrilling musical experience, Bam Bam Bhole opens with a dynamic rap section, performed by Shaikhspeare, Y-Ash and Husxain from Bombay Lokal. Adding to the track's raw and

electrifying energy are the young talents Bhimrao Jogu, Sarfaraz Shaikh and Faisal Ansari from The Dharavi Dream Project. Their verses infuse a street-style edge, making the song an engaging mix of traditional festivity and contemporary

> The teaser showcases a burst of color and high-octane visuals, bringing the spirit of Holi to life. Salman Khan's entry is a major highlight, as he makes a striking appearance with

his signature charisma just as the beat drops. Composed by Pritam, the full song is set for release on Tuesday, adding to the festive fervour.

Bam Bam Bhole is just a glimpse of the larger spectacle that Sikandar promises to be. The film marks Salman Khan's return to the big screen after more than a year, following his last outing in Tiger 3. Adding to the excitement, he will be seen alongside Rashmika Mandanna, who is currently riding high on the success of Pushpa 2: The Rule and Chhaava.

> Ghaiini. Sikandar is expected to deliver an intense blend of action. drama, and emotions. The film also marks a long-awaited reunion between Salman Khan and producer Sajid Nadiadwala,

following their

blockbuster hit Kick in

Directed by A.R. Murugadoss, the filmmaker behind

Boney Kapoor plans Mom 2 with daughter Khushi Kapoor

captivated audiences since its debut on a major OTT

anticipation is at an all-time high for its much-awaited fourth

installment. Now, fresh updates reveal that filming for Maharani

of the shoot taking place in Huma Qureshi's hometown, Delhi

protagonist Rani Bharati, will arrive in Delhi for an extended

to the development said, "Huma will start her Delhi schedule

Purana Quila and India Gate have been confirmed as key shooting

soon. She will be here along with the crew from March 14.'

The team is expected to film in the capital for 15-20 days,

covering multiple iconic locations. So far, Connaught Place,

spots, while additional locations are still being finalised. The teaser for Maharani 4 has already set the stage for a

moments features her responding to past accusations—being

called a murderer, uneducated and even a potential Prime Minister. However, Rani remains steadfast in her

principles, prioritising her family over political

of grave consequences for anyone who

dares to harm it.

ambitions. In a powerful declaration, she asserts

her deep-rooted connection to Bihar, warning

compelling new chapter, promising an even bolder and more determined Rani Bharati. One of the teaser's most striking

shooting schedule alongside the production team. A source close

According to reports. Qureshi, who plays the powerful

4 is all set to commence on March 14, with a significant portion

platform in 2021. With three successful seasons,

Veteran producer Boney Kapoor made an exciting revelation—he is planning a sequel to Mom, the 2017 thriller that marked Sridevi's last film, with his daughter Khushi Kapoor in the lead. Speaking on the green carpet at IIFA 2025, Boney Kapoor expressed his admiration for his daughters, Khushi and Janhvi Kapoor, highlighting their efforts to carry forward the legacy of their

Sharing his thoughts on Khushi's budding career, Boney Kapoor

MAHARANI 4 TO BRING

RANI BHARATI

A MORE FIERCE & RESOLUTE

all of Khushi's films—Archies. Loveyappa and Nadaaniyaan. I am planning a film with her too after No Entry. It could be Mom 2. She is trying to follow in her mother's footsteps. Sridevi was the top star in every industry she worked in, and I hope both Khushi and Janhvi achieve that same level of perfection."

Mom, released in 2017 and directed by Ravi Udyawar, was a gripping revenge drama that earned Sridevi a National Award for Best Actress

posthumously. The film was highly acclaimed for its powerful narrative and emotional depth. making a sequel a highly anticipated project. In addition to Mom 2, Boney Kapoor also shared updates on his upcoming project, the much-awaited sequel to the 2005 comedy hit No Entry. The film is set to go on floors in he highly acclaimed political drama *Maharani* has

> final cast announcement is still in process. "There are too many leading ladies, so I can't just talk about a few now. We

have locked a few and still have some more to finalise. Once everything is in place, we will make a formal announcement," he



Randeep Hooda's deadly transformation as 'Ranatunga' raises the hype for Jaat

the excitement surrounding the upcoming action thriller Jaat has reached a fever pitch with North Indian cinema with the larger-than-life the grand reveal of Randeep Hooda's character, atunga. A special 20-second glimpse showcases da in a menacing avatar, cementing his role as Ranatunga. A special 20-second glimpse showcases Hooda in a menacing avatar, cementing his role as the formidable adversary to the film's lead, played by Sunny

Slated for release on April 10, 2025, Jaat has already created waves with its teaser, offering a tantalising peek into its gripping world. Now, with the unveiling of Ranatunga, fans are eagerly anticipating the showdown between Deol's protagonist and Hooda's rugged,

power-packed villain. Renowned for his versatility and intense screen presence, Randeep Hooda has captivated audiences with his powerful performances. In Jaat, he steps into the role of an unrelenting antagonist, bringing a raw, menacing edge to Ranatunga. The character teaser has sparked immense curiosity, with fans praising Hooda's fierce

look and the film's promise of high-voltage action. The special glimpse of Ranatunga has set social media abuzz, with many highlighting how Jaat

featuring including Sunny Deol, Randeep Hooda, Vineet Kumar Singh, Saiyami Kher and Regina Cassandra

Backed by Mythri Movie Makers and People Media Factory, the film is shaping up to be a grand cine-matic spectacle, fueled by adrenaline-pumping action sequences choreographed by Anl Arasu, Ram Laxman and Venkat.

Adding to the film's highenergy appeal is a gripping soundtrack by Thaman S, complemented by Rishi Punjabi's breathtaking cinematography. The immersive experience is further elevated by Navin Nooli's sharp editing and Avinash Kollass detailed production design.

With its explosive action, powerhouse performances, and an engaging narrative, Jaat is set to make a massive impact upon release. The unveiling of Ranatunga has only added to the anticipation, promising a face-off that will keep audiences on the edge of their seats.

'Tumko Meri Kasam is as much about the man as it is about his mission'

shwak Singh and veteran actor Anupam Kher come together to portray the inspiring journey of Dr. Ajay Murdia, the visionary behind India's largest IVF chain, Indira IVF, in the upcoming film

Tumko Meri Kasam. The trailer has garnered an overwhelmingly positive response, sparking curiosity about the film's unique and rarely explored subject in Bollywood. Both Ishwak and Anupam Kher lead the film, portraying Dr. Murdia in two distinct

yet equally compelling timelines. Ishwak's track captures the formative years of Dr. Murdia—his transition from a college professor to a pioneer in fertility treatment, his fight against deep-seated social

stigmas surrounding infertility, and his mission to challenge the long-standing belief that infertility is solely a woman's problem. His journey is not only about medical advancements but also about breaking societal barriers, and at the heart of it is the unwavering support of his wife, played by Adah Sharma. Their relationship adds an emotional depth to the film, making it as much a story of love as it is of resilience.

Speaking about the film, Ishwak shared, "This story is as much about the man as it is about his mission. Playing Dr. Murdia in his formative years, when he was laying the foundation for Indira IVF, taking on societal stigma, and reshaping conversations around fertility, has been an incredible experience. What makes the film even more special is that we get to see his journey in two timelines, with Anupam sir portraying a phase where he's fighting for everything he has created. Watching him bring such depth and power to the role was truly inspiring." Directed by Vikram Bhatt and produced by Indira Entertainment, Tumko Meri Kasam is set to release on 21 March 2025.

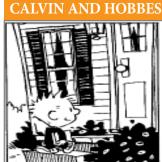
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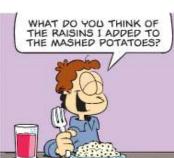




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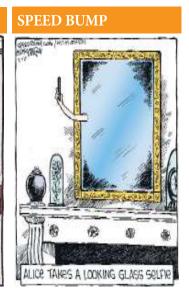
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ACROSS

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- 9 Frequently 11 A row of metal rings
- fastened together
- 12 Jumble together (3,2) 13 Sneak

DOWN 1 Actor or singer 2 An octagon's number

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3 As well

4 Instructor

- 16 Baby's toy 18 A stinging insect
- 19 A newspaper employee



5 Use your eyes

with this

8 Rub wood smooth

10 An imaginary line

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17 A chopping tool

14 Precise

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around the middle

Vijayawada

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Tuesday March 11, 2025

'What works on stage isn't the same as what works on screen'

FATIMA HASAN

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dream becoming journalists, possess the traits required for the profession. This is what banker-turnedactor Danish Husain, as he goes by his screen name, reflected upon

in his latest series Crime Beat. In an exclusive conversation with The Pioneer, Husain traces his journey in Crime Beat and shares what drew him to the project. "When the director told me about the story and the novel that inspired the series—The Price You Pay it immediately caught my attention," he says. Husain was particularly drawn to the depiction of journalism in the series, especially the role of the editor and the character of Abhishek Sinha. "I liked the way journalism was portrayed, the editor's role, and how Abhishek's character was written. That, along with my experience of interacting with journalist friends, played a big part in my decision to take up the role. I admire the professionalism the job demands—the

objectivity and authenticity required. All of these factors made me want to do the series." Playing the chief editor of a newspaper was a challenging experience for Husain. "Maintaining objectivity while getting the news, understanding what the real news is and then presenting it properly—these are the key responsibilities of an editor. I think that's a huge

He adds, "The script also delves into how an editor decides which stories make it to the front page and how to differentiate those stories from how other newspapers treat them. It's not just about professionalism-it's also about the emotional side of the job, which I had to bring into my performance.

To prepare for the role, he relied on the expertise of Jairaj Singh, a seasoned journalist who served as a consultant on the series. "Jairaj's guidance was invaluable. His observations were extremely relevant and helped me shape my character. He helped me understand how an editor operates—how they carry themselves, the fast-paced nature of their work, and the perspective they bring to news.' Interestingly, he did not model his performance on any specific real-life journalist or detective. Instead, he focused entirely on the inputs from Jairaj, the director, and conversations with other actors. "I did not base my performance on any real-life journalist. I simply worked with the insights and feedback I received," he emphasises.

One of the most compelling aspects of Crime Beat is how it navigates the fine line between entertainment and responsible journalism. When asked about this balance, he responds with a thought-provoking counter-question: "Who decides how much is entertainment and how much is responsibility? What one person sees as responsible storytelling might seem irresponsible to another, and vice versa."

He acknowledges that making a series for a platform involves a significant entertainment component. "At the same time, you want the series to be credible. It shouldn't be so implausible or outlandish that it loses touch with reality, especially when it's set in a very real socio-political landscape," he explains.

Quoting a dialogue from the series—"As it becomes more and more corrupt and democratic, the world that you are living in becomes harder and harder"—Husain raises critical questions: "Can we really do meaningful crime journalism today? What happens when journalists expose big corruption and scams? What happens to whistleblowers?"

He points out that crime journalists are increasingly at risk. "When they bring major scams to light, they become targets. Many have even lost their lives for it," he notes. "Journalists are constantly threatened. So, in such an atmosphere, how can crime journalism continue to evolve?"

Having worked in theater and film for over two decades, he has gained a deep understanding of how different mediums shape storytelling. "What works on stage isn't the same as what works on screen, and that's different from how a story is told in a book. Each medium has its limitations and advantages. Understanding how to adapt a story to the medium is crucial.

how to make it compelling for the screen. If it's for the stage, I need to understand how it can be adapted theatrically. The medium dictates how the story is told." As for his future

projects, Husain remains tight-lipped but assures fans that exciting work is on the horizon. "There are a handful of series I'm currently working on, including a Netflix series. Some of my projects are in the production stage, waiting to be released by the producers," he concludes.

In an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer*, Danish **Husain** delves into his role as a chief editor in Crime Beat and the broader themes of journalism, integrity and truth-seeking. He also discusses how his performance was shaped by real newsroom dynamics



NEUROSCIENCE IN EARLY EDUCATION

n recent years, our understanding of how young brains develop has been significantly enhanced by advances in neuroscience. This knowledge offers powerful insights into early education, allowing us to design interventions that can positively shape cognitive development during the most formative years of a child's life. Early childhood represents a critical window of opportunity and we must leverage neuroscience to optimise learning experiences that fos-ter intellectual, social and emotional growth.

Neuroscientific research has demonstrated that the first five years of a child's life are crucial for brain development. During this period, the brain is highly malleable, forming over a million new neural con-nections every second. This rapid growth lays the foundation for cognitive functions, emotional regulation and even personality traits that will continue to evolve. However, the quality of experiences during this phase plays an essential role in either reinforcing or hindering this development.

What we now understand is that targeted educational interventions can significantly influence this process. High-quality early education environments, rich in cognitive stimuli, can help children reach their full potential by enhancing neural pathways associated with problem-solving, language acquisition and executive function skills.

Implementing neuroscience-informed interventions in early education is not about making learning more complicated; rather, it's about being intentional with the kinds of stimuli and experiences we provide to young learners. Here are some key areas where neuroscience has provided valuable insights:

Language acquisition and bilingualism: Neuroscience shows that early exposure to multi-

ple languages can enhance brain plasticity and improve cognitive flexibility. Bilingual children often exhibit stronger skills in attention and problem-solving. Incorporating multiple languages in early education fosters not only language skills but also critical cognitive functions.

Executive function development: Executive functions like working memory, flexible thinking and self-control are foundational skills that are nurtured during early childhood. Neuroscience suggests that playful, structured activities that challenge children to think critically and plan can improve executive functions. These are skills that predict future academic success.

Social-emotional learning (SEL): Neuroscientific evidence strongly supports the importance of

emotional regulation in learning. Emotions are deeply intertwined with cognitive processes. Therefore, early education that incorporates SEL—teaching children to manage their emotions, empathise with others, and build healthy relationships—can lead to stronger academic outcomes and improved well-being throughout life.

Motor skill development and cognitive growth:
Physical movement has a direct impact on cognitive development.
Neuroscientists have found

that motor skills and cognitive development are closely linked. Activities that promote coordination, balance and fine motor skills can enhance neural networks responsible for spatial awareness and mathematical reasoning. Movement-based learning can be especially beneficial

in early education

Resilience, the ability to bounce back from stress and adversity, is a quality that can be nur-tured from early childhood. Neuroscience has shown that chil-

settings.

dren who develop resilience have stronger neural connections in areas of the brain associated with emotional regulation. Early interventions that focus on building resilience through supportive relationships, exposure to manageable challenges, and teaching coping mechanisms—can shape more adaptive and stress-resistant individuals.

As educators, it's important to understand that the goal is not to shield children from all difficulties but to equip them with the emotional tools they need to navigate challenges. This nurturing approach aligns with the brain's natural developmental trajectory and helps children build the neural architecture for handling adversity.

Educators are key to translating neuroscience into practice. Understanding how the brain works can inform teaching methods, curriculum design and classroom interactions. Teachers who are trained in brain-based strategies can create learning environments that are stimulating and supportive, promoting both

intellectual and emotional development.

By fostering curiosity, encouraging problemsolving, and creating a positive emotional climate, educators can facilitate the kind of deep, sustained learning that neuroscience shows is possible during these critical early years. The impact of these efforts is profound, shaping not only a child's academic trajectory but also their lifelong capacity for learning, creativity and

(The author, Manish Rastogi, is the CEO of Zee Learn Ltd.)

New era in healthcare, inspired by Ratan Tata

PNS|HYDERABAD

rom seeing a family's heartbreaking struggle to pay for life-saving medications to creating a pharmaceutical empire that is revolutionising the industry, Arjun Deshpande's journey is one of ingenuity, passion and purpose. Come along as we explore the history of Generic Aadhaar!

You started working to address a basic problem in India's pharmaceutical industry when you were just sixteen years old. What was the most difficult thing you had to do as a teenager?

Disrupting the conventional pharmaceutical distribution system, which relied heavily on middlemen, was the most difficult task. When I was sixteen, I noticed a serious problem with India's pharmaceutical sector: the exorbitant cost of medications because of several intermediaries. Knowing that this needed to change, I went to 200–300 pharmacies in an attempt to persuade them to use my direct-to-consumer business strategy. Most were doubtful at first. However, I was not taken seriously. "How can a 16-year-old change an industry that has worked this way for decades?" They found it incomprehensible that a teenager would question a long-standing system. I struggled for two to three months before I was able to persuade one pharmacy. As a result of that success, more retailers began to support the idea over time. Breaking the retailers' deeply rooted attitude was the most difficult task. However, perseverance, conviction and a distinct vision transformed suspicion into trust. And that "yes" was only the first step.

Have you encountered opposition from bigger pharmaceutical firms? If yes, how have you handled it?

Indeed, large corporations that rely on aggressive marketing, med-

ical referrals and branding have historically controlled the pharmaceutical sector. Established businesses resisted when I proposed the Generic Aadhaar business model. which cuts out middlemen to lower the cost of medications. I addressed this, though, by emphasising openness, quality control and public knowledge. My strategy was to inform patients and customers about the effectiveness and affordability of generic medications. It increased public trust and expanded access to affordable healthcare.

Have you had to put forth more effort to build credibil-

ity, or has your young allowed you to disrupt the industry?

In a field as well-established as pharmaceuticals, being young presented both opportunities and difficulties. On the one hand, it gave me the freedom to think creatively and unconventionally without being constrained by social standards. However, at first, credibility was a barrier since many people doubted that someone so young could have

a significant influence. I created an ecosystem with it that allows consumers to obtain the same premium medications at reasonable costs from the same producers who supply global corporations. By cutting out needless intermediaries and lowering exorbitant prices, I guarantee that important medications will always be accessible to the average person.

Do you view yourself as spear-heading a new social entrepreneurship movement in light of India's employment crisis?

By producing micro-entrepreneurs, the concept not only lowers the cost of medications but also gives people more control. One of the most rewarding parts of my journey has been this! Allowing people to operate their own pharmacy with no financial outlay has significantly improved their lives, especially in light of India's employment issues. I'm most surprised by the initiative's overwhelming impact, which includes witnessing entire towns gain access to inexpensive



healthcare, young entrepreneurs become financially independent and families improve their standard of living. This strengthens my conviction that companies can contribute to society while still being

What measures have you done to guarantee that people trust your medications?

Despite scientific proof that generic medications are just as effective as branded ones, many continue to be skeptical because of ignorance and false beliefs about their quality. I have addressed these issues in a number of ways. Through awareness efforts, I also concentrate on educating consumers, pointing them that generic medications are far less expensive than branded ones while still containing the same active components.

Have you discussed healthcare changes with legislators?
Affordable healthcare is a crucial

topic that is frequently debated in policy circles, but when efforts are put into practice, genuine change occurs. Businesses like Generic Aadhaar, in my opinion, have the power to bring about systemic change in areas where governments struggle to implement policies. Our goal is in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji's ambition to make medications accessible and inexpensive for all citizens, includinexpensive for all citizens, including those living in remote areas. Recognising the need for creative solutions that close the gap between affordable and high-quality healthcare, government agencies have taken the initiative to promote this cause. Droupadi Murmu madam, the President of India, commended Generic Aadhaar for its substantial role in ensuring that life-saving medications are accessible to the general public at notably reduced costs. She recognised our efforts to provide millions of families with access to necessary medications without sacrificing quality and to lessen the financial burden of



healthcare. We are demonstrating that access to affordable healthcare is not only a dream but a reality that we are constructing daily, changing lives all throughout the nation, by collaborating with the government and utilising innovative business

What is the most important thing you've learned from

Ratan Tata, your mentor?
Among the most important things I've learnt from Ratan Tata sir is that business is about more than simply making money; it's about

actually changing the world. His dedication to moral leadership and creativity has served as an inspiration to me. My first TEDx talk, which focused on my goal of lowering the cost of medications by cutting out intermediaries, went viral, marking a significant turning point in my journey with Generic Aadhaar. When Ratan Tata sir saw it, he was moved by the reason I was working. My life changed when I got a call shortly after that saying he wanted to meet me. More significantly, his mentorship influenced my leadership style, but his faith in future.

my mission also gave me confidence. He has always dreamed of a healthcare system in which the exorbitant cost of necessary medications does not prevent anyone from accessing them. Under his direction, I am using Generic Aadhaar to make this goal a reality and provide everyone with access to reasonably priced healthcare. I'm determined to uphold his legacy of moral business practices and social impact as I develop further, making sure that high-quality healthcare reaches the people who need it most.

You saw an old man who was having trouble paying for cancer treatment, so you began Generic Aadhaar. Do you ever think back on that moment now that you have thousands of consumers?

That was a pivotal event in my life. I came to the realisation that affordability should not be a privilege but rather a right after witnessing someone who was having dif-ficulty paying for life-saving medications. Since then, my goals have expanded to include changing healthcare accessible more broadly as well as creating a profitable company. I feel even more obligated to advance now that it is growing quickly and enabling micro-entrepreneurs. I now see this as a movement to transform healthcare in India and abroad, not just a company.

Do you anticipate growing internationally as you scale further, especially in nations like the U.S. where the cost of medications

is similarly high?
Indeed, growing internationally is undoubtedly a goal of ours. The high cost of medications is a problem in many nations, including the US, and my strategy of lowering the cost of high-quality generic medications can have a big worldwide impact. We are now working to fortify our position in India, but I envision it helping to lower the cost of medications globally in the

I am not retiring from ODI format: Rohit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Dubai

ndia skipper Rohit Sharma has dismissed the speculations about his career after winning the ICC Champions Trophy (CT), saying that he is not quitting the ODI format anytime soon. Since the tour of Australia, speculations were rife about Rohit's future in the team as well as his position as captain but a match-winning 76 in the final against New Zealand on Sunday has given him a new lease of life.

"I am not going to retire from this (ODI) format. Going forward please don't spread rumours," Rohit said at the post-match press conference after India beat New Zealand by four wickets to clinch the trophy. He was expectedly quizzed about his future plans and he said that things will remain as it is.

"No future plans. Jo ho raha hain, woh chalta jayega (Whatever is happening will keep continuing)," Rohit added.

Rohit said his aggressive approach in the Power Play segment was a decision taken with a specific aim in mind.

The Mumbai man flew off the blocks in the first 10 overs making 49 before eventually getting out for a 83-ball 76.

"I haven't done anything different today as I have been doing in the last 3-4 matches. I know how important it is to make runs in Power Play because we have seen that tributing to the team's win as a batter was after 10 overs, it becomes very difficult a very satisfying experience. "You get a lot



when the field spreads and spinners come." The nature of the Dubai pitch too played its part in him adopting a quick fire approach to batting.

It becomes tough also because the pitch is already slow. So, it is very important for you to take chances from the top.

"I pick the bowler and where I can charge him and where I can play the shot. In that, you may not see that many big runs. Today after that 10 overs, I changed my game a bit. I had to play for a long time," he added.

However, Rohit admitted that con-

of happiness when you win a match and you make a contribution in it, it feels even better. I made a lot of contributions in the 2019 World Cup, but we did not win.

"So, there was no fun in it. Even if you make a sudden run and win the match, you get more satisfaction and happiness. So, I think it was very important for me to do something and contribute and keep the team in a winning position," he noted.

The demotion of KL Rahul to No. 6 has been discussed threadbare in recent times, but Rohit said the management is delighted to see the wicketkeeper batter making consistent efforts in his new role.

"It is very important for everyone to

contribute in their own way. When we dis cussed KL's batting position, we discussed quite deeply about how calm he is when he is batting. The pressure doesn't get to

"We wanted that calmness in the middle order. Also, we wanted to use a lefthander (Axar Patel) in the middle. That actually worked out in both ways for us," he said. Rohit said Rahul's contributions have been important for the team despite not scoring any big knocks.

"KL has been doing a lot of challenging work for the team for so many years now. I am very happy with how he managed to pull through this tournament and bat it in the pressure situation — both in the semifinals and this game as well.

The contribution may not be 70-80, but those 30-40s are very important for the team. When you are chasing, it can get tough. But with KL being there, we know that he has got that mind where he keeps himself calm and keeps the dressing room also very calm," he explained.

The 37-year-old also praised Shreyas Iyer for playing significant knocks from No. 4. "He is very, very important in that middle phase for us. The partnerships with all the batters who were batting with him...That semifinal against Australia, his alliance with Virat was very important. Even against Pakistan and New Zealand, the league game that we played

We learned from past defeats in ICC knock-out games: Kohli

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Dubai

uperstar Virat Kohli says lessons learned from tough defeats in past ICC knock-out games have the paved the way for India's second major title in less than 12 months.

India won the T20 World Cup in June last year and on Sunday, they lifted the Champions Trophy for the third time.

It was a total team effort from Rohit Sharma's men over the course of their campaign in the UAE.

"It's been a long time since we've had a Champions Trophy, and the format is really good. This was our aim. After a tough tour of Australia, we came here and won a big tournament, which has once again boosted our confidence as a team," Kohli told the host broadcaster.

'Throughout the tournament, different players stepped up in different matches. There were moments in past tournaments where we weren't able to finish games or capitalise on crucial situations. But this time, we learned from those experiences."

The experience of Rohit and K L Rahul towards the end got India over the line in the final against New Zealand.

That's why you back experienced players - they have faced these moments before, and when you apply those learn-

ings and work hard, you get a chance to turn things around," Kohli said.

"The way KL (Rahul) finished in the last two matches is a testament to that experience. When you've been in those situations before and couldn't cross the line, there's always a desire to get another opportunity and overcome it. And that's exactly what we did."

India were by far the best team in the combination. They picked as many as five spinners and that worked well for them on the slow wickets of Dubai. In the playing eleven, India had four spin options.

One thing we kept emphasising throughout the tournament was focusing on our skills - how good we are, not how good the opposition is. Despite all the challenges, this is why you play the game - for these big tournaments.

Manchester United draws 1-1 with Arsenal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Manchester

stunning double save from David Raya denied Bruno Fernandes a dramatic late winner for Manchester United against Arsenal in the Premier

Raya's heroics salvaged a 1-1 draw for Arsenal at Old Trafford but its Premier League title looks all but out of reach with runaway leader Liverpool 15 points clear at the top of the standings.

"I don't want to say that, but today the frustration is that we haven't won our game. We know the urgency and we are obligated to win every single match," Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said after watching his team drop points for a third straight

league game. And it could have been worse for second-placed Arsenal if not for Raya's brilliance. In added time the goalkeeper flung himself in front of Fernandes' effort from close range and then leapt to his feet to claw the spinning ball away just before it crossed the line.

Chelsea moved up to fourth in the standings after a 1-0 win against Leicester and Tottenham battled back from two goals down to draw 2-2 with Bournemouth.

United fight

After fan protests in the street, United's players produced one of their most spirit- it finished in eighth place. It is currently ed performances of the season to draw with

Arsenal. Thousands of United supporters marched in unity to protest the club's ownership before kickoff. But on the field Ruben Amorim's team produced a unified display of its own.

Fernandes fired home a free kick from around 20 yards in first-half added time and only a slew of missed chances stopped United from extending its lead after the break, with Joshua Zirkzee and Noussair Mazraoui forcing saves from Raya.

Arsenal leveled through Declan Rice in the 74th, but needed Raya again to prevent Fernandes late on.

Amorim accepted that United, which ras forced to cede possession for much of the game, will have to be more adventurous if he is to achieve his goal of returning the 20-time champion to the summit f English and European soccer.

And he believes there's another way to ring the good times back to Old Trafford. What I can say is we need more Brunos, that is clear," the United head coach

"Not just the quality and the character, he makes some mistakes, but in this league the availability is so important and he is so decisive with and without the ball."

The draw moved United up to 14th in the 20-team standings on 34 points. Last season the once dominant United endured its worst league campaign in 34 years when eight points off 10th-placed Fulham.

Chelsea rises

Marc Cucurella struck a 60th-minute winner against Leicester at Stamford Bridge after Cole Palmer's first-half penalty was

Victory boosted Chelsea's chances of a return to the Champions League next season, moving it ahead of four-time defending champion Manchester City, which lost -0 to Nottingham Forest a day earlier.

The 2021 Champions League winner has not qualified for European club soccer's top

competition for the last two years. But Enzo Maresca's team took full advantage of City's latest loss by edging out relegation-fighting Leicester and climbing into the top four.

Cucurella's long-range effort was drilled low into the corner to beat Leicester goalkeeper Mads Hermansen

Earlier, Hermansen had been the visitors' hero when diving low to save Palmer's penalty in the 22nd. It was the first time Palmer had failed to score from the spot in the league in 13 attempts. His 100% record from his previous 12 was a league record, according to the competition's stats provider Opta.

Spurs fightback

Son Heung-min's late penalty completed an unlikely comeback after Champions League-chasing Bournemouth had dominated the chances at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

Rohit exceptional knock took the match away from us, says Mitchell Santner

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Dubai

ew Zealand skipper Mitchell Santner admitted that his Indian counterpart Rohit Sharma's exceptional knock was the difference between the two teams in the Champions Trophy final, and termed the four-wicket defeat as a "bittersweet end."

Rohit made a fluent 76 off 83 balls as India chased down 252 in a close finish here on Sunday.

"I think the way Rohit Sharma played kind of took it away from us, I think, obviously, India here understood the conditions in Dubai perfectly and played some good cricket. Yeah I guess it's kind of bittersweet at the end," said Santner in the post-match press conference.

Santner said he was "proud" of his side despite the surrender in the title clash.

"Î think we came up against a good side in the final. We challenged at times throughout this game, which was pleasing and I think there were probably a couple of small moments where we let it get awav from us.

"But yeah, incredibly proud of this group the way we've kind of gone about it throughout this tournament," he added.

Santner said the Kiwis were prepared to tackle the DICS pitch and conditions. which were vastly different from Lahore,



the venue of their semifinal win over South Africa. "I guess we just keep coming up against India, which is always a challenge. We knew the conditions were going to be slightly different again from the semifinal, but we were ready for that.

performance, and we took India deep. But guess there's always a few moments in every game, let alone every final, where you can potentially look back at," he said. Santner also conceded that they missed

Matt Henry after he was ruled out of the

"I thought we still put in a pretty good

Pacer Henry was the highest wickettaker in the event with 10 scalps. "He's an outstanding bowler. We've seen

he seems to be able to nip it on wickets that don't look like they should nip so I guess we missed that today.

"I feel for Matty - he's a massive team man and he looked pretty distraught. You know, we just kind of said, like, let's do it for him. He tried everything he could to be ready for this game and unfortunately for us he wasn't quite there," he noted.

It required lot of preparation: KI Rahul after excelling in new role



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Dubai

L Rahul is delighted after successfully migrating to No. 6 batting slot, and termed it as a result of his unrelenting "preparation" and improving his game constantly.

Rahul, who usually bat No. 5, was pushed down a position lower in the Champions Trophy, and made 140 runs in four innings here.

"It's really pleasing for me. The work that I'm putting in to different roles requires a lot of preparation, work outside the cricket field, thinking about how I need to take each game and how I need to perform in different situations and watch some of the players that bat at 5, 6 and how they've been successful," said Rahul following India's Champions Trophy triumph on Sunday.

Rahul said he was happy to take up that

new responsibility for the team. "I've been taught from a very early age by my coaches that cricket is a team game and whatever the team requires of you, you need to be able to accept that and find a way to put in performances for the team and understand what your role is, understand what the responsibility is, understand what it takes to be successful batting in different positions," he added. True to those words, Rahul adapted well to the situation in the semifinal against Australia and in the final against New Zealand, pro-

ducing small yet significant knocks. The Bengaluru man made an unbeaten 42 against the Aussies while his collected 32 not out helped India come out of a it worked," he added.

tight chase against the Kiwis successfully. Overall, he made just 140 runs but he made it at a strike-rate of 98, indicating the impact those runs had on the course of the game. Skipper Rohit Sharma indicated as

much. "The pressure doesn't get to him with that calmness, we wanted that calmness in the middle. I'm very, very happy with how he managed to pull this tournament and batted in the pressure situation, both in semifinals and this game as well. "The contribution may not be 70-80, but those 30-40s are a very, very important one," said Rohit. Now, Rahul has a Champions Trophy to show for his efforts, and he was pleased as punch. "I'm very happy at the moment, ICC victories are not so easy to get. It's my first run so I'm very happy over the moon and really happy with the way we've played this entire tournament and it's been a complete team effort," he noted. Rahul was an assured presence behind the stumps as well, pulling off important stumping and catches. The 32-year-old was chuffed because 'keeping was not an easy task in these con-

ditions where spinners dominated. "It's not something very new and the role of a wicketkeeper batsman that I'm doing here in the Indian team, I think from 2019 or 2020. I do wicket keeping in IPL as well. "But I think this is the most challenging place that I've kept wickets in. I worked really hard and I have to mention our fielding coach Dilip sir also, he worked very hard with me...his tips and whatever he noticed about my keeping, so

Pakistan miffed at no representation at closing ceremony of Champions Trophy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Karachi

→he ICC's failure to invite a Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) official on stage for the closing ceremony of the Champions Trophy has not gone down well with the tournament host.

A source said that the PCB's chief executive officer Sumair Ahmed, who was also the director of the tournament, was present at the venue but was not invited for the ceremony. Pakistan hosted an ICC event after 29 years with all India games scheduled in Dubai as part of the competition's hybrid model.

"PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi didn't go to Dubai because of prior commitments as federal minister for interior but the PCB CEO was sent to represent Pakistan at the

said. He said for some reason or misunderstanding, the PCB official was not called on the podium, from where ICC chairman Jay Shah, BCCI president Roger Binny and secretary Devajit Saikia gave away the medals, trophies, and jackets to the players.

The source added that perhaps the CEO might not have been able to communicate properly to the ICC people responsible for organising the final ceremony and was left out. Pakistan as hosts of the Champions Trophy, thus, didn't have any representative on the podium.

The PCB is expected to take up the matter with the ICC as to why its CEO was not invited on stage for the closing ceremony. Meanwhile, former fast bowler Shoaib

final and closing presentation," the source Akhtar also questioned the absence of PCB officials from the post-match presentation ceremony after the final of the tournament. "India has won the Champions Trophy

but I noticed there was no representative from the PCB after the final. Pakistan was hosting the Champions Trophy. I do not understand it," Akhtar said in a video posted on social 'X'.

"Why was nobody (from PCB) there to present the trophy? It is beyond me. It is something to think about. This is the world stage, you should have been here. Feeling very down to see that," Akhtar added. BCCI president Binny presented the white jackets to India and the medals to match officials, while ICC chairman Shah handed the trophy to Rohit Sharma and gave the medals to the Indian players.

IPL to ban tobacco, alcohol advertising

Government asks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi

he Health Ministry has instructed the Indian Premier League to ban all forms of tobacco and alcohol promotions, including surrogate advertisements, during the tournament beginning March 22. In a letter to IPL chairman Arun Dhumal, Director General of Health Services Atul Goel said cricket players, who are role models to the youth of India, should not be directly or indirectly connected to any form of

tobacco or alcohol advertising. "IPL should strictly implement the regulations banning all forms of tobacco/alcohol advertising, including surrogate advertisements, within the stadium promises where the games and related IPL games/events are held as well as during telecast sessions on national tele-

vision," Goel wrote. 'The sale of tobacco/alcohol products in all affiliated events and sports facilities.

"Discourage promotion of sportspersons (including commentators) who directly or indirectly endorse products directly or indirectly linked to alcohol or tobacco," the letter stated.

Majority of the Indian population is glued to television sets when the IPL is on, making the tournament a darling of the advertisers. "India is experiencing a sig-nificant burden of Non Communicable disease Cardiovascular diseases, Cancer, Chronic Lung Disease, Diabetes, Hypertension etc. Which accounts for

more than 70 per cent deaths annually. 'Tobacco and alcohol use are key risk factors for NCDs. We rank second in tobacco-related deaths worldwide; with nearly 14 lakh annual deaths while alcohol is the most common psychoactive substance used by Indians," Goel said fur-

He added that cricketers have a moral obligation to promote public health.

"Cricket players are role models for the youngsters for promoting a healthy, active lifestyle, IPL being the largest sports platform in the country, has a social and moral obligation to promote public health and support health initiatives of the government," added Goel.

Harry Brook pulls out of IPL deal with DC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA London

ngland batter Harry Brook faces a two-year ban from the IPL after **⊿**pulling out of his deal with Delhi Capitals ahead of the tournament beginning March 22. Brook, who has made himself unavailable for the second straight season, apologised "unreservedly" to the franchise and its supporters. "I have made the very difficult decision to pull out of the upcoming IPL. I apologise unreservedly to the Delhi Capitals and their supporters," Brook wrote on social media.

"It is a really important time for England cricket and I want to fully commit to preparing for the upcoming series. "In order to do this, I need time to

recharge after the busiest period in my career to date. I know not everyone will understand, and I don't expect them to, but I have to do what I believe is right and playing for my country remains my priority and focus." England will play India in a home Test series in June, which will be followed by the much-anticipated Ashes from November to January.

The 26-year-old Brook had earlier withdrawn from the 2024 edition of IPL



following the death of his grandmother. picked at the auction, makes himself Any foreign player who missed the IPL after getting picked at the auction faces two-year ban from the IPL unless he is injured. "Any (overseas) player who reg-

unavailable before the start of the season will get banned from participating in the IPL/IPL auction for two seasons," as per the BCCI document shared with isters for (an) auction and, after getting teams last year.

tollywood

Sankalp Reddy of *Ghazi* fame joins hands with Gopichand for a period drama



pirector Sankalp Reddy, known for his National Award-winning film *Ghazi* (2017), is set to begin shooting his new film with Gopichand. The film was officially launched on Monday with a puja ceremony, and production will commence soon.

Like his previous films, Sankalp is crafting this project as a period drama. He made a mark with *Ghazi*, a war film set in the sea, followed by *Antariksham* (2018), a space-based drama, and IB71, a Hindi spy thriller based on the 1971 Indian Airlines hijacking. His projects are known for their distinct and unconventional narratives.

This untitled film, produced by Chittoori Srinivas, aims to bring to life a forgotten chapter of Indian history. Set in the 7th century, the film explores an untold historical event with rich cultural depth and period-accurate details.

untold historical event with rich cultural depth and period-accurate details.

Gopichand will be seen in a neverbefore-seen role, showcasing his versatility as an actor. Sankalp, known for his technical brilliance, is assembling a skilled team to ensure high-quality visuals and production value.

"The shoot will start in Hyderabad, followed by a schedule in Kashmir," Sankalp Reddy confirmed. The female lead is yet to be finalised, with casting expected to take place in May.



VISHNU MANCHU'S KANNAPPA GENERATES POSITIVE BUZZ AHEAD OF RELEASE

vishnu Manchu's highly anticipated film *Kannappa* is gaining positive response from various quarters. The actor plays the titular role, while Preeti Mukundhan stars as his love interest.

As part of the film's promotional strategy, the makers release new content every Monday. This week, they unveiled a romantic song, featuring Vishnu and Preeti, choreographed by Prabhu Deva.

graphed by Prabhu Deva.

According to sources, the makers recently held a private screening for industry insiders, who gave rave reviews.

"The last half-hour of the film is a visual spectacle and will leave audiences spellbound," a source

Directed by Mukesh Kumar to expectations.

Singh, the film was primarily shot in New Zealand, with key sequences involving Prabhas and other actors filmed in India.

The film boasts an ensemble cast, including Prabhas, Mohanlal, and Akshay Kumar. Akshay plays Lord Shiva, while Prabhas appears as Rudra. Vishnu has previously stated that Prabhas did the film without charging any fee, as a gesture of friendship.

Scheduled for release on April 25, *Kannappa* will hit screens in multiple languages, including Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Kannada and

Malayalam.
Vishnu has already kick-started nationwide promotions, expressing confidence that the film will live up



Actress Abhinaya gets engaged to her longtime beau

Popular Telugu and Tamil actress
Abhinaya has announced her engagement to her longtime boyfriend. She took to Instagram on Sunday, sharing a picture of their intertwined hands with the caption:
"Ring the bells, count the blessings – forever starts today!"

She did not reveal her fiancé's name or photo. Rumours previously linked Abhinaya to actor Vishal, but she consistently denied them. Despite being hearing and speech impaired, she has delivered outstanding performances in films like Seethamma Vakitlo Sirimalle Chettu, Dhruva and Raju Gari Gadhi 2. In interviews, Abhinaya had mentioned that she was in a long-term relationship with her childhood friend. Now, with this official announcement, all speculation has been put to rest.



Rajamouli's team furious over leaked footage from Mahesh Babu's film

espite implementing stringent security measures, leaks continue to emerge from the sets of SS Rajamouli and Mahesh Babu's upcoming untitled film. The team is currently shooting in Koraput forest, Odisha, where a video from the set recently surfaced online. The leaked footage has been widely circulated on social media and television channels, leaving

the filmmakers frustrated.
Since the film's launch,
Rajamouli has ensured tight
security at the shooting locations, preventing unauthorized access. Even cast and
crew members have been
required to sign non-disclosure agreements (NDAs), barring them from revealing any
details. Despite these precautions, information has still
found its way into the public

domain.

While the production team remains tight-lipped, reports suggest that Priyanka Chopra plays a key role alongside Mahesh Babu and Malayalam star Prithviraj Sukumaran is also part of the cast. According

to a source, Tamil superstar Chiyaan Vikram is also rumored to have an important

role in the film. The leak has infuriated Rajamouli, who has demanded answers from his team regarding how the video was recorded and released. In response, the crew has now intensified security protocols, reportedly banning mobile phones on set to prevent further leaks. The team is currently working to remove the leaked footage from online platforms. Meanwhile, Rajamouli remains determined to maintain secrecv around the project, ensuring no further disruptions in the film's production.



POOJA HEGDE STUNS RETRO TEAM WITH HER TAMIL DUBBING SKILLS

audiences with a new milestone in her career—dubbing in her own voice for her character in director Karthik Subbaraj's highly anticipated action film, Retro. Starring Suriya in the lead role, the film has already created a buzz among fans, and this latest update has only added to the excitement.

excitement.
The film, produced by Stone Bench Films in collaboration with Suriya's 2D
Entertainment, has been building anticipation through a series of comic strips featuring behind-the-scenes moments. On Monday, the production house released its fifth comic strip titled "EP1005: Vaazhga Tamizh! Challenge Accepted! Pooja Hegde Dubs for Herself" on its X (formerly Twitter) timeline, revealing the actress's dedication to perfecting her Tamil dialogue delivery. The journey of casting Pooja Hegde for *Retro* was not a straightforward one.

According to the production house, several names were considered for the female lead, but it was Pooja who ultimately stood out. "When director Karthik Subbara was searching for a heroine, multiple names were suggested. But when Pandiyaa saw Pooja Hegde, he immediately confirmed. 'This is the girl we've been looking for!' The only concern was whether she could deliver dialogues fluently in Tamil. But Pooia. known for taking on challenges childhood, confidently assured the team that she

would overcome this hurdle as well," the production team revealed.

Once finalised for the role, Pooja underwent intense Tamil language training to perfect her dialogue delivery. Her dedication was evident, as she managed to flawlessly deliver even lengthy

delivery. Her dedication
was evident, as she
managed to flawlessly
deliver even lengthy
monologues,
impressing the entire
team.
While Pooja
Heade has

been part of several North Indian films, seem of several North Indian films, seem of several South Indian films, seem of several North Indian films, seem of s

"After an impressive look test, she

words," the production house shared. This announcement has thrilled her fans, who are eager to witness her authentic and natural performance on the big screen. Apart from Suriva and Pooia Heade. Retro boasts a powerful ensemble cast, including Malayalam actors Joju George and Jayaram, as well as Tamil actor Karunakaran. The film promises a thrilling cinematic experience, packed with highoctane action sequences choreographed by stunt master Kecha Khamphakdee. With Karthik Subbaraj's signature storytelling, powerful performances, and stunning visuals, Retro is shaping up to be a must-watch action spectacle. The film is set for a grand theatrical release on Mav 1. 2025

began her daily Tamil training and surprised

everyone by delivering even lengthy

monologue sequences flawlessly. There

were plenty of fun moments on set, with

the team challenging her with tougher Tamil