



Stopped sale of 14 products
whose licences were

suspended

5

MODI TO

MEET ECONOMISTS
AHEAD OF UNION BUDGET

8




'Securing financing was
incredibly tough in Kalki
2898 AD'


P12



QUOTE OF THE DAY



It is surprising that Jagan lost despite implementing numerous schemes for the poor. Securing 40 per cent of the votes is no small feat. If Pawan Kalyan had contested separately, the results might have been different. Surprisingly, Ketireddy, who was consistently in touch with the public, was defeated. Sharmila was a tool against Jagan, and there was nothing more to it.



- K. Taraka Rama Rao, BRSMILA

P4

DON'T MISS...

Saikanth Varma appointed...

In a significant administrative move, CM Saikanth Varma has been appointed as the Managing Director of the Andhra Pradesh Township and Infrastructure Development Corporation (APTIDCO). Varma, who previously served as Commissioner of the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC), will now lead APTIDCO in a bid to boost urban and infrastructure development across the State. This appointment is part of a strategic effort to enhance the efficiency and impact of infrastructure...

-PAGE: 3

Survey on risk profile of glacial...

Four states and a Union territory in the Himalayas will commence ground surveys to determine the vulnerability of glacial lakes after the monsoon season, officials said on Tuesday. A glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) in Sikkim in October 2023 has prompted this initiative, they said. Monitoring systems will also be established to provide crucial information about GLOFs, the officials said. "Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir are setting up...

-PAGE: 5

ONGC to invest Rs 2 Lcr to meet net...

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) will invest about Rs 2 lakh crore in setting up renewable energy sites and green hydrogen plants and cutting gas flaring to zero to achieve its 2038 net-zero carbon emission goal. The company, which produces about two-thirds of India's crude oil and about 58 per cent of natural gas, on Tuesday released a 200-page document, detailing its path to achieving net zero emissions. It listed clean energy projects even as it looks to boost its hydrocarbon output...

-PAGE: 8

Bumrah, Mandhana named ICC Player...

Hero of India's victorious T20 World Cup campaign, Jasprit Bumrah added another feather to his hat when he was on Tuesday named the 'ICC Men's Player of the Month for June'. It was double delight for India as women's team vice-captain Smriti Mandhana was also named the 'Women's Player of the Month' by the global body. Mandhana won her first ICC Women's Player of the Month after playing a starring role in India's sweep over South Africa in the ODI series last month. Bumrah came out on top in the...

-SPORTS

SC adjourns KRMB case to Aug 20

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Supreme Court has taken up the matter of bringing the projects in the Krishna River catchment area under the purview of the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB). Andhra Pradesh had earlier filed a petition against the use of water from Srisailem and Nagarjuna Sagar projects for power generation and other purposes without permission. The petition was heard by a bench headed by Justice Abhay S Okha and Justice Augustine George Masi. Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhatia told the court that they would file a fresh affidavit after taking appropriate instructions from the Centre.

Continued on Page 2

Jagan ruined power sector: CM

Releases White Paper, says 98% tariff increase hit poorest consumers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has criticised the previous YSRCP government for imposing excessive charges on consumers, including True-up, Fuel Surcharge, and Electricity Duty. He claimed these charges resulted in a 45 per cent excess burden, affecting 53 lakh people and leading to a 98 per cent tariff increase for the poorest power consumers using up to 50 units.

At a media conference on Tuesday at the Secretariat in Amaravati, Naidu released a white paper on the power sector. He revealed that the debt of power companies increased by 79 per cent during the YSRCP's five-year rule. The Chief Minister emphasised the need for tariff control and expressed plans to seek Central government assistance to revive the power sector.

Naidu blamed the previous government for causing over Rs 1.29 lakh crore in losses to the power sector.

He highlighted a tariff burden of Rs 32,166 crore on consumers, an increase in AP power utilities' debts by Rs 49,596 crore, and losses due to inefficient governance amounting to Rs 47,741 crore.

2



● Naidu blames the previous government for Rs 1.29 lakh crore in power sector losses and Rs 32,166 crore in tariff burden on consumers.

● Delays in commissioning power projects and

additional costs from short-term power purchases major issues.

● CM slams the previous government for stripping incentives, renegotiating PPAs, and causing legal challenges.

● He emphasises the need for power sector reforms 3.0 to address losses, restore investor confidence, and provide reliable, affordable power.

● CM notes the rise in power utilities' debt from Rs 62,826 crore to Rs 1.12 lakh crore and an additional burden of Rs 10,892 crore from high-interest short-term borrowings.

● Outstanding receivables increased from Rs 12,945 crore to Rs 52,091 crore during the last five years.

ANNUALISED LIABILITY RISE DURING YSRCP GOVT WAS JUST 7.28%: KAKANI

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In response to Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu's white paper on the power sector, former agriculture minister Kakani Govardhan Reddy highlighted the fiscal performance of the previous YSRCP government compared to its predecessor, the TDP government. During the YSRCP's tenure (2019-24), the annualised liability growth in the power sector was 7.28%, significantly

lower than the 24% growth rate during the TDP period (2014-19).

Govardhan detailed that under the YSRCP, the power sector's debt rose from Rs 86,215.46 crore to Rs 1,22,518 crore, including payables to power generators. In contrast, the TDP government saw a more pronounced increase in liabilities, with the debt rising from Rs 26,658.27 crore to Rs 64,674.50 crore, and payables growing to Rs 21,540.96 crore.

Watery grave for AP boy in US



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A pall of gloom descended over Chityala village in the East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh, as Gadde Sai Surya Avinash, a local resident, died after accidentally falling into a waterfall in the USA. The Consulate General of India in New York reported that Avinash drowned on Saturday, July 7, at Barberville Falls in Albany, New York.

Extending condolences to the deceased student's family and friends, the Consulate noted that it is providing all necessary assistance to repatriate Avinash's mortal remains to India.

A relative from Avinash's hometown, Chityala, shared that he had gone to the US 18 months ago and was nearing the completion of his MS degree. He said that the Telugu Association of North America (TANA) is facilitating the repatriation of his body, which is expected to reach Chityala by Friday.

2 workers critically hurt in boiler blast at NTTPS

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Coming close on the heels of the Ultratech Cement factory in Budavada in the NTR district, another accident took place at the Dr Narla Tata Rao Thermal Power Station (NTTPS) in Ibrahimpattanam. In this incident, a permanent employee, Chakradhar, and a contract worker, Appa Rao, were severely injured. The injured individuals were taken to Andhra Hospital in Gollapudi for treatment.

The accident occurred at the NTTPS 5th unit on Monday at midnight. While an employee and a contract worker were repairing the stalled operation of the boiler, the



Labour Minister V Subhash and former minister Devineni Uma Maheswara Rao talking to the victims' family members at the Andhra Hospital in Gollapudi, near Vijayawada, on Tuesday.

doors suddenly opened, and a fly ash fire broke out. As a result, Chakradhar and Appa Rao were severely injured.

AP Cabinet meeting on July 16

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu will be held on July 16 in the Secretariat at Velagapudi in Amaravati. The Cabinet meeting will discuss important issues including Super Six assurances of Telugu Desam and Jana Sena's joint election manifesto.

Chief Secretary to AP Government Neerabh Kumar Prasad issued a circular regarding the Cabinet meeting of the Council of Ministers to be held on Tuesday.

The Cabinet meeting will discuss the vote on account propos-

als and is likely to give consent to it. Already the government issued instructions to all departments to send budget proposals and will discuss them in the meeting.

As one month passed with the formation of the Telugu Desam government, the Cabinet is going to discuss the implementation of Super Six election assurance mainly about the implementation of free RTC bus travel to women.

Earlier minister for Transport, Mandipalli Ramprasad Reddy stated that the free bus poll promise will be fulfilled in a month hence the Cabinet meeting will focus on the free bus scheme.

According to the employees, the accident occurred in the fifth unit due to a lack of safety measures. Trade union leaders expressed anger at the management.

Meanwhile, the Minister for Labour, Factories, Boilers, and Insurance Medical Services, Vasamsetti Subhash, and former minister Devineni Uma Maheswara Rao visited the victims at Andhra Hospital in Gollapudi. They inquired with the doctors about the health condition of the injured.

Minister Subhash assured the victims' families that the government would support them. He also directed the concerned officials to provide the necessary medical treatment.



AP govt accepts Praveen Prakash's VRS request

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has granted the request of senior IAS officer Praveen Prakash (AP: 1994) for voluntary retirement from the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) effective September 30, 2024. Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad issued Government Order RT No. 1207 on Tuesday, approving the retirement request submitted by Praveen Prakash on June 25, 2024.

Praveen Prakash's request for voluntary retirement was made in accordance with sub-rule (2) of Rule 16 of the All India Service (Death-cum-Retirement Benefits) Rules, 1958, and was based on personal grounds.

After a thorough review, the State government has approved his request, allowing him to retire from service on the specified date.

Bhogapuram Airport lifeline of north AP: Union Min

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

Union Minister of Civil Aviation, Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu, has underscored the crucial significance of the Bhogapuram International Greenfield Airport for the North Andhra districts, heralding it as the region's lifeline. In his inaugural visit post assuming office, Minister Naidu urged the construction company to expedite the airport's completion, setting an ambitious target of mid-2026, six months ahead of the initial December deadline.

Minister Naidu assured that all necessary permissions from central government departments would be granted swiftly, emphasising the government's full cooperation to ensure the project's timely completion. Highlighting the airport's potential, he noted that while Visakhapatnam Airport currently serves 28 lakh

All necessary permissions from central government departments would be granted swiftly, emphasising the government's full cooperation to ensure the project's timely completion.



passengers annually, the new Bhogapuram Airport is projected to handle 50 lakh passengers by 2026, with a capacity of 60 lakh passengers.

Beyond passenger services, the airport will feature a state-of-the-art cargo terminal capable of handling 50,000 tonnes of cargo. The establish-

ment of a Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) department aims to position Bhogapuram International Airport as the premier airport in the country. To enhance accessibility, comprehensive road connectivity plans are also underway. During his visit, Minister Naidu was warmly

received by local leaders, public representatives, district officials, and GMR Corporation representatives. He conducted meetings with key officials, including Union Minister and Vizianagaram MP Kalishetti Appalanaidu, Nelli Marla MLA Lokam Nagamadhavi, Vijayanagaram

MLA Pusapati Gajapathiraju, District Collector Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, and Joint Collector K. Karthik, to review the airport's construction progress.

District Collector Dr. Ambedkar and National Highways officials briefed the Minister on the construction of the trumpet interchanges and the airport connection road from the National Highway. Minister Naidu then inspected the airport terminal building and runway works, reviewing a detailed presentation on the project's progress.

The visit was also attended by Revenue Divisional Officer M.V. Suryakala, GMR Chief Executive Mammoji Roy, Project Head BHA Ramaraju, and other key stakeholders, reflecting the high level of coordination and commitment to transforming Bhogapuram International Airport into a regional hub of connectivity and economic growth.

Jagan needs to put YSRCP back on track

Andhra Pradesh's former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy needs to take in his stride YSRCP's humiliating defeat in the 2024 Assembly elections, come out of his frustration at not being able to marginalize his bête noire and TDP president Chandrababu Naidu, and, more importantly, put his own party back on track, considering that it won nearly 40 per cent of the vote share, despite securing only 11 seats against the dream target of 175.

In the wake of YSRCP's poll debacle, there is talk that most leaders and cadre of the party consider Jagan to be an eccentric personality disinclined to accept his failure. His complacency about retaining power solely on the strength of his party's welfare programmes has made the defeat all the

more bitter. For, having bagged 86 per cent of the seats in the AP Legislative Assembly (winning 151 out of 175 seats) in the last Assembly polls, he ruled with an iron hand, creating a wedge between the cadre and party leadership. Things came to such a pass that almost all the contesting candidates were made to believe this time that, regardless of their individual performance, they would win, thanks to their chief minister's track record. This situation was painful at least to those leaders who are otherwise capable of attracting votes on the strength of their own performance. Thus, lack of coordination and unexpected anti-incumbency factor proved costly for YSRCP.

Jagan perhaps thought he

In the wake of YSRCP's poll debacle, there is talk that most leaders and cadre of the party consider Jagan to be an eccentric personality disinclined to accept his failure. His complacency about retaining power solely on the strength of his party's welfare programmes has made the defeat all the more bitter.

could retain power in the recent AP Assembly just as his father late Dr.YS Rajasekhara Reddy had expected in the 2009 elections in the combined Andhra Pradesh. But the situation had become very hard for YSR to retain power. The Congress had won 180+ seats in the Assembly (out of 294 seats) in the 2004 elections. Severe anti-incumbency factor made then chief minister

N.Chandrababu Naidu a loser, though he had handed out huge doles just the before elections. "It's a rebellion of the common man," was how YSR had summed up the election results. Despite the strong presence of the Grand Alliance, comprising TDP, TRS and Left parties, YSR could retain power, though with slender margin. YSR could get only eight seats above the magic fig-



ure of 148. The Congress won only 156 seats out of 294 in the Assembly of combined AP. YSR then commented that the people of AP had given him only 'pass' marks, though he deserved to come out with 'distinction'.

Today, Jagan must be feeling

worse. For, Jagan had dreamed that there won't be opposition for YSRCP in the 2029 polls, should the party return to power with a massive majority in 2024.

Jagan is not able to digest that 90 per cent of the total seats have gone to the NDA combine, leaving just 11 seats to YSRCP. The welfare measures of his government, costing a whopping Rs.2.70 lakh crore rupees, did not prevent Chandrababu Naidu from coming to power. No state in the country has spent such huge money on welfare schemes at the cost of creation of public assets for future generations. Even the Polavaram project could have been completed with just one-fifth of the outlay for welfare schemes. The worst part of Jagan's predicament is that YSRCP failed to get even the status of

principal opposition party.

There is talk in party circles that Jagan might resign from the Assembly and opt for contesting from the Kadapa Lok Sabha seat for strategic reasons, including proximity to power centres while pursuing criminal cases that CBI and ED have filed against him. Even this may not be a smooth affair for Jagan. For Telangana Chief Minister Anumula Revant Reddy declared at YSR's birth anniversary celebrations in AP that he would strive to make APCC chief and daughter of YSR YS Sharmila victorious by touring every nook and corner of the Kadapa LS seat.

P. Janardhan Reddy, who was leader of the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) during the first stint of Chandrababu Naidu, had then justified his job even without the party's status as principal opposition

in the Tenth House (1994-99) of the AP Legislative Assembly. The construction of the Almatti Dam on the Krishna River by the Government of Karnataka had come to light due to the brave acts of PJR in 1997. He visited the dam site, along with media persons drawn from Hyderabad, braving restrictions imposed by the Karnataka government then headed by J.H.Patel. PJR's exercise highlighted how detrimental the project would be to the interests of AP. YS Rajasekhara Reddy, who took the reins of APCC in 1998, could not up the ante as PJR had already taken up the matter quite successfully.

So, Jagan would do well to make himself more relevant by properly fulfilling his responsibilities as an opposition member in the Assembly, regardless of his party's present status.

Service road to NHAI East Bypass in V'wada sought

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Farmers from Gollapudi and Jakkampudi villages in Vijayawada Rural mandal met with Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni) to request the construction of a service road from China Avutapalli to Kaza along the National Highway East Bypass. The residents emphasised the challenges faced by local farmers due to the absence of a service road, which is essential for their day-to-day agricultural activities.

These residents are facing severe hurdles due to the lack of service roads to the NHAI East Bypass. They discussed these issues with MP Kesineni



Chinni at his office, NTR Bhavan at Gurunak Nagar in Vijayawada, on Tuesday. On the occasion, they also felicitated MP Chinni.

During the discussions, farmers expressed their dissatisfaction with the absence of a service road for the Gollapudi - Jakkampudi route.

They also urged the construction of another Road under the Bridge (RUB) at the Gollapudi railway level crossing, as the current under-construction RUB does not adequately accommodate vehicles. MP Kesineni Chinni assured the farmers that he would strive to solve their problems after holding discussions with the NHAI officials.

Vijayawada Rural former MP Vadlamudi Jagan Mohan Rao, Gollapudi Ex-Sarpanch Bommasani Subba Rao, and leaders V Chalapati Rao, Ch Naga Raju, K Purnachandra Rao, and B Rajasekhar, along with others, participated in the discussions.

SC adjourns...

Continued from Page 1

Andhra Pradesh has already said that it is willing to bring Krishna River catchment area drainage projects under the purview of KRMB. The Telangana government has filed an affidavit expressing its reluctance on the same issue.

In this context, the advocates of both states said that the Centre should decide following the views of the two governments. However, the Additional Solicitor General for the Centre (KRMB) said there were some technical reasons for issuing the notification. It was explained to the court that appropriate instructions and directions should be taken from the Center in this regard. After hearing these arguments, the Apex court adjourned the further hearing to August 20. It has issued instructions to the Center to file an affidavit.

YSRCP leader TJR Sudhakar Babu questions missing sand stock

Claims 80L tons of sand was available when Jagan govt stepped down

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former MLA TJR Sudhakar Babu raised concerns on Tuesday regarding a significant discrepancy in the sand stock reported by the State government. Babu claimed that 80 lakh tonnes of sand were available when the YSRCP government stepped down. However, the current TDP-led NDA government reports only 45 lakh tonnes, leading him to question the missing 35 lakh of sand.

Addressing the media, Sudhakar Babu demanded that the state government fulfil its election manifesto promise by supplying sand free of cost, without imposing any charges. He accused the alliance government of misleading the



income of Rs 750 crore from sand sales, questioning where this revenue is now going under the current administration. He called for an inquiry into the missing sand, suggesting that TDP, Jana Sena, and BJP leaders should be held accountable for the discrepancy.

Furthermore, Sudhakar Babu pointed out that both the High Court and the Green Tribunal had identified illegal activities related to sand mining during the 2014-19 TDP government. He criticised the present government for continuing similar policies under the guise of free sand, contrasting it with the previous administration's transparent practices, where sand was sold for Rs. 1400 per tonne with public advertisements.

public by advertising free sand while levying fees. He cited instances of sand being sold at Rs. 1225 per tonne at the Narsipatnam depot in Anakapalli district and Rs. 1394 per tonne at the Aganampudi depot in Visakhapatnam, contrary to the free sand claims.

Sudhakar Babu also highlighted that during YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's tenure, the government earned an annual

CM asks... TG Cong leaders feel Naidu has hidden agenda in his actions

Continued from Page 1

A new coordination committee will be formed, comprising Cabinet Ministers, bankers, and experts, to address five key issues and oversee their implementation.

The Chief Minister also announced plans to implement the P-4 system to combat poverty and improve skill development among youth.

This committee will also explore ways to leverage banking support for wealth creation and GST enhancement.

Minister for Agriculture Kinjerapu Achten Naidu urged bankers to support horticulture and aquaculture sectors, which he said had been neglected by previous administrations.

Minister for Finance Payyavula Kesav expressed confidence that with bankers' cooperation, the government could meet the aspirations of the populace and achieve ambitious economic goals.

The meeting was attended by Union Bank Executive Director Sanjay Rudra, SLBC Convener CVS Bhaskar Rao, and other bank officials.

SNCN ACHARYULU
■ HYDERABAD

Why are the Telangana Congress leaders reacting more than the BRS leaders over the entry of TDP supremo and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu into Telangana? Usually the BRS leaders always react on Chandrababu and try to provoke sentiments in the people of Telangana. But this time surprisingly, the BRS leadership is maintaining silence over Chandrababu's decision to restore the old glory of TDP in Telangana. In the last 10 years, Chandrababu did not concentrate on the TDP in Telangana. The BRS has branded Chandrababu as being anti-Telangana and during the elections, the BRS provoked the Telangana sentiment in the people.

Chandrababu thinks that it is the right time to restore the old glory of the TDP in Telangana, because the BRS is not in power in Telangana and KCR's well-wisher YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is not in power in Andhra Pradesh. After the defeat in the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections, the BRS MLAs, MLCs and leaders, one after the other are leaving the BRS. As a result, the BRS is weakening gradually. The BJP is trying to occupy the place of the BRS in

Telangana. Now the TDP in the NDA and its alliance with the BJP, they will become a big force in Telangana, Chandrababu feels. He also thinks if now activates the TDP, some BRS leaders who were in the TDP in the past, may return to the party.

Keeping all this in view, Chandrababu decided to concentrate on Telangana politics too. Like in the past in BRS regime, now the TDP may not face any hurdles in Telangana for its activities because BRS is not in power. In fact, the entry of Chandrababu into Telangana politics will affect the BRS more than the Congress. But the BRS leadership is silent on this and the Congress leaders are reacting more.

TPCC working president Jagga Reddy, former MP Vijaya Shanthi and others reacted. Jagga Reddy said, "Chandrababu has a residence in Hyderabad. In the last 10 years, he used to come and leave. However, this time he initiated talks at the government level with a hidden agenda." Meanwhile, Vijaya Shanthi said, "Chandrababu's secret agenda is the interests of Telugu Desam party rather than the interests of the people of Telugu states." Political observers feel that the reason for reacting more by the Congress leaders may be the relationship between Chandrababu and Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy.



Jagan ruined power...

Continued from Page 1

He attributed these losses to delays in commissioning thermal power plants, the Polavaram Hydro Electric Project, and the additional impact of short-term power purchases. The interest burden from borrowings amounted to Rs 10,892 crore, with accumulated losses from the poor performance of distribution companies (DISCOMs) and the Andhra Pradesh Power Development Company Ltd (APCPDCL) totalling Rs 9,618 crore. The state's DISCOMs suffered lower credit ratings, leading to a 1.1 per cent increase in interest rates.

Naidu criticised the previ-

ous government for stripping incentives committed by the TDP administration between 2014 and 2019 and renegotiating solar and wind power purchase agreements (PPAs), resulting in legal challenges.

The Chief Minister recalled the TDP's introduction of power sector reforms 1.0 and 2.0 and emphasised the necessity of reforms 3.0 to transform the sector and empower society. He noted that the earlier TDP governments successfully executed the first two phases of power sector reforms.

As part of energy sector reforms 3.0, Naidu outlined his plans to address over Rs 1.29 lakh crore in losses,

restore investor confidence, rebuild the Andhra Pradesh brand, and provide quality, reliable power supply at affordable rates, eliminating power cuts in a rapidly transforming sector.

He highlighted the increase in power utilities' debt from Rs 62,826 crore in FY 2018-19 to Rs 1.12 lakh crore in FY 2023-24. Naidu pointed out that short-term borrowings at high interest rates of 10.11 per cent to manage cash flows added an extra burden of approximately Rs 10,892 crore over the last five years. Additionally, outstanding receivables increased from Rs 12,945 crore to Rs 52,091 crore.

Continued from Page 1

"Whether it is war, conflicts, terror attacks, everyone believing in humanity is deeply affected when there is a loss of lives. But even in that, when innocent children are killed, when we see innocent children dying, then it is heart-wrenching and that pain is very horrible," Modi said.

The Indian prime minister's remarks that appeared to be critical of Russia came hours after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy criticised the Indian prime minister for hugging Putin.

In his remarks, Modi also referred to his extensive discussions on the Ukraine conflict with Putin during a private

Continued from Page 1

Modi gets Russia's prestigious civilian...

Continued from Page 1

"Honoured to receive the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle. I dedicate it to the people of India," Modi said in a post on X after receiving the award at a ceremony here. Established in 1698 by Tsar Peter the Great in honour of Saint Andrew, the first apostle of Jesus and patron saint of Russia, the Order of St Andrew the Apostle is the highest state decoration of Russia

meeting on Monday evening and said dialogue is the only way to find a solution.

"For a bright future for the future generations, peace is most essential. No solution is possible on the battlefield. Solutions and peace talks are not successful in the midst of bombs, guns and bullets and

we have to find the path to peace through dialogue," he said. The Indian prime minister assured the world community that India is on the side of peace and the conflict must be resolved through talks.

"For restoration of peace, India is ready to cooperate in all possible ways," Modi said.

The prime minister said he was satisfied that Putin had put across his views very openly at the meeting on Monday and that many "interesting ideas" and a "new thinking" had emerged from it.

In his comments, Putin appreciated Modi's efforts to find ways to resolve the Ukraine crisis. "I appreciate the attention you pay to the most pressing issues, including your efforts to find ways to resolve the Ukraine crisis, primarily through peaceful means," he said.

The 22nd India-Russia annual summit took place a day after Modi arrived in Moscow on a two-day visit that has been watched closely by the West in view of the Ukraine conflict.

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V'wada hospital in spot for links with kidney racket

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The city of Vijayawada was shocked to learn that a well-known private kidney hospital was connected to the kidney scam that has been unravelled. There are numerous allegations against the hospital regarding its involvement in cases related to the kidney racket originating from Guntur. One victim, an auto driver named Garlapati Madhu Babu from Guntur, sold his kidney due to financial difficulties and was reportedly deceived by the kidney racket.

The scandal came to light after the victim, Madhu Babu, filed a complaint with Guntur Superintendent of Police (SP) Tushar Dudi on Monday. Upon the SP's directive, the Guntur police, supervised by DSP Mahesh, initiated an investigation on Tuesday.

Several kidney specialists have established hospitals in Vijayawada to advance their practices. However, some of these doctors allegedly maintained ties with the kidney racket to further their interests. As part of this connection with the racket, Garlapati Madhu Babu recently visited a renowned kidney hospital in Vijayawada for transplantation.

The transplantation took place at the hospital in Vijayawada on June 15. However, Madhu Babu, who sold his kidney to alleviate his financial burden, did not receive the promised amount of Rs. 30 lakh. Upon realising that he had been deceived by the kidney racket, he filed a complaint with the Guntur SP.

Madhu Babu alleged that he had been cheated of Rs. 30 lakh after selling his kidney to repay debts accrued through loan apps. He claimed that the doctor had colluded with the racket and cheated him. Although he was promised Rs. 30 lakh, he only received Rs. 50,000.

Madhu Babu had taken substantial loans from various mobile applications and local financiers and was under immense pressure to repay them. In his desperation, he came across a Facebook post promising significant earnings for kidney donations. Despite knowing the illegality of selling organs, Madhu Babu contacted the individual who had posted the advertisement.

Subsequently, a woman from Vijayawada contacted Madhu and shared her experience of donating a kidney and receiving the promised payment. She introduced Madhu to the brother-in-law of the kidney recipient and Dr. Venkatesh, a doctor at a private hospital in Vijayawada.

Since November of last year, Madhu Babu has been visiting the hospital regularly for medical tests and consultations. He interacted with the patient's family, who provided him with small amounts of money for travel and medical expenses. Before the surgery, Madhu Babu was given Rs. 50,000 in cash and assured that the



Victim Garlapati Madhu Babu showing the copy of the police complaint against the kidney racket

HM orders probe in kidney scam

To take strong action against those involved



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Minister for Home and Disaster Management, Vangalapudi Anitha, has responded promptly to the illegal kidney transplantation issue. She has instructed the Police Department to launch an investigation and take strong action against those involved in the kidney racket.

Minister Anitha expressed grave concern over the kidney scam and directed Vijayawada Police Commissioner PHD Ramakrishna, Guntur District Collector Naga Lakshmi, and SP Tushar Dudi to look into the racket and the involvement of a private hospital in

the scam.

Upon receiving a complaint from the victim, Garlapati Madhu Babu, Minister Anitha instructed the police officials to conduct a thorough probe into the scam. She personally spoke with Commissioner Ramakrishna, Collector Naga Lakshmi, and SP Tushar Dudi over the phone to emphasise the need for a detailed investigation.

Furthermore, she stressed the importance of vigilance and directed the Commissioner to take strong action against the hospital management involved in illegal kidney transplantation.

remaining amount would be paid post-surgery.

The kidney transplant took place on June 15 at a hospital in Vijayawada. To facilitate the procedure, Madhu Babu's name and address were altered on his Aadhar card and other identity documents, making it appear as if he was donating his kidney as a relative of the patient. Madhu Babu also accused the doctors of removing his right kidney instead of the left one, which had been agreed upon before the surgery.

Kidney transplantation conducted following rules: Dr Sarath Babu

Meanwhile, Dr G Sarath Babu, a kidney transplantation specialist and the head of

Saraths Institute of Nephrology and Urology, stated that there was no truth in the allegations against his institution. He emphasised that they conducted kidney transplantation surgeries in compliance with government rules and regulations.

Dr Sarath Babu also clarified that they had recently conducted kidney transplantation under the Arogya Sri scheme, following approval from the official committee. He further stated that all their kidney transplantations were conducted transparently and without any financial irregularities, citing a recent transplantation conducted for a patient from Krishna district.

Clean sweep for YSRCP in VMC Standing Committee

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The ruling YSRCP has secured all six member posts of the Standing Committee in the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation in the election held on Tuesday. The loss of TDP candidate Ch Rammohan is a major setback for the party.

Seven corporators contested for the six posts in the VMC Standing Committee. Election Officer and Commissioner in charge Dr Mahesh oversaw the election held at the council hall. The Standing Committee is chaired by Mayor Rayana Bhagyalakshmi.

The elected members are: Ambadipudi Nirmala Kumar (second division), Bhimiseti Pravalika (third division), Bapoti Koti Reddy (33rd division), Md Irfan (41st division), Valluri NDS Murthy (33rd division), and Esarapu



Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner in-charge Mahesh handing over the certificates of confirmation to the elected Standing Committee members at the council hall in Vijayawada on Tuesday

Devi (57th division). Mahesh handed over the certificates of confirmation to all six members.

YSRCP holds the majority in

the VMC council with 49 corporators, while TDP has 13 members, including one who switched to BJP from YSRCP, and CPM members. One post

is vacant due to the resignation of Kesineni Swetha.

TDP contested for one post in the committee after appealing to the Mayor to allot a post.

However, YSRCP refused and contested for all six posts. Additionally, TDP member representing the 32nd Division, Ch Rammohan, also contested the poll.

The election was held amidst tight police security, and only members with identification cards were allowed. Out of 63 valid voters, 59 members cast their votes. One CPM member, Boyi Satya Babu, boycotted the election, and several YSRCP members, including the floor leader Venkata Satyanarayana, Kalapala Ambedkar, and Bali Govind, did not cast their votes.

TDP candidate Rammohan received 16 votes. YSRCP candidate Devi received 47 votes, Murty and Irfan polled 45 votes each, Koti Reddy received 46 votes, and Pravalika and Nirmala Kumar received 47 votes each.

'STOP DIARRHOEA' DRIVE

Residents seek better sanitation steps during

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Andhra Pradesh government's recently launched "Stop Diarrhea" campaign has garnered a measured response from residents in Anakapalle and Visakhapatnam districts. While acknowledging the campaign's value, residents urge authorities to prioritise measures addressing the root causes of seasonal diarrhoeal outbreaks: water contamination and inadequate sanitation infrastructure.

A recent outbreak in Anakapalle district's Moturupalem village serves as a stark reminder of the sanitation issue. Eighteen Diarrhoea cases, including among school-children, were reported within three days. Initial investigations strongly suggest a link to open defecation, with nearly 80% of households lacking toilets. "The absence of proper sanitation facilities in the village significantly contributes to the spread of diarrhoea," confirmed Dr M.S.V.K. Balaji, District Medical & Health Officer, Anakapalle.

Previous water quality testing in the Visakhapatnam district revealed contamination. While corrective actions were taken, residents in Visakhapatnam city expressed apprehension about similar issues arising during the monsoon season, particularly due to potential damage to water supply lines. "We encountered issues with contaminated tap water during the last mon-

soon, which led to protests against the GVMC (Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation)," recounted K. Murali, a resident. "With the monsoon approaching, we are concerned about a repeat of water contamination unless the authorities implement preventive measures." However, GVMC Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Naresh Kumar, assured residents that preventive measures are in place and water pipeline issues are being addressed promptly.

Visakhapatnam district reported 60 diarrhoea cases between June 1 and July 6, with only one currently active. "These are isolated cases, unlike the recent outbreak witnessed near Amaravati, which prompted the state-wide campaign," clarified Dr. P. Jagadeshwara Rao, District Medical and Health Officer, Visakhapatnam. The Andhra Pradesh Medical, Health, and Family Welfare Department launched the two-month "Stop Diarrhoea" campaign on July 1.

The concerns raised by residents in Anakapalle and Visakhapatnam underscore the need for a multi-pronged approach. While the government's awareness campaign is a positive step, residents emphasise the critical role of improved sanitation infrastructure and stricter water quality monitoring in effectively preventing the spread of Diarrhoea.

Kovvur-Bhadrachalam railway track works to be speeded up

PNS ■ ELURU

Eluru Lok Sabha Member Putta Mahesh assured of taking steps to expedite the Kovvuru-Bhadrachalam railway track works and conduct job mela.

After concluding the Parliament sessions, MP Putta Mahesh arrived here on Tuesday and he was accorded a warm welcome. He garlanded the statue of TDP founder NT Rama Rao at the fire station centre.

Later, addressing a large number of TDP activists at the TDP office, the MP said that he



would strive to complete the Kovvur-Bhadrachalam railway track works at the earliest. He said that he would also make efforts to halt of Vande Bharat train in Eluru.

He said that job melas would be organised in Eluru from the first week of September.

Collector inspects sand stockyard operations in NTR district



NTR District Collector G Srijana enquiring the officials about sand stocks at Keesara on Tuesday.

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector G Srijana, conducted an inspection of the sand stockyard at Keesara in Kanchikacherla Mandal on Tuesday. During her visit, she closely observed the sand sales and loading processes, issuing clear directives to ensure efficiency and compliance.

Dr. Srijana emphasized the importance of a seamless supply chain, instructing officials to eliminate any delays in the loading process. She mandated that the prices set by the District Level Sand Committee (DLSC) be strictly adhered to by all involved in the sand sales.

She highlighted that eight

sand depots—Kanchikacherla, Magallu, Kodavatikallu, Allurapadu, Anumanchipalli, Polampalli, Keesara, and Moguluru—are operational and available to supply sand within the district. Specifically, she noted that the Keesara depot currently holds approximately 2.25 lakh metric tons of sand.

Dr. Srijana also clarified the DLSC's policy, allowing individuals to purchase up to 20 tons of sand per day. She stated that all sand transactions are being monitored through CCTV cameras to prevent illegal storage and transportation of sand to other states. Strict penalties, including criminal charges, would be enforced against any viola-

tions. Furthermore, she instructed that daily sand sales activities should be conducted from 6 AM to 6 PM. All related data, including sales and stock details, must be uploaded to the Mines and Geology portal by 8 PM each day.

In addition to her inspection of the sand stockyard, Collector Srijana visited the Munneru Project. She directed irrigation department officials to take immediate steps to release irrigation water for the Kharif season. During her visit, she assessed the condition of the damaged old Anicut at Munneru with SE TJS Prasad Babu and EE Gangaiah, who provided a detailed briefing on its current state.

Saikanth Varma appointed APTIDCO MD



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a significant administrative move, CM Saikanth Varma has been appointed as the Managing Director of the Andhra Pradesh Township and Infrastructure Development Corporation (APTIDCO). Varma, who previously served as Commissioner of the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC), will now lead APTIDCO in a bid to boost urban and infrastructure development across the State.

This appointment is part of a strategic effort to enhance the efficiency and impact of infrastructure projects. Varma, celebrated for his dynamic leadership and innovative strategies at GVMC, is anticipated to bring a fresh outlook to APTIDCO. His track record in managing urban development projects and improving civic amenities at GVMC positions him as a strong asset for advancing the state's township and infrastructure initiatives.

The reshuffle underscores the state government's commitment to innovation and sustainable development. Stakeholders and residents will be closely watching how this transition influences the state's development efforts and the effectiveness of public service delivery.

First batch of Haj pilgrims from AP to return today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Law & Justice and Minorities Welfare, N Md Farook said that about 800 Haj pilgrims went for Haj-2024 from Vijayawada Embarkation and are returning on 10th July to 11th July 2024. He said that the pilgrims are currently in Madina Munawara and the first delegation of the Hajis will start on July 11. He stated that the first flight SG-5237 would arrive at 4.20 pm on July 10. He further stated that two other flights SG-5328 at 3 pm and SG-5112 at 9.35 pm on July 11.

Minister Farook, along with K Harshavardhan, Secretary to the Government Minorities Welfare Department, other officials and various dignitaries would welcome and receive the Haj Pilgrims on

July 10. These Hajis have performed Haj and are returning safely after 42 days of pilgrimage.

Minister Farook has instructed the Officials to make all necessary arrangements at the Airport to facilitate Haj pilgrims in completing all required Official formalities with ease to proceed to their respective destinations and Districts.

He instructed that necessary arrangements were made at Shah Zahoar MusafirKhana, Wynchipeta, Vijayawada for the Haj pilgrims who intend to stay overnight or for a day before their onward journey. The minister further instructed that the RTC buses shall be available for necessary Transportation to Vijayawada from Gannavaram Airport.

Former APSCH chief, AU VC face corruption allegations

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Dr. GKD Prasada Rao, media coordinator of the Andhra University Parirakshana Samithi, has levelled serious allegations of financial misconduct against prominent educational figures in Andhra Pradesh. According to a detailed memorandum submitted to State HRD minister Nara Lokesh at Tadepalli, Prof Hemachandra Reddy, former chairman of the AP State Council of Higher Education, and Prof PVGD Prasad Reddy, former Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University, have been accused of embezzling crores of rupees.

Dr. Prasada Rao's memorandum outlines egregious violations of the UGC and AP Universities Act allegedly committed over the past five years.

These include improper removal of qualified guest faculty, irregular appointments, and other misuse of power, which he claims have significantly compromised the educational standards of Andhra University.

In a scathing critique, Dr. Rao also criticised former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, accusing his administration of turning a blind eye to systemic corruption that has plagued the State's higher education institutions.

The allegations further implicate former AU registrars Prof V Krishn Mohan and Dr M James Stephen. Responding to the gravity of the accusations, Nara Lokesh has assured swift government action to investigate and address the alleged misconduct.

Free sand initiative aims to help those building homes, says Gummadi Sandhya Rani

Policy expected to significantly reduce construction costs

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Minister of Women and Child Welfare and Tribal Welfare, Gummadi Sandhya Rani, inaugurated the distribution of free sand at Sivaramapuram in Saluru Mandal on Tuesday. This initiative forms a cornerstone of the State's pioneering Free Sand Policy, designed to alleviate financial burdens for those aspiring to build their homes.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Sandhya Rani underscored the government's proactive stance under the leadership of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu. "The introduction of the Free Sand Policy reaffirms our commitment to bringing essential construction materials within reach of the public," she said. The policy is anticipated to



significantly reduce construction costs, empowering numer-

ous families to turn their dream of homeownership into reality.

Highlighting the policy's broader implications, Sandhya

Rani emphasized: "This initiative will not only stimulate growth in the construction and related sectors but also bolster the overall economic landscape of the region." She urged residents to capitalise on this opportunity, citing its potential to reshape housing affordability across diverse communities.

The ceremony witnessed the presence of local public representatives and community members, who lauded the government's initiative, foreseeing positive socio-economic outcomes for the region. This initiative marks a pivotal moment in Andhra Pradesh's efforts to redefine housing accessibility, showcasing the government's commitment to inclusive development and economic empowerment through strategic policy interventions.

Two die of diarrhoea; DC visits patients in hospital

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

As many as two children of PASS Manovikas Kendra died of diarrhoea and 16 are undergoing treatment and the condition of two of them is said to be very critical.

District Collector Venkateswar here on Tuesday visited the diarrhoea patients in the Ruila hospital on Tuesday. As many as 16 mentally retarded children who are in the People's Action Social Service (PASS) Manovikas Kendra, located at Padmavathi Puram here, suffered diarrhoea and were admitted to the Ruila hospital here. Two of the children died of diarrhoea.

Official sources said that there are 73 mentally retarded children in the PASS Manovikas Kendra, being run



by an NGO, of which 16 fell ill with diarrhoea after taking food. The caretaker and the staff of the PASS Manovikas Kendra did not take steps to provide proper medicines or treatment to the children, resulting in the death of two children and the condition of

another two children turned out to be critical.

After getting information about the incident, Collector Venkateswar visited the Ruila hospital today. He inquired with the doctors about the condition of the other children. He directed the doctors

to provide the best medical treatment to the children. He also directed the officials concerned to visit the PASS Manovikas Kendra for the mentally retarded and study the situation prevailing there.

Later talking to the media, Collector Venkateswar said that two children died of diarrhoea since the organizers of the PASS Manovikas did not inform the matter to the officials by time. At present 16 children are undergoing treatment for diarrhoea in the Ruila hospital and the condition of two of them is said to be critical. The two children were shifted to the SVIMS hospital for better treatment, the Collector added. He said that he had ordered the officials to inspect all the care centres being run by various NGOs.

Take up sanitation on a war-footing: DC

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

District Collector C Nagarani directed the municipal officials concerned to take steps to carry out sanitation on a war footing because of the onset of the rainy season. The Collector held a meeting with the municipal and public health officials here on Tuesday and reviewed the sanitation and other issues.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector C Nagarani ordered the municipal and public health officials to take steps to carry out sanitation in a tangible way. During the rainy season, diarrhoea, dengue, fever and other diseases are prevalent due to unhygienic conditions and water pollution.

She instructed the officials to ensure that garbage is not dumped and that drinking water pipelines should be seen without leakages. Wide awareness should be created among the people to throw garbage only in designated places and not in streets, in front of shops, or drainages, she told them.



"Steps should be taken to keep wet and dry garbage separate. Municipal officials and sanitary inspectors should visit the field for at least two hours in the morning and monitor the sanitary works thorough-

ly. The accumulated silt should be removed from drainage," she instructed the officials.

The municipal Commissioners explained the steps taken to carry out sanitation to the Collector. Joint

Collector CV Praveen Aditya, Municipal Administration Regional Director CH Narasimha Raju and Municipal Commissioner Shyamala were among those who attended the meeting.

Check sex determination tests: Collector to officials

PNS ■ ELURU

Eluru District Collector V Vetri Selvi directed the officials to take steps to check the illegal sex determination tests.

The Collector held a meeting with the Multi Member Appropriate Authority Advisory Committee here on Tuesday and reviewed the steps taken to implement the sex determination prohibition Act 1994.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Vetri Selvi said that it is everyone's responsibility to protect the unborn child. The Department of Medical Health, Department of Women Development and Child Welfare, Revenue, Police and officials should work in coor-



dination and take strong measures for the strict implementation of the Pre-Conception

and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act 1994 (PC PNDT).

The Collector ordered the authorities concerned to intensify the implementation of the PC PNDT Act, renewal of registration of scanning centres, decoy operations and surprise inspections in coordination with representatives of NGOs.

It is an offence to use ultrasound medical tests for gender determination in the recognized scanning centres in the district; she said and ordered the officials to crack down on scanning centres that conduct gender determination tests contrary to the rules.

The authorities concerned should monitor that the table of scanning prices must be displayed; she said adding that they should also intensify inspections on whether the

sale of medicines is being carried out as per the government's directives. Medical shops should sell related medicines according to the prescription given by the doctors, she stated.

The officials should conduct awareness programmes to educate girls over 18 years of age and pregnant women about sex determination scanning, ANMs, ASHA workers and Anganwadi staff should be employed in the village to take care of the girl child.

Additional SP Swaroop Rani, DMHO Dr S Sharmista, DIO Dr Nageswara Rao, Red Cross chairman BV Krishna Reddy and ICDA PD K Padmavati were among those who attended the meeting.

It took a Minister to reinstall an uprooted electric pole

PNS ■ KADAPA

The intervention of Minister for Energy, Gottipati Ravi Kumar, ensured the reinstallation of an uprooted electric pole and the removal of hanging wires in a field at Nagasanipalle village in Khajipet mandal.

An electric pole had uprooted and tilted to one side, causing the electric wires to hang low, thereby hindering agricultural activities for farmers in Nagasanipalle village.

Farmer Abbayya and his family had been forced to push the precariously hanging electric wire using a long bamboo pole while tilling their field.



Despite reporting the issue of low-hanging wires and the tilting pole to the concerned officials, no action was taken.

The farmers' plight went viral on social media, catching the attention of Minister for Energy, Gottipati Ravi Kumar. Moved by their situation, the Minister instructed electricity officials to urgently address the issue and install a new electric pole in the field.

Following the Minister's directions, the electricity staff promptly erected a new electric pole and ensured that the wires were lifted to a safe height. Farmer Abbayya expressed his happiness over the swift resolution of a problem that had persisted for several years, noting that it was resolved in just three hours.



Anusha bags three bronze medals in Poland Cup

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh's soft tennis player N Anusha has bagged three bronze medals for individual, doubles and mixed doubles events of the International Soft Tennis Tournament, 17th Poland Cup, being conducted in Grodzisk Mazowiecki in Poland from July 5 to 8.

Vijayawada-based young Anusha represented the Indian team and competed in three categories. She bagged medals in all three events.

Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP) Vice Chairman and Managing Director PS Pradyumna congratulated Anusha in a press release here on Tuesday.

Anganwadi centre inspected

PNS ■ RAJAMPET

Annamayya District Collector Sridhar Chamakuri conducted a surprise inspection of an Anganwadi centre here on Tuesday.

District Collector Sridhar Chamakuri made a surprise inspection of the Anganwadi centre in Arundhati Vada in Rajampet mandal.

The Collector expressed his dissatisfaction with the Anganwadi employees for having only three children out of 13 children in the centre not preparing meals even after noon and



not maintaining the registers properly.

He questioned the Supervisor and other employees on how they were maintaining the centre.

The Collector expressed anger

over the Anganwadi Supervisor for not inspecting the Anganwadi centres. On the directions of the Collector, show-cause notices have been issued to the supervisor and the employees working at the Anganwadi centre in this regard.

The Collector said that he would inspect the Anganwadi centre soon and ordered the Anganwadi centre. Later, the Collector mentioned the Anganwadi centre issue in the review meeting held in the RDO office and instructed the RDO and Tahsildar to inspect the Anganwadi centres often.

Telangana Ministers visit Durga temple

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Telangana State Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Finance, Planning and Energy Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and Minister for Information Technology, Electronics & Communications, Industries & Commerce and Legislative Affairs Duddillapati Sridhar Babu had darshan of Durga Devi at the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada on Tuesday.

Endowment Department



Endowment Department Special Chief Secretary Satyanarayana presenting portraits to Telangana Ministers Bhatti Vikramarka and Sridhar Babu atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada on Tuesday

Special Chief Secretary and Commissioner S Satyanarayana and Durga Temple Executive Officer KS Rama Rao accorded a grand welcome to the ministers. Also, they visited Sri Lakshmi Ganapati Swamy. The ministers performed special pujas.

Later, the Vedic scholars gave blessings to Ministers Vikramarka and Sridhar Babu at Veda Ashirvachana Mandapam. Commissioner Satyanarayana and EO Rama Rao presented them with Sesha Vastram, Laddu Prasadam and portraits.

Collector reviews steps for Simhachalam Giri Pradakshina

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Ahead of the anticipated Simhachalam Giri Pradakshina scheduled for July 20, District Collector M.N. Harendhira Prasad has reaffirmed the administration's commitment to facilitating a secure and hassle-free experience for devotees. "Our top priority is to ensure a seamless and safe pilgrimage for all participants," stated Collector Prasad during a review meeting held at the Collector's office meeting hall. The event, organised by Sri



Lakshminarasimha Swamy Devasthanam, is expected to draw lakhs of devotees from across the region.

Measures discussed in the meeting include stringent

security arrangements, with police personnel and camps stationed along the route from Tolipawancha in Kondadiguvu to manage traffic and crowd control. "Critical directives include the installation of public address systems, provision of adequate lighting, drinking water facilities, and sanitation maintenance," emphasised Prasad.

Medical officers have mobilised medical camps equipped with supplies and ambulances to provide immediate assistance as needed, ensuring devotees' health and

safety. "To mitigate risks, EPDCL has been instructed to ensure uninterrupted power supply and prepare backup generators," noted Prasad, highlighting precautionary measures during bathing rituals at Appughar.

In adherence to Excise Department directives, liquor shops will remain closed on the event days, while RTC officials are arranging additional buses for transportation. Further initiatives include deploying support personnel with fire extinguishers and medical kits on the hill, along with improved sanitation facil-

ities using school and marriage hall toilets.

Collaborative efforts involving various departments under the oversight of the RDO, including Information and Police Departments, aim to ensure the event's smooth execution. Joint Police Commissioner Fakirappa, GVMC Additional Commissioner K.S. Viswanathan, and temple management officials have expressed their commitment to ensuring the success of Simhachalam Giri Pradakshina.

Polycet: Final notification released for counselling

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Board of Technical Education Director Dr B Navya, on Tuesday, issued the final notification to conduct the web counselling for admissions into the diploma courses, for candidates who qualified in the AP Polycet-2024. She appealed to the candidates to apply for attending the web counselling.

Further, she stated that as

per the final notification, candidates are to pay the online processing fee, certificate verification and registration process will be conducted from July 11 to 14.

Later, the seat allotment will be announced on July 16. The Board will allow candidates for self-joining reports from July 18 to 20, she added.

Interested candidates can visit the website <https://appolycet.nic.in>.

Youth stabbed to death on Aganampudi NH

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Surya Kiran, a resident of the Prakash Nagar area of Malkapuram, was brutally stabbed to death by Korlaiah from Gangavaram on the Aganampudi National Highway on Tuesday. The incident has caused a significant uproar in the locality.

Surya Kiran, who hailed from Malkapuram, married Meghna from Gangavaram a year ago despite strong opposition from Meghna's parents. Following their marriage, the couple relocated to Hyderabad to start a new life together. Recently, Meghna became pregnant, prompting Surya Kiran to bring her to Aganampudi

Hospital in Visakhapatnam for her delivery.

As Surya Kiran was making his way home after visiting his wife and child, Korlaiah intercepted him on his bike, causing a collision that knocked Surya Kiran to the ground. In a brutal and frenzied attack, Korlaiah repeatedly stabbed Surya Kiran with a knife, inflicting fatal injuries. Despite the efforts of locals to rush him to the hospital, Surya Kiran succumbed to his injuries en route.

Following the attack, Korlaiah surrendered at the Duvvada police station. The police have registered a case and are currently investigating the incident.



22 kg ganja seized; 9 arrested

PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM

The police seized a huge quantity of 22 kg of ganja in Mylavaram on Tuesday and arrested nine peddlers.

DCP K Srinivas told the media in Mylavaram police station that on a tip-off a police team conducted a raid and arrested 9 drug peddlers

and seized 22 kg of ganja and five motorcycles. The nine youths were selling ganja in the area.

The DCP said that three of the arrested drug peddlers were minor boys. Some of the drug peddlers fled the scene after seeing the police and a massive search was launched for them.

‘There is gap between party & people’

- ◆ It is our fault to blame people for BRS defeat in elections, acknowledges KTR
- ◆ Express surprise that Jagan lost despite so many schemes for poor

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLA KT Rama Rao acknowledged that there has been a gap between their party and the people and emphasised the need to change their approach. In a chat in Delhi, he admitted that blaming the people for the loss is actually their fault. KTR highlighted their victory in all seats in Hyderabad and mentioned that they have not sufficiently showcased their developmental achievements.

He dismissed the notion that renaming Telangana led to their defeat and found it surprising that Jagan lost despite implementing numerous



schemes for the poor. He noted that securing 40 per cent of the votes is no small feat. KTR speculated that if Pawan had contested separately, the results might have been different. He expressed surprise at the defeat

of Ketireddy, who was consistently in touch with the public.

KTR criticized the political manoeuvring that led to Jagan's defeat and the use of Sharmila as a tool against him, stating that there was nothing more to it. He refuted the claims of arrogance within their party, asserting that the difference between self-confidence and arrogance is often misunderstood and that those unable to compete in development labelled them as arrogant.

Meanwhile, Harish Rao said that defections have not benefited their party as expected, noting that 10 individuals who joined their party were defeated. According to the Supreme

Court's verdict, a decision should be made within three months. Harish Rao confidently stated that the BRS government will come to power again in Telangana, as people are witnessing the difference between the current and previous governments.


He criticised Revanth Reddy, saying he lacks governance skills and is more focused on politics.

Harish Rao also pointed out the lack of cleanliness in villages, leading to the spread of diseases like dengue and malaria. He remarked that officials claiming to be under their control is an indication of their incompetence.

INDIA CORNER

NEET-UG leak case: CBI arrests two more persons from Patna

The CBI has arrested two more persons, including a candidate, from Patna in connection with the alleged leakage of NEET-UG paper, taking the total number of arrests by the agency to 11, officials said Tuesday. NEET-UG aspirant Sunny who hails from Nalanda and father of another candidate Ranjit Kumar who is from Gaya have been arrested, they said. The CBI has so far arrested eight persons in Bihar NEET-UG paper leak case and one each in connection with alleged manipulation in Gujarat's Latur and Godhra, and one from Dehradun in connection with general conspiracy, the officials said. The agency had earlier arrested principal and vice principal of Hazaribagh-based Oasis school in the case and two persons who allegedly provided safe premises to NEET candidates where burnt question papers were recovered by the Bihar Police. The CBI, which is probing the alleged irregularities in the medical entrance exam, has registered six FIRs.



Govt extends ban on pro-Khalistan group Sikhs For Justice

The Union Home Ministry has extended the ban imposed on pro-Khalistan group Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) for five years for its anti-India activities. In a notification issued on Tuesday, the Home Ministry said the SFJ was declared a banned organisation five years ago under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for its anti-national activities which are prejudicial to the internal security and integrity of the country. The SFJ continues to involve in anti-national and subversive activities in Punjab and elsewhere and intended to disrupt the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India, it said. The ministry said the SFJ is encouraging and aiding the activities for secession of a part of the Indian territory from the Union of India and supporting separatist groups fighting for this purpose in India and elsewhere by indulging in activities and articulations intended to disrupt the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India.



NIA team to assist police in Kathua terror attack probe

The National Investigation Agency will assist the Jammu and Kashmir police in its probe into a terrorist attack on an Army convoy in Kathua that left five personnel dead and as many injured, officials said on Tuesday. A team of National Investigation Agency (NIA) officials has been sent to Kathua in Jammu region to extend all possible support to the police in its investigation, they said and made it clear that the probe agency has not registered a case to investigate the terrorist attack. Five Army personnel, including a junior commissioned officer, were killed, and as many were injured when a group of heavily armed terrorists ambushed a patrolling party on the rugged Machedi-Kindli-Malhar mountainous road near the Badnota village in Lohai Malhar, approximately 150 km from the Kathua district's headquarters. It was the fifth terror attack in the Jammu region within a month.



PM Modi hails Russia as India's 'all-weather friend', lauds Putin

PNS ■ MOSCOW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday made a whole-hearted endorsement of India's ties with Russia, describing the old ally as India's "all-weather friend" and lauding President Vladimir Putin for strengthening the bilateral relations over the past two decades of his leadership.

Addressing the Indian diaspora, he said the India-Russia relationship is built on the strong pillar of mutual trust and respect, asserting that their ties were tested time and again only to emerge stronger every time.

Modi's high praise of Russia as an ally and Putin's leadership came amid ongoing efforts by the Western world to isolate the Russian leader over the war in Ukraine.

Prime Minister Modi also made a veiled criticism of the "influence-oriented global order" which endured for decades.



"But, what the world needs right now is confluence not influence and no one can deliver this message better than India which has a strong tradition of worshipping confluences," he said.

He said India is being seen as a strong pillar in the "emerging multipolar world order".

"When it speaks of peace, dialogue and diplomacy, then the whole world listens." Modi has often stressed the need for dia-

logue and diplomacy to end the war between Russia and Ukraine.

Commenting on India's ties with Russia, he said he has been for decades an admirer of the unique partnership between the two countries.

"On hearing the word Russia, the first word that comes to the mind of every Indian is India's 'sukh-dukh ka saathi' (all-weather friend) and a trusted ally," he said.

Modi visits photo expo on India-Russia cooperation in civil nuclear energy

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said energy is an important pillar of cooperation between India and Russia and New Delhi is eager to further cement ties in this sector with Moscow as he visited the Rosatom Pavilion along with President Vladimir Putin here. Modi witnessed a photo exhibition dedicated to India-Russia cooperation in the field of civil nuclear energy at the Rosatom Pavilion at VDNKh, inaugurated in November 2023. It is one of the largest exhibitions in the history of scientific and technological developments. "Visited the Atom Pavilion with President Putin. Energy is an important pillar of cooperation between India and Russia and we are eager to further cement ties in this

sector," Modi posted on his official X platform along with the photographs from the visit. "Prime Minister Modi was also shown the 'Atomic Symphony' – a permanent working model of the VVER-1000 reactor, which is the heart of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP) in India," a statement from the Ministry of External Affairs said. Modi is here to hold the 22nd India-Russia annual summit with President Putin. Modi and Putin visited the All Russian Exhibition Centre, ahead of the summit talks. "At the Pavilion, the Prime Minister also interacted with a group of Indian and Russian students. He encouraged them to look at future possibilities in science and technology, which could be harnessed for the benefit of future generations.

PATANJALI TO SC

Stopped sale of 14 products whose licences were suspended

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Patanjali Ayurved Ltd on Tuesday informed the Supreme Court that it has stopped the sale of the 14 products whose manufacturing licences were suspended by the Uttarakhand State Licensing Authority in April.

The company told a bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Sandeep Mehta that it has issued instructions to 5,606 franchise stores to withdraw these products.

It said media platforms have also been instructed to withdraw advertisements of these 14 products in any form.

The bench directed Patanjali Ayurved Ltd to file an affidavit within two weeks stating whether the request made to social media intermediaries for the removal of advertisements has been acceded to and whether advertisements of these 14 products have been withdrawn.

The bench posted the matter for further hearing on July 30.

The top court is hearing a plea filed by the Indian Medical Association (IMA) alleging a smear campaign by Patanjali against the Covid vaccination drive and modern systems of medicine.

The Uttarakhand State Licensing Authority had earlier told the apex court that



The bench directed Patanjali Ayurved Ltd to file an affidavit within two weeks stating whether the request made to social media intermediaries for the removal of advertisements has been acceded to

Khattar for collective efforts for growth of power sector in NE


PNS ■ GUWAHATI

Union Power Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Tuesday emphasized on collective efforts for a sustainable future along with advancing the growth of power sector in the northeastern region.

Chairing a meeting of Power ministers of the region in Guwahati, the minister stressed on collective efforts.

"Chaired the all-important Power Minister's Conference (North-Eastern Region) in Guwahati today. During the session, highlighted the significance of collective efforts towards a more promising & sustainable future along with advancing the growth of the power sector in the North-Eastern region," Khattar wrote in a post on X.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, also in



Sarma informed the Union Power minister about the increased demand for PMAY (U) homes, as the state has already delivered over 60 per cent of the sanctioned 1.7 lakh homes.

"Shared our plans to achieve saturation in urban drinking water supply, building the Guwahati River Front and develop a new satellite township on G20 principles near Guwahati. We also deliberated on the possibility of establishing a Centre of Excellence for Urban Planning in the State," the CM posted.

In another post on X, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said that Sarma discussed various issues and apprised the Union Minister of the state's initiatives to revamp power sector and urban infrastructure.

a post on the micro-blogging site, wrote: "I had an extremely fruitful discussion with Hon'ble Union Minister Shri @mlkhattar ji during his first visit to Assam after assuming charge."

He said the state has sought "assistance to help rationalise gas prices to meet Assam's increased demand for power. The state's peak power demand has already crossed over 2500 MW."

Dalits facing 'large-scale atrocities' in TN: Union Min

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior leaders of the BJP Tamil Nadu unit, including Duraisamy, were present at the press conference.


"After the DMK came to power in May 2021, there has been a tremendous increase in the atrocities against Dalits in Tamil Nadu. A survey is telling that every year more than 2,000 cases of atrocities against Dalits are filed in the state," Murugan said.

He referred to a series of incidents of alleged atrocities against Dalits since 2022 and some attacks and murders of BJP leaders in the state, putting the blame on the "complete failure" of Chief Minister M K Stalin.

"Recently, K Armstrong, a Dalit leader and BSP state president was murdered," he said, alleging that "even political leaders are not safe" in the state under the DMK rule.

"Scheduled caste leaders and people do not have security. They are facing harassment under the DMK government," he said.

In April 2023, the Union minister said, that Tamil Nadu



BJP treasurer Shankar was murdered, followed by "the brutal killing" of a student in August 2023.

A local DMK official "fatally attacked" Jagan Pandian, leader of the BJP Tamil Nadu youth wing, in another incident, he charged.

"A delegation of BJP Tamil Nadu unit, led by Duraisamy, is going to submit a memorandum to the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and National Human Rights Commission today in this connection, urging them to take appropriate action in the matter," the Union minister said.

Murugan said the DMK claims that it is the pioneer of social justice but the ruling

party is not following the idea of social justice in the state.

A survey conducted by the Tamil Nadu Untouchability Eradication Front revealed that in 22 villages, panchayat presidents were denied chairs and obstructed from carrying out their duties due to caste discrimination, he said.

"Stalin doesn't have the moral right to talk about social justice because of the incidents of atrocities against Dalits taking place in the state," the Union minister charged.


Murugan, former president of the Tamil Nadu unit of the BJP, also took on the Congress, the DMK ally, questioning its silence over the recent hooch tragedy which claimed several lives in the state.

Centre reviews guidelines for execution of bagless days in schools

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Education on Tuesday reviewed the NCERT guidelines for implementation of bagless days in schools and said they will be further fine-tuned, according to officials.

PSS Central Institute of Vocational Education (PSSCIVE), a unit of the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), had developed comprehensive guidelines for implementing bagless days and make learning in schools more joy-



During this time, students will intern with local skill experts and engage in activities outside of traditional school settings. This initiative aims to help students develop an appreciation for the larger ecosystem in which their school is embedded, the policy had suggested.

"Bagless Days will be encouraged throughout the year, encompassing a variety of activities such as arts, quizzes, sports, and skill-based learning.

"Students will gain periodic exposure to activities outside the classroom, including visits to historical, cultural, and tourist sites, interactions with local artists and craftsmen, and visits to various educational institutions within their village, tehsil, district, or state, as mapped by local skilling needs," the official added.

Visit and survey of vegetable market; charity visit; survey and report writing on pet care; doodling, kite making and flying; organising a book fair; sitting under Banyan tree; and visiting a biogas plant and solar energy park are among the recommended activities in the NCERT guidelines.

PRADHAN TO STATES

Work together with Centre for building collaborative education

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Tuesday called upon states to work with the Centre as a team to strengthen the education ecosystem and replicate and amplify the best practices across all states and Union Territories (UTs).

The minister made the comments at a review meeting of the Ministry of Education's Department of School Education and Literacy with states and (UTs). The meeting focused on implementation of



ecosystem as well as to replicate and amplify the best practices across all states and UTs. All stakeholders should work cohesively for strengthening capacities, building a collaborative education system and leveraging education as the key pillar of Viksit Bharat (developed India)," Pradhan said.

"In almost four years of the National Education Policy (NEP), the education ecosystem in the country has made tremendous progress and implementation of the NEP is key to transforming Bharat into a knowledge superpower.

the new National Education Policy (NEP) and alignment of the ministry's flagship schemes such as the Samagra Shiksha, PM SHRI, PM Poshan and ULLAS with the policy.

"Both states and the Centre have to work as a team to strengthen the education

Nadda terms Congress, Communist parties as 'ideologically bankrupt'

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

BJP President and Union minister J P Nadda on Tuesday slammed the Congress and the Communist parties, and accused them of being "ideologically bankrupt" and "power hungry".

Nadda said that the Communists were also emulating the Congress by promoting their own sons and daughters.

"You know what I mean," he said, addressing a large gathering of party leaders, workers and supporters in the Kerala capital.

The BJP chief, on his first visit to Kerala after the recent

Lok Sabha polls, further attacked the Congress, terming it a "parasite" that won seats in the general elections this year thanks to the help and support of regional parties.

"They (Congress) are like parasites. They have a poor strike rate on their own. They won only two of the 60-plus seats where they were competing directly against the BJP.

"It (Congress) is a party walking on crutches and cannot stand on its own two feet. They have a national presence thanks to the support of the regional parties," Nadda said.

He further said that a narrative was created that the BJP was a North Indian party.

Survey on risk profile of glacial lakes after monsoon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Four states and a Union territory in the Himalayas will commence ground surveys to determine the vulnerability of glacial lakes after the monsoon season, officials said on Tuesday.

A glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) in Sikkim in October 2023 has prompted this initiative, they said.

Monitoring systems will also be established to provide crucial information about GLOFs, the officials said.



"Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir are setting up survey teams and identifying routes to the glacial lakes. The teams will include officials and experts from agencies, such as the National Remote Sensing Centre, the Indian Army and the Geological Survey of India," an official from the National Disaster Management Authority said.

The survey, set to launch after the monsoon season, will

Most of these lakes are situated at altitudes of 5,000 metres or higher. The survey teams will comprise experts in hydrology, topography and other relevant fields who are equipped to endure harsh weather and difficult terrain.

The glacial lake outburst in Sikkim resulted in at least 60 fatalities and extensive damage in the Mangan, Gangtok, Pakyong and Namchi districts. It also destroyed the Chungthang dam (Teesta III dam), a crucial part of a major hydropower project.

Glacial lakes are formed by the melting of glaciers and accumulation of meltwater in depressions on or near the glacier's surface. GLOFs occur when these lakes suddenly burst open due to factors, such as excessive water accumulation or triggers like earthquakes. These floods can cause significant destruction and pose serious risks to people and the environment downstream.

The officials said that the current understanding of glacial lakes is primarily based on remote sensing.

Strong message

PM Modi's Russia visit signals India's intent to preserve its strategic autonomy and pursue its national interest

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is in Moscow for a two-day state visit. The visit comes after a long gap as the last time PM Modi visited Russia was in 2019. Since then, a lot has happened in the international arena and India and Russia have emerged as reliable friends. This visit holds profound implications for India-Russia relations, and it sends nuanced messages to both China and the West. India and Russia share a long-standing relationship rooted in historical, strategic, and economic cooperation. This visit underscores India's commitment to maintaining and strengthening these traditional ties. The partnership between the two nations spans various sectors, including defence, energy, space, and nuclear technology. By reaffirming these bonds, PM Modi signals India's intent to preserve its strategic autonomy and resist external pressures to align exclusively with any single global power bloc. India's relationship with China has been marked by border tensions. PM Modi's visit to Russia is a strategic manoeuvre in this delicate



balance. Russia and China have their own close ties. However, India's engagement with Russia serves to remind China that India has strong partnerships beyond its immediate neighbourhood. PM Modi was welcomed at the airport by Russia's First Deputy Prime Minister, Denis Manturov, a higher-ranking official than the Deputy Prime Minister who greeted Chinese President Xi Jinping on his recent visit. This underscores the significant importance Russia places on its relationship with India and is in contrast with Xi Jinping's welcome, where the lower-ranking Deputy Prime Minister received him. On the other hand, India's relationship with Western powers, particularly the United States, has grown significantly in recent years. However, by visiting Russia, PM Modi communicates India's desire to maintain an independent foreign policy. This visit is a reminder that India will not be swayed into a singular alignment with Western interests. It underscores India's multipolar approach to international relations, where it seeks to engage with all major powers based on mutual interests and benefits. To put things in perspective Russia happens to be the major supplier of arms to India and India made no bones about buying Russian oil despite western sanctions. One of the critical aspects of PM Modi's visit is the focus on economic and energy cooperation. Russia is a significant supplier of energy resources, including oil and natural gas. Strengthening this energy partnership helps India secure its energy future while diversifying its sources. Defence cooperation has been a cornerstone of India-Russia relations. PM Modi's visit likely includes discussions on furthering defence ties and technology transfers. Furthermore, India has challenges in its neighbourhood and by leveraging its friendship with Russia, it can always have an edge. Besides, Russian support would come handy in India's bid for a permanent seat at the United Nations. India's engagement with Russia is vital for world peace and fostering a multipolar world which is the best guarantee for world peace.

PICTALK



NDRF personnel rescue trapped people from the flooded areas in Tanakpur PTI

The Imperative of upskilling strategies in modern business

By investing in learning and development initiatives, organisations not only equip their workforce with essential skills but also drive sustainable growth

In today's fast-evolving business environment, the ability to adapt and thrive through continuous learning has become indispensable for sustained success. To remain competitive amidst technological advancements, economic shifts, and geopolitical changes, businesses must adopt proactive upskilling strategies. These strategies empower organizations to innovate and stay resilient, ensuring readiness to tackle uncertainty and adapt to evolving market demands. A crucial aspect of fostering organizational success lies in developing a robust upskilling plan tailored to the needs of C-suite executives. This comprehensive approach focuses not only on enhancing technical competencies but also on cultivating strategic thinking and leadership abilities. CEOs play a pivotal role in this endeavor by investing in tailored Learning and Development (L&D) programs. These initiatives aim to refine communication skills, enhance adaptability, manage crises effectively, and unleash influential leadership potential. Strategic thinking involves



synthesising information from diverse sources and cultivating collaborative relationships with stakeholders. These competencies are pivotal for making informed decisions and driving organizational progress. Embracing technology-centric strategies that incorporate cutting-edge skills such as Generative AI, Machine Learning, Data Analytics, and Cybersecurity is essential for navigating complexities and maintaining market competitiveness. To effectively implement upskilling initiatives, organizations must first identify skill gaps within their workforce through regular assessments and performance reviews. Tailoring training programs to address these specific needs is key. Technology plays a crucial role in modern L&D, with e-learning platforms, virtual classrooms, and mobile appli-

cations offering flexible and accessible training options. Research underscores the importance of fostering a culture of continuous learning. Encouraging cross-functional experience is another pivotal element of a robust development plan. Leaders benefit from rotating through various roles and departments, gaining a comprehensive understanding of the organization and fostering better decision-making. Building strong internal and external relationships is crucial, enabling effective collaboration and leveraging partnerships for innovation and growth. The 2024 Business Outlook Report highlights that a significant majority of small and medium-sized enterprises have either implemented or plan to implement upskilling strategies. Failure to do so risks falling behind in a competitive landscape. McKinsey & Company supports this, citing that investment in employee development enhances engagement and retention. AI-powered Human Capital Management (HCM) systems are transforming how

organizations manage skills gaps. These systems analyze workforce data to identify current competencies and predict future skill requirements, recommending personalized development opportunities. Tracking metrics such as employee engagement, course completion rates, and skill acquisition is crucial for refining L&D strategies aligned with business objectives. Creating a culture that values learning is pivotal for upskilling success. Leaders must champion continuous development by setting an example, fostering an environment where learning is encouraged and rewarded. This involves integrating development goals into performance reviews, providing incentives for learning activities, and ensuring visible support from CEOs and senior leaders. Such a culture not only keeps businesses abreast of industry changes but also fosters sustainable growth and innovation, securing a competitive edge in the market. (The writer is CEO, TimesPro; views are personal)



ANISH SRIKRISHNA

Babas thrive on social equality deficit

The Hathras incident points to a deeper societal neglect of marginalised communities, offering a fertile ground for dubious leaders to emerge as champions of social reform

The Hathras incident points to a deeper societal neglect of marginalised communities, offering a fertile ground for dubious leaders to emerge as champions of social reform

The unfortunate incident in Hathras is finding a very despicable narrative in social media. Nobody seems to be mourning the death of 120-odd people belonging mostly to the Dalit community but contesting the fact that a godman had emerged from the Jatav community. We political analysts talk of undercurrents in polls and leave it unexplained. The emergence of a Baba like Surajpal Singh explains it. In times when the most powerful of the political leaders with the help of all the money and machinery at their disposal find it difficult to get 25000 people to attend a rally, there must be something in Surajpal Singh's modus operandi which saw a gathering of 250000 people. When the BJP blames the Hindu voters for deserting it, particularly in Uttar Pradesh during the last parliamentary elections, its answer lies in the Hathras incident. The opposition leaders led by Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav have blamed the administration for the tragedy and in a way covertly if not overtly taken a stand in defence of the Baba. It's not only about a Surajpal from the Jatav community but several others like Rampal from the Jat community in Haryana, who have challenged the upper caste monopoly on Hindu spiritual discourse. They have their methods that challenge the Puritan practises but they are applauded by their followers for it. The police report filed in the matter states that organisers "underreported the number of expected attendees, did not cooperate in managing traffic, and concealed evidence after the stampede, which occurred when people stopped to collect soil from the path of the baba's vehicle." The FIR indicated that the police and administration did everything possible with available resources. The FIR ironically also shows that how the administration, not just district but pan-India, has been completely unaware of the swelling undercurrent. When such a large gathering of people clamber to clutch dust particles



kicked up by a departing godman's car, it reflects that the government and society have failed to engage with the poor and the deprived. Poverty is not as an economist would define it but that of ignorance and inequality. This provides just the fertile ground for a Baba from the community to emerge as a 'social reformer'. The social reform programmes of the government, be it the 'sarvodaya' of the yore or the 'antodaya' of the current times, have focussed on cash transfer and not social equity transfer. This explains the financial sinews of Surajpal and others like him. The financially prosperous in the community donate liberally as he talks of ending social discrimination. In his discourses Surajpal talks of equality and empowerment. He advocates education and even facilitates the admission of children from his community into upmarket schools. He routinely condemns caste-based discrimination and preaches universal brotherhood. What got his following soaring was that during the Covid-19 pandemic, he is reported to have facilitated food and medicine distribution and other such succour to the poor from the community. During the second wave of the pandemic, in

THE SOCIAL REFORM PROGRAMMES OF THE GOVERNMENT, BE IT THE 'SARVODAYA' OF THE YORE OR THE 'ANTODAYA' OF THE CURRENT TIMES, HAVE FOCUSED ON CASH TRANSFER AND NOT SOCIAL EQUITY TRANSFER. THIS EXPLAINS THE FINANCIAL SINEWS OF SURAJPAL AND OTHERS LIKE HIM

May 2021, when contagion was at its peak, Surajpal organised a camp in Farrukhabad. The district administration had allowed the presence of 50 people but several thousand attended. Such 'social movements' are not alone in western Uttar Pradesh where Surajpal operates. People flock to 'Deras' of different hues, especially in the region of Haryana-Punjab. Though all these Deras have followers among every caste, most followers are Dalits and backward caste people, who are often economically weaker too. Punjab has been witness to the emergence of a large number of Deras due to prevailing inequality in the social and economic order and the marginal position of the Dalits in society. According to rough estimates given by Sikh scholars, there are more than 9,000 Sikh and non-Sikh Deras in 12,000 villages in Punjab. Of these, there are about 300 major Deras across Punjab and the neighbouring Haryana. Out of these almost a dozen have over one lakh devotees each. Going by these standards Surajpal's Ashram has if not more at least as strong a numerical strength as the major Deras of Punjab like Radha Soami (Beas), Dera Sacha Sauda (Sirsa),

Nirankari, Namdhari, Diya Jyoti Jagran Sansthan (Nurmahal), Dera Sant Bhanjariwala (Ropar), and Dera Sach Khand (Ballan). As of now, a judicial commission has been set up to enquire into the matter. The commission would blame Surajpal, his devotees and the administration for the tragedy. The state would also for some time act with full might carrying out arrests. Once the public outcry dies down, the media would withdraw its cameras and post it at another news event. The matter under judicial probe too will hit a dead end. Probably nobody wants to answer why Babas like Surajpal get a tailor-made pitch to mould public emotion. Through their clout they come to command political influence and every political party wants them on their side. No wonder Congress and Samajwadi Party are backing Surajpal Singh in the same way as the BJP government of Haryana gave liberal furloughs to murder convict Ram Rahim Singh of Dera Sach Sauda. The wrath of Babas could be politically harmful. (The writer is the author and president of the Centre for Reforms, Development & Justice; views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

REEVALUATE CANDIDACY CRITERIA

Madam — The radical Sikh preacher and chief of 'Waris Punjab De', Amritpal Singh, who is imprisoned in Assam's Dibrugarh district under the National Security Act, and Kashmiri leader Sheikh Abdul Rashid, popularly known as Engineer Rashid, who is in Delhi's Tihar jail for a terror funding case under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, were granted parole to take their oaths as members of the Lok Sabha on July 5. This event took place amid heavy security in and around the Parliament complex. People are wondering how, under our constitution, both individuals were allowed to run for MP and won convincingly as independents. This reflects on the electorate's choices, not the country's policies. Moreover, while both Amritpal (31) and Rashid (56) took their oaths to uphold the Constitution, they have no faith in it. I believe it is high time our Parliament revisited the criteria for election candidates. Anyone facing charges of terrorism or anti-national activities should not be allowed to contest elections, regardless of their popularity. Any individual who does not respect India's integrity and sovereignty should be ineligible to file a nomination. Instead, an affidavit affirming faith in the Constitution and National Integrity should be a prerequisite for candidates. Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

CELEBRATING TRUE HEROES

Madam — At a recent event in Kozhikode, Kerala, Union Minister Suresh Gopi referred to the cleaning staff as "superheroes" for their efforts in maintaining the cleanliness of the venue. He also invited them to sit in seats reserved for special guests, which they did hesitantly. Kudos to the minister for recognizing and honoring the work of a group of workers who are often overlooked. We hope this generous gesture will inspire more such acts of appreciation for those who typically remain on

Mumbai battles monsoon rains



Mumbai, India's financial capital, has come to a standstill as heavy rain lashes the city, causing widespread flooding and disruption. The city's residents are struggling to cope with the torrential downpour, which has led to waterlogging in many areas, particularly low-lying regions like Sion,

Andheri, and Kurla. The rain has also caused significant damage to property and infrastructure, with reports of wall collapses and tree falls disrupting daily life. The city's drainage system has been overwhelmed, leaving many areas submerged in water and hindering emergency services. The heavy rain has also affected the city's transportation systems, with flights and trains delayed or cancelled, and major roads clogged with traffic. Schools and offices have been forced to shut down, and the authorities are working hard to mitigate the situation. However, the city's residents are bracing themselves for another day of heavy rain and flooding, as the weather forecast predicts more rainfall in the coming days. The situation has sparked discussions on the need for improved urban planning and infrastructure to handle such extreme weather events. Purva Pandya | Ujjain

the margins of social functions. Even Gandhiji once said, "Sanitation is more important than Independence." Avinash Godbole | Dewas

AGENDA OF PM'S RUSSIA VISIT

Madam — As Prime Minister Narendra Modi traveled to Russia on Monday, July 8, there was anticipation about whether he would address the issue of Indian nationals fighting for the Russian army in the conflict zone and ensure their safe return to India as soon as possible. The prime minister will hold summit talks with President Vladimir Putin amid the ongoing conflict in Ukraine during this visit, which is his first trip to Russia since 2019 and the first since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. India has a longstanding relationship with Russia, initially with the USSR, thanks to the diplomatic and strategic initiatives of various Congress governments over the decades. More recently, during his ten years as Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh met with Russian Presidents Vladimir Putin and Dmitry

Medvedev 16 times, either in India or Russia. In comparison, this is only Mr. Modi's 11th meeting with President Putin after a decade in office. Between FY14 and FY23, India's exports to Russia stagnated, dropping from USD 3.17 billion to USD 3.14 billion, while imports surged dramatically from USD 6.34 billion to USD 46.21 billion. Such an imbalanced trade relationship is unsustainable in the long term and has harmful effects on our domestic industry. According to the Indian Embassy in Moscow, at least 50 Indian nationals have joined the Russian army. Many others have been "duped" into fighting in a war where they have no stake, aside from a chance to escape the poverty and unemployment crisis perpetuated by the current administration. Will the prime minister address the plight of these youth and ensure their safe return to India as soon as possible? Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

DISCOVERING TRUE STRENGTH


The soul's intrinsic qualities of peace, love, and wisdom give us true strength and power



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Mahatma Gandhi has defined power in 2 forms, one is obtained by the fear of punishment and the other by acts of love. According to him power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from fear of punishment. However, the world that we live in today has a different scenario wherein power spells authority, strength, capability and superiority. If we walk down history lane, we can see that all good and bad endeavours by individuals or groups in the past were directed at garnering power. Be it world wars, political uprisings, revolutions, religious propaganda, scientific research, technological innovations, economic strategies, or ethnic-cultural dominance, almost everything was aimed at being powerful or being in the seat of power. So what is it about power that makes most of us go crazy after it? Well!! The simple reply to this would be .. Who doesn't want to be powerful & experience the adrenaline rush? Of course, all of us just love that moment of power that allows us to do what we want to do on our terms.

Power has different meanings for different people, but the most common association of power is with money and that is why the rich and the powerful people in society always make headlines due to their high net worth. Another common imagery of power goes with political leaders who are seen as synonymous with power. In the 21st century, science and technology combined with marketing has also become another means of power along with media which has also emerged as a highly influential medium of power. It won't be exaggerating to say that media is one such source that affects all other powers as it can help to highlight downplay or even destroy the power value of all the above-mentioned powers. However in reality these are all outer forms or sources of power and since they are based on outer reality they tend to deplete or change and perish with time also they are unstable, unreliable and often disempowering. If that is so then what is the True source of power? The majority of us are unaware of the reality that True power is rooted in human consciousness i.e. in the soul. Yes!! But it's unfortunate that most of us, in our quest for power, totally forget that money or status



is the only means from which temporary power can be derived. Such power is also limited in its outreach, value or benefit. The sense of 'I' and 'mine' turns such power into a limitation and it has its influence for a limited period on a limited area of life to a limited degree. On the other hand, true power will be unlimited, benevolent and universal in its impact & hence it will automatically empower others. Therefore to reclaim our real power we need to first understand who we are and live life from a spiritual perspective because when the spirit is awake and aware it is indomitable. When we become aware of how powerful we are from within, we become free from all kinds of desires. Remember! A person who can control his thoughts and emotions and live by the highest values of peace, love, truth and joy under all circumstances is truly powerful. Such a person can influence and bring about change not only in his life but also in others' lives and the world around him. As children of the Supreme, every human being is a soul inherent with core values like peace, joy, love, purity, wisdom, power and bliss. Due to gross ignorance about these very values, we lose our true power and start searching for it in the wrong sources. That is why today the whole human race has become weak and impure. But! Now the Supreme Source of Power himself is guiding us all to regain our lost power and sovereignty by imparting knowledge of spirit (soul) through which we would become the rulers of our inner kingdom. So what are we waiting for? Let's just begin the journey to experience real power by connecting to our true selves and the Supreme Source.

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

Airfares to surge amidst aircraft shortage



SHIVAJI SARKAR

Indian air travelers are bracing for a steep hike in ticket prices as India is feeling the repercussions of a significant disruption in Boeing's production schedule



Airfares to shoot up sharply as airlines in India, the third largest in the world, face a shortage of aircraft. The airlines are to suffer as the US Boeing is in crisis for its Starliner space vehicle leakage and two fatal crashes defrauding the US government. Boeing has lost more than \$32 billion since 2019. Fewer companies could lose that kind of money and not be facing bankruptcy. Boeing may face three years of probation, independent safety audits and a penalty of \$ 487.3 million in penalty. It has put its new aircraft manufacturing off schedule causing delivery of far fewer planes to airlines in India. It would hamper the growth of the industry here and limit the capability to offer seats to fliers. It would result in severe seat shortages and spiralling fares.

The US Justice Department might charge Boeing with fraud if it does not plead guilty to two deadly Max crashes in 2018 and 2019 killing 346 people. The case stems from the department's determination that Boeing violated an agreement that was intended to resolve a 2021 charge of conspiracy to defraud the US government. Boeing is charged with misleading regulators who approved the 737 Max and set pilot-training requirements to fly the plane. The company blamed two relatively low-level employees for the fraud. Boeing reached a \$2.5 billion settlement for the 2018 and 2019 Ethiopian crashes with the Justice Department in January 2021 to avoid prosecution on a single charge of fraud — misleading federal regulators who approved the plane. Boeing blamed the deception on two relatively low-level employees. In March 2019, an Ethiopian Airlines 737 MAX crashed, killing all 157 on board, after which regulators around the world grounded MAX aircraft. The crashes were blamed on a flaw with a newly-inducted system for pushing the aircraft nose down to prevent the plane from stalling.

This week the justice department's criminal fraud section told a federal court Boeing violated terms of the settlement by failing to make promised changes to detect and prevent violations of federal anti-fraud laws. The determination means that Boeing could be prosecuted "for any federal criminal violation," including the charge of fraud that the company hoped to avoid with the settlement, the Justice Department said.

The company handed over 27 planes in January, its lowest tally since September, compared with 67 deliveries in December. It sold three Boeing 737 Max planes but also logged three cancellations. As it was grappling with the situation on January 5, 2024, a door plug blew out on an Alaska Airlines flight at 16,000 feet shortly after take-off from Portland, Oregon. None was injured but it ripped off headrests and exposed passengers to a gaping hole in the 26th row. Bolts holding a door panel were also found missing, the US National Transportation Safety Board reported.

This led the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to halt Boeing's planned production increases till it was satisfied with the quality control issues.

The Max planes that Air India wants to buy, Boeing says, would have to rework about 50 of the undelivered planes because of incorrectly drilled holes in 22 fuselages or the larger outer shell that encompasses the main aircraft body.

It is a new production glitch that could slow deliveries further. Various FAA safety inspections would periodically stop the production line. The FAA says that it would allow the variant of the 737 Max 9 with the door plug to fly again — after demanding checks to the bolts on every plane. The family of two MAX victims want Boeing to face a criminal trial and pay a fine of \$ 24.8 billion. They are against plea bargaining saying this was just a reworking of "letting Boeing off the hook". In such a situation, the hope of Air India Express and Akasa getting their deliveries does not look bright.

Questions arise about how the two airlines agreed to the deal of MAX, which still has not cleared safety issues. China has reportedly cancelled some of its bookings. Amid such situations in June 2022, Tata Sons signed the agreement during the Paris Air Show for 20 Boeing Dreamliners, 10 Boeing 777X widebody aircraft, and 190 Boeing 737 MAX narrow-body aircraft along with 250 Euro Airbus for \$ 70 billion, according to Tata Sons and Air India chairman N Chandrababhan.

In June 2023, IndiGo made the world's largest aircraft order by signing a deal for 500 A320neo family planes from Airbus. IndiGo is expecting some Airbus 320 deliveries.

But that would not suffice the needs of the growing number of passengers. IndiGo is set to ground many aircraft. So would Spicejet, which met with several security issues. The delays, which are said to be unavoidable, would create a shortage of aircraft almost with all major airlines, IndiGo, Spicejet, Akasa and Air India.

Jet Airways and Go First have gone bankrupt adding to the shortage. The Boeing crisis could hit India hard with Air India and Akasa having fewer aircraft and an overall shortage of seats for domestic and international routes spiralling fares. Airlines in India carried a record 152 million passengers in 2023, a 30 per cent increase from 2022 and a 5 per cent rise over 2019. According to the Director General of Civil Aviation, the domestic air traffic from January to May rose 4 per cent during the period to 13.8 million.

The aviation industry fears that the reduced aircraft delivery is set to impact the aviation market severely more so as several passengers rise more owing to a fallacious dynamic Indian Railways fare structure. It hikes train fares to the level of air fares making people prefer to travel by air. This is impacting the railways and the airlines alike.

Fares in certain destinations like Kochi-Delhi Kolkata-Delhi Mumbai-Delhi or Guwahati-Delhi could skyrocket and match some of the international routes as the country does not have an integrated transportation approach.

If the rail fares are cut and the reservation system rationalised, it could take off a significant load from the airlines. The unimaginative system predicts a scramble for airline tickets by the end of December winter vacation.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views expressed are personal)

Leadership shifts in the UK and Iran signal a new era of moderate politics

The recent election results in the UK and Iran reflect a broader global trend of voters favouring leaders who advocate for inclusivity and moderation

There has been a change of leadership in both the United Kingdom and Iran. In the UK, Rishi Sunak of the Conservative Party has been succeeded by Keir Starmer of the Labour Party. In Iran, the people have elected Masoud Pezeshkian, a reformist and relatively liberal candidate, as their new President.



AKHILESH SUMAN

The Iranian presidential election was necessitated by the death of the former President, Ebrahim Raisi, in a helicopter crash in May. These shifts, one in Europe and the other in Asia, represent a change in the mindset of people across continents. Both countries, with their rich traditions and civilizations, have seen their electorates reject hardliners in favor of moderate leaders and parties.

believed the country would remain under Conservative rule indefinitely. The Conservatives, driven by their nationalistic desires, even led the UK out of the European Union, isolating the nation from its neighboring democracies. It is noteworthy that while the Conservatives' loss marks a historic low in the context of British democracy, the significant increase in seats for the Liberal Democrats, from 11 in 2019 to 72 now, represents a historic high.



renew ties with the European Union, and Iran may aim to improve relations with the West.

the country's political landscape. Conversely, since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran has consistently positioned itself against the West to assert its sovereignty. This stance has not only led to cultural conflicts with the West but also created significant challenges for Iran's economy. Its isolation and confrontations with G7 nations have weakened its oil-based economy.



Iran's isolation in the West. These election results suggest a potential leftward shift in global politics, with significant changes occurring in both major European and Asian countries.

As the Liberal Democrats are considered somewhat more left-leaning than even the Labour Party, there is a renewed emphasis on improving the quality of life for the common man, more so than at any other time in

remains to be seen whether this will lead to peace with the USA and, eventually, with tech-rich Israel. It will also be intriguing to observe if the Iranian leader can persuade the Supreme Leader to return to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) framework, which is the main reason for

Finally, there is a message for political parties worldwide: if you stay connected with the grassroots and continue to address the issues of the common people in pragmatic ways, you will remain relevant and potentially revive.

(The writer is a senior journalist and has been covering foreign affairs and international politics; views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

India added 4.7 cr jobs in FY24: RBI data

India added nearly 4.7 crore jobs during 2023-24, taking the total number of employed people to 64.33 crore spread over 27 sectors covering the entire economy, according to Reserve Bank data. The number of employed people was 59.67 crore at the end of March 2023, said the RBI's update on 'Measuring Productivity at the Industry Level-The India KLEMS [Capital (K), Labour (L), Energy (E), Material (M) and Services (S)] Database'. Using the Tornqvist Aggregation formula, the RBI said the annual growth in employment during 2023-24 was 6 per cent compared to 3.2 per cent in the year-ago period. In the last five years, the India KLEMS database revealed that total employment increased from 53.44 crore in 2019-20 to 64.33 crore during the previous fiscal. The data for financial 2022-23 is a provisional estimate of productivity for the total economy. The 'agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing' employed 25.3 crore individuals, up from 24.82 crore in 2021-22, the fiscal 2022-23 data suggested.



CCPA directs Yatra to expedite COVID-19 flight cancellation refunds

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has ordered online travel agency Yatra to speed up pending refunds for flight cancellations during the COVID-19 lockdown, the consumer affairs ministry said on Tuesday. In its June 27 order, the CCPA directed Yatra to establish five dedicated seats at the National Consumer Helpline to contact remaining passengers about their pending refunds. The company will bear the costs of this arrangement. This action follows a 2020 Supreme Court ruling mandating immediate refunds for tickets booked during the lockdown period. The CCPA initiated suo-moto action against Yatra following numerous grievances lodged through the National Consumer Helpline regarding non-refund of cancelled air tickets. From July 2021 to June 2024, CCPA conducted several hearings to address these issues. "As a result of these efforts, Yatra has made significant progress in reducing the total number of pending refund bookings," the ministry said in a statement.



KVIC turnover crosses Rs 1.5 L cr, 10 lakh jobs created in FY24: Chairman

Khadhi and Village Industries' annual turnover crossed Rs 1.5 lakh crore for the first time in FY 2023-24 with over 10 lakh new jobs generated during the fiscal, its Chairman Manoj Kumar said on Tuesday. According to provisional figures for 2023-24 released by KVIC, a 315 per cent increase in production and a 400 per cent rise in sales were registered in the last 10 years. New employment generation also witnessed an 81 per cent increase during the decade starting from 2013-14. "For the first time, over 10 lakh new jobs were created and our turnover crossed Rs 1.5 lakh crore in 2023-24," Kumar said. Surpassing all previous figures, there has been an increase of almost 400 per cent in sales, nearly 315 per cent in production, and 81 per cent in new employment generation compared to the financial year 2013-14, KVIC stated. KVIC's sales were Rs 1.34 lakh crore in 2022-23.



Financial inclusion index rises with growth across all segments

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank's FI-Index, capturing the extent of financial inclusion across the country, rose to 64.2 in March 2024, showing growth across all parameters.

The index captures information on various aspects of financial inclusion in a single value ranging between 0 and 100, where 0 represents complete financial exclusion and 100 indicates full financial inclusion.

"The value of the index for March 2024 stands at 64.2 vis-à-vis 60.1 in March 2023, with growth witnessed across all sub-indices," the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in a statement on Tuesday.

Improvement in FI-Index is mainly contributed by usage



"The value of the index for March 2024 stands at 64.2 vis-à-vis 60.1 in March 2023, with growth witnessed across all sub-indices," the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in a statement on Tuesday

dimension, reflecting deepening of financial inclusion, it added.

The FI-Index comprises three broad parameters -- access (35 per cent), usage (45 per cent), and quality (20 per cent) -- with each of these consisting of various dimensions, which are computed based on a number of indicators.

In August 2021, the central bank said FI-Index has been conceptualised as a comprehensive index, incorporating details of banking, investments, insurance, postal, as well as the pension sector, in consultation with government and respective sectoral regulators. The index is responsive to ease of access,

availability and usage of services, and quality of services.

According to RBI, a unique feature of the index is the quality parameter which captures the quality aspect of financial inclusion as reflected by financial literacy, consumer protection and inequalities and deficiencies in services

ATMA asks govt to restrict import of waste tyres

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association (ATMA) on Tuesday said there is a need to restrict import of waste tyres into India, saying the country is becoming a 'dumping ground' for scrap tyres. The import of waste/scrap tyres into India has increased by more than five times since FY20-21, ATMA said in its pre-budget submission to the finance ministry.

"Such indiscriminate import of waste/scrap tyres is not only an environmental and safety concern but also undermines the very purpose of Extended Producers Responsibility (EPR) Regulation on Waste Tyres which is in place since July 2022," it added.

Govt may relax 45-day payment rule for MSMEs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government may relax the requirement of making payments to MSMEs within 45 days of buying goods and services to check large corporate from looking at other sourcing avenues, sources said.

The announcement to this effect could be made in the Budget likely to be presented on July 23.

The government is considering suggestions regarding changes to Section 43B(h) of the Income Tax Act made by MSMEs during pre-Budget consultations, sources said.

The government in last year's Budget added a new clause under Section 43B of the Income Tax Act to address the challenge of delayed payments

faced by MSMEs in the country.

According to Section 43B(h) of the Income Tax Act, introduced through the Finance Act 2023, if a larger company does not pay an MSME on time -- within 45



days in case of written agreements -- it cannot deduct that expense from its taxable income, leading to potentially higher taxes.

MSMEs fear that due to this provision, large buyers could cold-shoulder MSME suppliers and start buying

either from those MSMEs that are not registered with Udyam or from non-MSMEs.

The amendment was brought in for MSMEs to get timely payment, but there are a lot of fear were raised by them, sources said, adding

that they feared that large corporate, in bid to safeguard their interest, can shift their sourcing requirement to bigger firms or ask their vendors to give up their MSME registration to do business with them.

Earlier in May, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said the changes, if any, to the rule will have to be done in the full Budget in July under the new government as per the representations submitted by MSMEs.

Indian gaming industry set to reach Rs 23,100 cr by FY25, says Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian gaming industry is poised to record a 20 per cent growth to reach Rs 23,100 crore by FY25, a report on Tuesday said, citing industry estimates that number of online gamers in India has touched 442 million, surpassing China.

The report by Grant Thornton Bharat and E-Gaming Federation further advocated a comprehensive Code of Conduct (CoC) for the gaming industry, setting clear standards for ethical behaviour to ensure accountability and transparency.

The dynamic gaming landscape in India is fuelled by a vibrant young demographic and set for unprece-

dented growth, the report said.

"The industry is projected to experience a 20 per cent growth by FY25, reaching Rs 23,100 crore. Over the last five years, Indian gaming has raised US\$ 2.8 billion from domestic and

global investors," it added.

According to industry estimates, the number of online gamers in India has reached a soaring 442 million, surpassing China, making a case for adherence to a strong code of conduct and embracing self-regulation to ensure sustainable growth of this industry.

The real money gaming (RMG) segment is emerging as one of the chief revenue drivers within the industry.



Sensex, Nifty hit all-time closing high levels on gains in auto, FMCG

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded on Tuesday, hitting their fresh record closing levels on the back of gains in auto and FMCG shares and foreign fund inflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 391.26 points or 0.49 per cent to settle at a new closing peak of 80,351.64. During the day, it jumped 436.79 points or 0.54 per cent to hit a new lifetime high of 80,397.17.

The NSE Nifty went up by 112.65 points or 0.46 per cent to 24,433.20 -- its record closing high. During the day, it surged 123.05 points or 0.50 per cent to hit a new record peak of 24,443.60.

"Both domestic and global factors continue to drive the market momentum. Currently, consumption sectors like FMCG and auto are leading

the gains, buoyed by progress in the monsoon and kharif sowing," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

Among Sensex shares, Maruti Suzuki India jumped



over 6 per cent amid reports that the UP government waived registration taxes on hybrid cars as part of its initiative to promote environmentally friendly vehicles in the state.

Mahindra & Mahindra, Titan, Sun Pharma, ITC, Nestle and Tata Motors were

the other big gainers.

Reliance Industries, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bajaj Finance and JSW Steel were among the laggards.

Investors are eagerly awaiting the first-quarter earnings results, which will guide market direction, Nair said, adding, "Additionally, continuous positive FII inflow contributes to the prevailing positive sentiment."

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.36 per cent and smallcap index went up by 0.22 per cent.

Among the indices, auto jumped 2.17 per cent. Consumer durables (2.01 per cent), realty (1.23 per cent), consumer discretionary (1.21 per cent), healthcare (1 per cent) and utilities (0.76 per cent) also closed higher. Telecommunication, capital goods and tech were the laggards.

Sebi invites public comments on amendments to REIT, InvIT rules

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Tuesday said it has sought public views on the proposed amendments to the master circulars for REITs and InvITs.

In a consultation paper, Sebi said these amendments will provide clarity on the nomination rights of directors to the boards of REIT (Real Estate Investment Trusts) and InvIT (Infrastructure Investment Trusts) managers.

In the proposed amendments, the markets watchdog has addressed market participants' requests for clarification on the rights of unitholders to nominate a director to the board of the investment manager or manager of REITs and InvITs.

The changes propose that the restriction on nominating a unitholder nominee director will not apply if the right to appoint a nominee director is available as per the Sebi (Debt Securities) regulations.

Mcap of BSE-listed firms at record high of Rs 451.27 L cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms on Tuesday hit a fresh lifetime high of Rs 451.27 lakh crore on a day when the BSE Sensex reached a record closing level.

The 30-share BSE benchmark climbed 391.26 points or 0.49 per cent to settle at a new closing peak of 80,351.64. During the day, it jumped 436.79 points, or 0.54 per cent, to hit a new lifetime high

of 80,397.17.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms hit an all-time high of Rs 451,27,853.30 crore (US\$ 5.41 trillion). Investors' wealth also went up Rs 1.56 lakh crore on Tuesday.

"After consolidating in the last few days, markets bounced back to make fresh high amid buying seen in index heavyweights," said Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd.



Among Sensex components, Maruti Suzuki India jumped 6.60 per cent amid reports that the UP government waived registration taxes on hybrid cars as part of its initiative to promote environmentally

friendly vehicles in the state. Mahindra & Mahindra, ITC, Sun Pharma, Titan, Tata Motors, and Nestle were the other big gainers.

Reliance Industries, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bajaj Finance, and JSW Steel were among the laggards.

Among the indices, auto jumped 2.17 per cent, consumer durables (2.01 per cent), realty (1.23 per cent), consumer discretionary (1.21 per cent), healthcare (1 per cent),

and utilities (0.76 per cent).

Telecommunication, capital goods, and tech were the laggards.

A total of 2,010 stocks advanced while 1,924 declined and 92 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Also, 320 stocks hit their upper circuit limit while 242 firms hit the lower circuit levels.

Both domestic and global factors continue to drive the market momentum.

Gold falls by Rs 100 to Rs 73,310 per 10 g; silver rises Rs 180

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices fell by Rs 100 to Rs 73,310 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday amid weak global cues, according to HDFC Securities. The precious metal had settled at Rs 73,410 per 10 grams on Monday.

However, silver prices jumped by Rs 180 to Rs 94,450 per kg from Rs 94,270 per kg in the previous session.

"Gold prices traded lower ahead of the Fed member speech and US inflation data. The silver prices at domestic as well as global front traded higher tracking strong base metal and risk-on moods," Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst at HDFC Securities, said.

Silver prices are expected to outperform the yellow metal in the near future, Parmar added.

ONGC to invest Rs 2 L cr to meet net zero emission target

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) will invest about Rs 2 lakh crore in setting up renewable energy sites and green hydrogen plants and cutting gas flaring to zero to achieve its 2038 net-zero carbon emission goal.

The company, which produces about two-thirds of India's crude oil and about 58 per cent of natural gas, on Tuesday released a 200-page document, detailing its path to achieving net zero emissions.

It listed clean energy projects even as it looks to boost its hydrocarbon output to meet the country's energy needs.

ONGC will invest Rs 97,000 crore by 2030 in setting up 5 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity, green hydrogen, bio-

gas, pump storage plant and offshore wind project, according to the document. Another Rs 65,500 crore will be invest-

ed by 2035, mostly in a green hydrogen or green ammonia plant, and the remaining Rs 38,000 crore by 2038, primarily in setting up 1 GW of off-

shore wind projects. These projects will help the firm offset 9 million tonnes of carbon emissions it is directly



zero by 2030 through technological intervention.

The firm released into the atmosphere 554 million cubic metres of methane in 2021-22 (base year), mostly because it was an incidental by-product of oil or the quantity was not economical enough to pipe it to consumers.

ONGC will spend Rs 30,000 crore in setting up 5 GW solar parks that will convert sunlight into electricity and turbines that will do the same with wind energy. It will add 1 GW of solar and onshore wind capacity by 2035 and 2038 at a cost of Rs 5,000 crore each.

It will invest Rs 40,000 crore by 2030 and a similar amount by 2035 to set up two 1,80,000 tonnes per annum green hydrogen and/or 1 million tonnes of green ammonia projects.



Devil Wears Prada sequel in works

The comedy-drama film *The Devil Wears Prada* is getting a sequel. Writer Aline Brosh McKenna is penning a would-be follow-up to the hit film, which is being developed and produced by Wendy Finerman, who was also behind the original.

Recently, Meryl Streep, Emily Blunt and Anne Hathaway reunited on stage for this year's SAG Awards, as per reports. No deals for the cast are in place yet. Disney, the studio that would be behind the film following its acquisition of the original *Devil Wears Prada* studio Fox 2000, has not commented.

According to reports, the 2006 film, based on the book of the same name, follows Andy (played by Anne Hathaway), a recent college journalism graduate who lands one of the most coveted jobs in publishing as the assistant to Miranda Priestly (played by Meryl Streep), an Anna Wintour stand-in. Andy navigates the world of magazines and high fashion with the help of her fellow assistant (played by Emily Blunt).

The film grossed a massive \$326 million at the worldwide box office and earned Streep an Oscar nomination. Puck first reported the news of the sequel, offering insights into a possible plot where Priestly remains the head of Runway, but the magazine has faced the financial challenges of contemporary publishing and is in a diminished state.

Blunt's former assistant character would now be an executive at a luxury brand conglomerate that advertises with Runway. While promoting her recent film, *The Idea of You*, Hathaway said that she was doubtful about the possibility of a sequel, saying, "I don't think a continuation of that story is probably ever gonna happen."

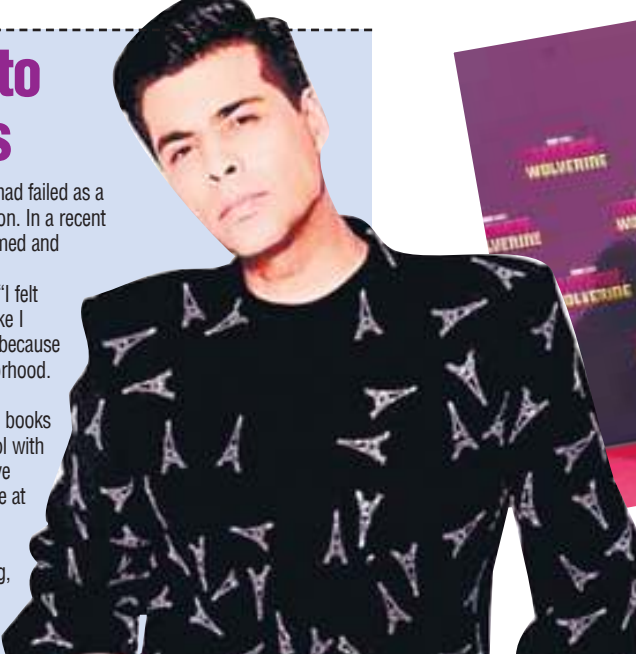
Karan Johar harks back to his tough childhood days

Karan Johar, a filmmaker, had a tough childhood. He first believed he had failed as a child and that his parents, Yash and Hiroo Johar, deserved a better son. In a recent interview, the film director and producer revealed how he self-body-shamed and wondered, "Why can't I be like other boys?"

In an interview with Faye D'Souza, Karan discussed his failures, saying, "I felt like I failed a lot as a child first. I felt like I was failing my parents. I felt like I wasn't the boy they were supposed to have. I was taught to believe this because I was effeminate. I was unlike the other males in my school and neighborhood. I didn't want to play sports."

Karan recalls being an introverted, shy child who would bury his head in books or watch a lot of Hindi cinema. Every time he returned home from school with his report card, he experienced disappointment in his mother's eyes. "I've always gone to school with a gloomy heart. There was apathy toward me at school. It didn't matter if I was present or not," the director explained.

Karan recalled an incident from his school days when he was three, saying, "There was this talent competition, and everyone was performing, and I did a dance. I noticed that some people were laughing, and my mother was in the crowd. I recall walking home, locking the door, and crying, wondering, 'Why can't I be like other boys?'"



Paul Mescal is all set for battle in *Gladiator 2*

The first poster for the highly anticipated *Gladiator 2*, starring Paul Mescal, was released on July 8, and it has already set the internet on fire. Ridley Scott's sequel to the 2000 classic *Gladiator* promises to be a cinematic spectacle and the poster has only added to the hype.

The poster features Paul Mescal as Lucius Verus, Lucilla's adult son and Commodus' nephew. Mescal, dressed in gladiatorial gear, may be seen sitting on one knee and ready to battle his opponent. Even though his entire face is obscured, he has a furious and resolute expression, foreshadowing the epic conflicts to come.

While the poster dropped today, the trailer will be released tomorrow, July 9. The poster was shared with the caption, "Prepare to be entertained. Trailer for #Gladiator2 debuts TOMORROW (sic)." Fans and industry insiders have turned to social media to express their delight at the poster's strong visuals and Mescal's commanding presence. The release has spurred extensive conjecture about the film's plot, character journeys, and how it would honor the original's heritage while charting its own course.



HALLE BERRY, GLENN CLOSE SIGN UP FOR LEGAL DRAMA *ALL'S FAIR*

Actresses Halle Berry, Glenn Close and Kim Kardashian are set to star in an upcoming legal drama from writer-director Ryan Murphy. The series, currently titled *All's Fair*, will focus on an all-female law firm in Los Angeles, as per reports.

Details about Berry and Glenn's characters are being kept under wraps. Both actresses will also serve as executive producers on *All's Fair*, alongside Kardashian.

According to reports, Glenn Close will produce under her Trillium Productions banner. This role marks Glenn's return to television legal dramas, having famously starred as notorious lawyer Patty Hewes in the FX series *Damages*.

She earned two of her three Emmy Awards and a Golden Globe for her work on the show.

Glenn, a 14-time Emmy nominee, won her other statuette for the TV movie *Serving in Silence: The Margarette Cammermeyer Story*. This will be one of the few regular television roles Berry has had in her career. Most recently, she starred in the series *Extant*, which counted Steven Spielberg among its executive producers.



'Sarfira is my 150th and my best film'

Akshay Kumar is all set to treat the audience with *Sarfira* on July 12. Ahead of the film's release, the actor was seen promoting the same in Delhi and Pune. A few special screenings were organised in the cities and the film received rave reviews from the audiences.

Talking about the film, Akshay Kumar shared, "This is my 150th film and it is my best film. I am very thankful to Sudha to give me this film and the opportunity to be in it."

Meanwhile, also starring Radhika Madan in the role of 'Rani', her character is a blend of strength and vulnerability, showcasing her versatility as an actress. She has masterfully adopted the nuances of Marathi culture, adding depth and authenticity to her portrayal.



Nicholas Cage, Maika Monroe's *Longlegs* in theatres on July 12

PVRINOX Pictures brings the nerve-wracking experience of *Longlegs* to theatres on July 12. This gripping mystery features a stellar cast, including Nicholas Cage, Maika Monroe, Blair Underwood, Kiernan Shipka, Alicia Witt, Michelle Choi-Lee and Dakota Daubly. Audiences can expect to be constantly challenged as they question every detail they experience throughout the film.

Longlegs portrays Maika Monroe as a passionate FBI agent, Lee Harker, who is determined to solve an intense mystery. The thrilling cat-and-mouse chase between Lee and the villain keeps audiences riveted, eagerly anticipating each unfolding twist and turn, leaving them on edge.

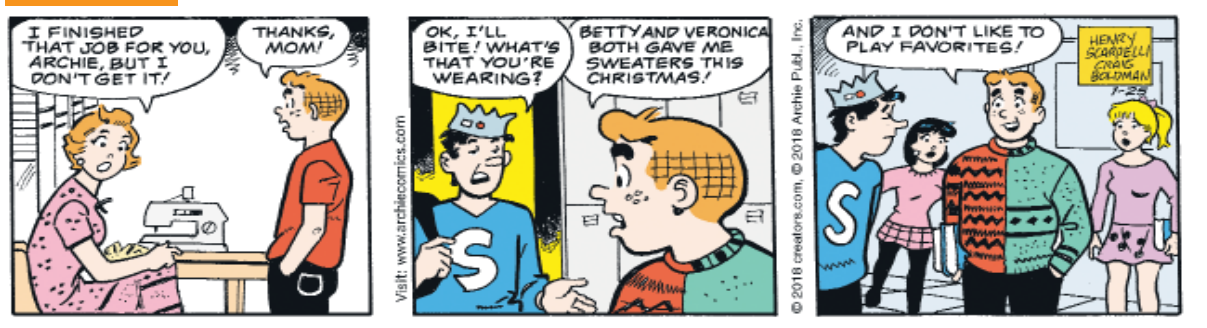
With *Longlegs*, Nicolas Cage returns to the big screen, in a way that catches viewers off guard! Nicolas Cage masterfully conceals *Longlegs'* identity and appearance, heightening the suspense around his character throughout the film. The opening sequence skillfully combines elements of subtle visibility and concealment in order to establish the character's ominous presence. As the audience becomes increasingly anxious to uncover *Longlegs'* true nature, even Maika Monroe remains in the dark about his features until her character meets Cage's for the first time on screen.

Sharing her experience of seeing Nicholas Cage's character for the first time, Monroe stated, "On horror sets, so many people ask if it's scary or spooky. And it really isn't! You see all the gags. You see the fake blood, but for the first time I was really able to experience this genuine feeling of being very uncomfortable, nervous, scared and fearful of opening that door and what I was going to see. Oz didn't let me see any photos or anything. I knew [Cage] was sitting in the hair and makeup chair for several hours, but I had no idea! It was a pretty surreal experience that I will definitely never forget."


To which Director Osgood Perkins also added, "There was anticipation. There were nerves. There was love. There was fear. There was sadness. There was excitement. Everything."

FUN


ARCHIE




CALVIN AND HOBBS




GARFIELD




NANCY




GINGER MEGGS



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	
6			7		8
9			10		
			11		
12		13		14	15
				16	
17				18	
19					

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- Saying again
- These brown fruit grow on a palm tree
- A clothing size
- A hard black fuel
- Beat in a battle
- A fire-breathing monster
- The number in a quartet
- Frown
- Played a part in a play
- Replying

DOWN

- More than is needed
- A compass direction
- Had a conversation

SOLUTION

P	A	L	O	O	U
A	L	I	V	E	S
R	A	V	E	B	E
A	N	S	E	R	E
C	N	H	E		
H	I	S	S	P	A
U	P	C	W	T	S
T	E	E	T	H	
E	A	O	I	N	D
S	K	I	P	P	I

'I'm not making any special appearances anymore'

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Rajeev Khandelwa has acted in several big-name productions. Recently, the actor discussed it with *The Pioneer* during the promotion of his upcoming series *Showtime*.

"Apart from the fact that we are both actors, Armaan and I have nothing in common. There is a big difference between what he saw as superstardom and what I saw as love. It was easy for me to believe in the character because I had seen so many Armaans. And I believe that's the reason it came through in my performance. An actor's work becomes effortless when they have faith in their performance," Rajeev Khandelwal starts the interview on a positive note.

We were somewhat curious to find out how his character changed from the first season of *Showtime* to the second. In response, he says, "Season 2 will feature Armaan without the mask he wears in public, as most actors do. He is the man behind the actor and you will see his true feelings. His desires, his emotions and his fears." Even in the first season, it was clear how Rajeev's character dealt with obstacles and criticism in the plot. In response, the well-known fame of *Kahiin Toh Hoga* replies, "Humans are naturally inclined to take criticism poorly. Furthermore, my character speaks for most of humanity. He feels that he is impervious to criticism and that those who do so are motivated by resentment or jealousy at the stark differences between their status and his. Regarding the current cinema industry, the character is a star in several films. And it makes perfect sense. In the spotlight, you often feel alone because everyone wants a piece of you. You are forced to isolate yourself from others, which leads to creating more enemies than friends. The first thing to do is to have faith in the procedure. The people closest to you are mostly waiting for you to fall. Therefore, it becomes extremely complex in the minds of all extremely popular people. While some people handle things quite well, others buckle under strain."

In the suspenseful film *Table No. 21* by Rajeev Khandelwal, the two protagonists must make life-or-death choices

and unexpected turns. For lovers of suspense movies, this one was a must-see! We brought those days back to him. He recalls with us, "Certain movies had pyrotechnics when they first came out, but they quickly went out of style. However, some movies start a fire when they're released and continue to do so for a long time. *Table No. 21* most likely belongs in the later group. I was drawn to the movie because of how honestly it presented its argument. It was also, of course, a crazy thriller."

Separately, delving a little into his personal life, we heard him mention that at first it was challenging to not be what the public expects him to be since, as performers, they can so easily fall into the stereotype of being a famous person. However, the world is highly gullible and will never stop altering the opinions of actors. Rajeev therefore made the very early decision to believe what he knows about himself and to reject what others tell him about himself. Furthermore, he is aware that he is not unique.

Aamir fame says, "I'm not making any special appearances anymore. I've declined the makers' offer. For me, *Hero Heeroine* didn't work out. What's going on in that movie, I have no idea! Furthermore, I think the projects chose me because I don't have a manager chasing down jobs for me or an agency working for me. I constantly hope to come across projects that will allow me to write a fresh story or alter the course."

He takes a break after each project and only returns to it when there are promotions or other events. After it's out, he never looks at it again. It leaves and remains in his mental collection! "I suppose that travelling makes me more whole and real. I've always thought of myself as not being restricted to any one area, whether at work or not. I was born in Jaipur, currently reside in Mumbai and spend a lot of my leisure time at my house in Goa. I have travelled through nearly all of India and around 25% of the globe. My travels to remote communities in Rajasthan, Ladakh and the northeastern region of our nation frequently give me the impression that pleasure is unrelated to financial advantages. It is an attitude."

In closing, he makes an even lighter statement, which we thought was great.

Speaking with *The Pioneer*, Rajeev Khandelwal shares some exclusive information about his character and the new series *Showtime*. He is now peddling the show.

Creating an 'Antique' impact on the breaking map!

THE PIONEER IS TAKEN SOLELY BY ANKIT KUSHWAH, ALSO REFERRED TO AS BBOY ANTIQUE, ON HIS INSPIRATIONAL JOURNEY AS THE FIRST BREAKING ARTIST OF BHOPAL.



TEJAL SINHA

The first ones are always special, they say. Well, Ankit Kushwah, who popularly goes by the name Bboy Antique, is one of the special ones Bhopal has been really proud of. Now when we mention 'first', it aptly goes with him; it's because when he began breaking, he was Bhopal's first breaking star.

During his early days, he too was one of those fun li'l guy, who did not really bother about the things around him. However, in 2008, when he was in his 10th grade, he just saw a video of the *Red Bull BC One* finals and that really hit something within him that made him wonder, 'What really is it?' But again, he knew this was his calling and wanted to do something around breaking. "I have always been around the internet and browsing. I come from a village and there you did not really have any dance classes. So what I did was search for it on YouTube and start practicing for it. I did come across many such tutorials. However, I did not understand anything about the battles. But as I went on taking it ahead, my knowledge also kept growing far beyond," shares the breaking star, all set to battle in the finals of *Red Bull BC One*.

There was a time back then when he used to just randomly play some songs and then start practicing his breaking. He found his inner peace while dancing. After connecting with many people and gathering more insights on battles and breaking, he began his travels in 2013. It was in Bangalore that he got on the ground for the battle for the very first time. "During that, I came across so many Bboymers. They were all in front of me, live and I was performing in front of them." Today, he has come so far! And to him, the journey did not require any sort of support because he never got one. It was all self-made and self-earned. "In 2012, my dad got transferred to Bhopal and we shifted here. I did come across many dance classes

there, but there was nothing regarding breaking. I knew if I had to do something around breaking, I had to do it all alone. I began solo travelling. In 2014, I had my third battle, which was a national championship and I won it."

The support he received from the audience from all over the nation was something he never knew was coming his way. And since then, there has been no looking back for him. He began connecting with more and more people and finally got the most deserved, breaking support he never knew was what he needed.

"I never got proper guidance," shares Ankit, who represented India in the Asian Breaking Championship 2023 in China, speaking about the challenges he initially faced. "Having learned and practiced via YouTube, I believe if I had gotten proper guidance, I could have been somewhere else today. Something that I began in 2013-14, I would have started much earlier. Being the first-breaker from Bhopal, there was also a time when I felt like giving up because of the ups and downs. But later, I did find people who did want to get into breaking, and I used to teach them. That really brought immense confidence and I was like, 'I'm not going to give up.'"

That made him start his own *Raw Breakers Crew India*, which also includes the one he used to practice with. Constantly changing the dynamics in Bhopal, he believes, "When I saw Bboy Junior performing in 2008 in the world finals and now in 2024, I just saw him live, and he was the one who selected me and brought me here. That itself shows the changes in the dynamics and how things have changed. The *BC One* qualifier is also happening in Bhopal. Things have gotten so much better now in Bhopal that if I don't perform, I know the ones I have taught are there. It's only and only growing."

The breaking scene is growing so much in Bhopal that the Madhya Pradesh government is soon setting up a 'break-dance' academy in the city. And with this, he is very confident that Bhopal is soon going to turn into a 'breaking hub'.

But one thing they were keen on knowing about was his Bboying name, 'Antique'. So further speaking about it, he enthuses, "In 2016, Bboy Brainstorm from Ukraine came to Bhopal, who was invited by a company. And to my surprise, he researched who all are breaking in Bhopal and came across my page. He invited me, and we did practice in his hotel too. During that, he keeps travelling to India and I was very keen because I would also be getting guidance. He was an international Bboyer. There's a place in Bhopal called MP Nagar and we used to practice there and on the streets, we used to perform cipher. And people, every time they saw me dancing, were always like, 'Aap bahut antique dance karte ho'. As Brainstorm noticed that, he started calling me 'Antique'. And that's when I kept my name as Bboy Antique."

"Crashes" are something that inspires his moves. On a concluding note, he shares that breaking creates a lot of freedom and you can do it your own way. "My main goal is to always break and keep doing it forever. I want to keep breaking until the last breath. (he laughs)"

Revolutionising relief by decoding PRP for musculoskeletal pain

The musculoskeletal system, comprising bones, muscles, joints, cartilage, tendons, ligaments, and connective tissue, provides structural support and facilitates movement in our body. Any disorder or injury that affects this system is called a musculoskeletal disorder; its predominant symptom is pain. As advancements in pain management continue, the utilisation of platelet-rich plasma (PRP) in managing musculoskeletal pain is gaining popularity.

About 1.71 billion individuals worldwide grapple with musculoskeletal problems, a leading contributor to disability. These problems impact mobility and agility, resulting in early retirement, diminished well-being, and decreased societal participation affecting the quality of life. Musculoskeletal pain is a common experience for adults, regardless of gender, and economic status.

PRP treatment is emerging as a promising solution, demonstrating pain reduction and improved function in patients with musculoskeletal disorders. It is a non-surgical, outpatient procedure with minimal side effects, as it uses the patient's own blood.

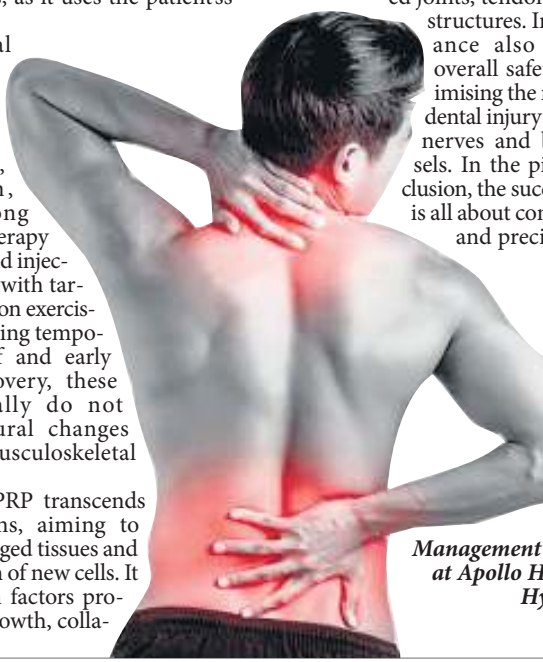
Conventional musculoskeletal pain management includes methods like Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation, along with physical therapy and corticosteroid injections combined with targeted rehabilitation exercises. While providing temporary pain relief and early functional recovery, these methods usually do not reverse structural changes linked with musculoskeletal conditions.

In contrast, PRP transcends these limitations, aiming to regenerate damaged tissues and spark the growth of new cells. It contains growth factors promoting tissue growth, collagen production, and increased stem cell numbers, enhancing the healing process. PRP also harnesses anti-inflammatory properties, serving as a promising therapeutic approach for arthritis.

Tailoring PRP formulations for specific injuries or conditions ensures better results. The platelet concentration in PRP is crucial for its effectiveness in treating conditions, like joint arthritis and shoulder rotator cuff tears. Studies indicate that higher platelet concentrations generally result in better healing. For instance, conditions like knee osteoarthritis may benefit from a specific platelet concentration, around 10 billion platelets, with fewer white blood cells preferred, as it is believed to reduce inflammation and minimise the risk of adverse reactions.

Image-guided injections, especially under ultrasound or X-rays, are another determinant of PRP success. Doctors find these methods beneficial as they provide precision through real-time visualisation, ensuring accurate needle placement in the targeted area. This is important for delivering PRP directly to affected joints, tendons, or other structures. Image guidance also enhances overall safety by minimising the risk of accidental injury to adjacent nerves and blood vessels. In the pivotal conclusion, the success of PRP is all about concentration and precision.

Management Specialist, at Apollo Hospitals in Hyderabad.)



(The author, Dr Tushar B Mummoli, is a Pain

BUMRAH, MANDHANA NAMED ICC PLAYER OF MONTH FOR JUNE



PTI ■ DUBAI

Hero of India's victorious T20 World Cup campaign, Jasprit Bumrah added another feather to his hat when he was on Tuesday named the 'ICC Men's Player of the Month for June'. It was double delight for India as women's team vice-captain Smriti Mandhana was also named the 'Women's Player of the Month' by the global body.

Mandhana won her first ICC Women's Player of the Month after playing a starring role in India's sweep over South Africa in the ODI series last month. Bumrah came out on top in the men's vote from compatriot Rohit Sharma and Rahmanullah Gurbaz of Afghanistan, while Mandhana won the women's award by overcoming England's Maia Bouchier and Sri Lanka's Vishmi Gunaratne.

Bumrah, who bagged 15 wickets to be adjudged the Player-of-the-Tournament in the T20 global showpiece last month, also claimed the Men's Player of the Month accolade for June, the ICC announced. "I am delighted to be named the ICC Men's Player of the Month for June," Bumrah said in the ICC statement. "It's a special honour for me following a memorable few weeks spent in the USA and West Indies. We have had a

lot to celebrate as a team, and I'm delighted to be able to add this personal accolade to the list." The 30-year-old was at his dependable best in the USA and Caribbean and bowled at an average of 8.26, at an astonishing economy rate of 4.17. He joined Virat Kohli (a two-time winner in his own right) as India players to claim the Men's T20 World Cup Player of the Tournament award. India were the first team to

win the men's T20 World Cup without losing a game all tournament. Barring a washout against Canada in the first round, the Rohit Sharma-led India went on to win all eight matches they played in the tournament. "To perform as well as we did at the tournament and lift the trophy at the end is incredibly special, and I will carry those memories with me forever," Bumrah said. "I wish to congratulate my

captain Rohit Sharma and Rahmanullah Gurbaz for their excellent performances in the same period, and I am humbled to have been chosen as the winner." In the women's game, Mandhana set the tone with a commanding 117 in the first outing in Bengaluru. Despite an early stutter by the hosts in which they fell to 99 for five, Mandhana remained resolute, and benefitted from some lower order resistance to guide India to a formidable score of 265 from their 50 overs, which proved far beyond the Proteas. Mandhana went one better in the second match, hitting her second successive century and top scoring in a game that saw 646 runs in total. The opener blitzed the South African bowling attack, smashing 136 in 120 balls and in tandem with her captain Harmanpreet Kaur, posted just enough to see off the resurgent visitors. She came close to sealing a hat-trick of hundreds in the final outing, falling agonizingly on 90 in a stylish effort that ensured India recorded a comfortable victory to close out the series. During the period, Mandhana recorded 343 runs at an average of 114.33, with a strike rate of over 100, earning her the Player of the Series award. "I'm really glad to have won the ICC Women's Player of the Month for June. I'm really happy with the way the team has performed and I'm happy to have contributed. For us, we won the ODI and the Test series and hopefully we can continue our form and I can further contribute to win more matches for India," Mandhana said.



Retired Warner says he is open to play Champions Trophy next year

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Declared his international career a "closed chapter" but at the same time, the Australian batting great won't mind padding up in the Champions Trophy next year should he be selected, something that has been described as an "emergency option" by his ODI captain Pat Cummins. Warner retired from ODIs after Australia's World Cup-winning run in November last year, while his last Test was against Pakistan in January. His final T20I came against India on June 24 at the shortest format's recently-concluded global showpiece.

give some others a crack [in ODIs], but knowing that he's going to still be playing cricket." "So it might be more of a kind of break glass in an emergency option. But, you know, David is going to be scoring runs somewhere in the world. So you never quite know that this is (the end)." Reflecting on his illustrious career, Warner, who retired as Australia's highest scorer and seventh-most prolific batter in the world in T20 format with 3,277 runs from 110 matches at an average of 33.43 and strike rate of 142.47, thanked his family, fans and teammates. "For all the cricket fans out there, I truly hope I have entertained you and changed cricket, especially tests, in a way where we scored a bit faster than others. We cannot do what we love without the fans, so thanks. "I want to say thanks to everyone out there who has made this possible. My wife and my girls, who sacrificed so much, thank you for all your support. No person will ever know what we've been through. From 112 Tests, he has scored 8,786 runs at an average of 44.59 with 26 hundreds and 37 fifties between 2011 and 2024. He also scored 6,932 runs from 161 ODI matches at an average of 45.30 with the help of 22 centuries and 33 half centuries. "To the players and staff, thanks for putting up with me. No more what's app junk, your ears are now going to be free of my voice. This team has had unbelievable success the last few years and long may this continue. Pat Cummins, Andrew old Mac and staff have got this," he added.

SLC denies report of drinking party inside team hotel during recent T20 World Cup

PTI ■ COLOMBO

The Sri Lankan Cricket Board on Tuesday described a media report which claimed that its players were involved in a drinking party inside team hotel during the recent T20 World Cup as "entirely false, fabricated, and baseless." A weekend newspaper had on July 7 claimed that the Sri Lankan players had a drinking party inside the team hotel before the match against South Africa, which the islanders lost by six wickets in New York on June 3. "Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) wishes to issue the following clarification regarding an inaccurate article titled 'Drinking Party Inside Team Hotel Before South Africa Match?' published in a weekend newspaper on July 7th and subsequently circulated on social media. "SLC categorically and strongly

refutes the contents of the article and confirms that no such incidents, as described, have occurred. Therefore, SLC states unequivocally that the news report is entirely false, fabricated, and baseless," the SLC said in a statement. Sri Lanka secured only one victory at the T20 World Cup, defeating the Netherlands. The islanders were eliminated in the group stage as they finished third after losing to South Africa and Bangladesh, while their game against Nepal was washout out. "We vehemently believe that such false reporting unfairly damages the reputation of Sri Lanka Cricket, its officials, and the players," the SLC added. "In light of the said false allegations, Sri Lanka Cricket has requested that the respective newspaper publish a 'Right of Reply' to address and rectify the damage caused to Sri Lanka Cricket."

It will be tough to fill Kohli's shoes, says Gaikwad

PTI ■ HARARE

India batter Ruturaj Gaikwad knows well that it will be "tough" and "hard" to replace retired Virat Kohli at number three spot in T20Is and said he is just focusing on making valuable contributions with the bat in whatever position the team leadership deems fit. The retirement of Kohli, skipper Rohit Sharma and all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja from the shortest format following the T20 World Cup triumph has opened the doors for the upcoming players and Gaikwad is one such talented batter who has the potential to seal the No. 3 spot. "This is a big topic and I think it's not the right point to think about it. To even compare with him (Kohli) or try to fill in his shoes is relatively very tough and very

hard," Gaikwad said on the eve of the third T20I against Zimbabwe. "As I had said in the IPL as well, it is difficult to fill my best shoes as well. Definitely, you want to start your career, you want to start the way you want, you want to play your own game. So that's the priority right now. "Focus on one game, focus on how you can contribute towards the team in whichever position you play and make sure you are on the winning side more often than not." Gaikwad has batted at No. 3 position for India in the first two T20Is against Zimbabwe but the Pune-born cricketer said he has no preference and will bat wherever the team requires him. "No, wherever the team wants, I will bat there. There is no problem. There is not much difference between the

opening and the number 3 because you have to play the new ball. So there is not much difference," he said. Gaikwad led the Chennai Super Kings in the IPL this year and he said captaincy has made him to get more involved in the game though it didn't make any difference to his batting. "Actually, to be honest, nothing has changed much. Because my batting has been the same as before. I have to play with responsibility and try and finish it on my own," he said. "It's just that the way you look at the game, I think every time you are more involved now in the game since you have captained the IPL franchise for a long period of time. "So you tend to be into the game for a longer period of time instead of just staying in the boundary outside and just

focusing on one ball. As I said, batting wise it's not made much difference." Young opener Abhishek Sharma had spoken about how Gaikwad helped him in "keeping perspective" as he went hammer and tongs to blast a match-winning 47-ball 100 in the second T20I. "Actually, communication is not from a senior player," Gaikwad said. "It comes from a batting partner because obviously with non-strikers you feel something about a particular bowler or particular conditions and you have to have that confidence to go and share with your partner whatever you feel and what are the right options, what to do in certain situations. "Definitely this is something which I have been doing it being part of all the teams whether state team, IPL team or Indian team as well..."

Focus on Jaiswal's batting position as stronger India ready to make statement against Zimbabwe

PTI ■ HARARE

India will find it tough to choose between Yashasvi Jaiswal's seemingly effortless flamboyance and Abhishek Sharma's uber-cool aggression at the top when they rejig their combination to make space for World Cup-winning squad members in the third T20 International against Zimbabwe here on Wednesday. The arrival of Jaiswal, Sanju Samson and Shivam Dube, all of whom were part of the main team during the title-winning run last month, gives the Indian team a formidable look in the most important game of the series as visitors look to press home the advantage after the booster shot of a series-levelling 100-run victory in the second match. Abhishek, the left-handed opener, did enough to live up to his pre-series hype with a 46-ball century in only his second game and did look the part opening the innings. However, Jaiswal, with a handsome strike rate of 161 plus in 17 T20I matches, including a hundred and four half-centuries, does have the first claim to be skipper Shubman Gill's opening partner by virtue of being the reserve opener of the first-choice T20 team. Although rare but it is not

uncommon for batters to be dropped in the very next match after a milestone innings. Case in point were Manoj Tiwary, immediately after his maiden ODI hundred against the West Indies in 2011, and Karun Nair after his triple hundred in a Test match against England in 2016. But skipper Gill is unlikely to let that happen with his best friend since their U-14 days and someone who scored his first international ton with a willow borrowed from the former. So, it could well be a case of one of the two southpaws batting at one drop. Sanju Samson, who normally bats at No. 3 for Rajasthan Royals, might come in at No.5, while Ruturaj Gaikwad, who batted at No.3, will probably drop down a place to No.4. As far as the changes in the playing eleven are concerned, Jaiswal is likely to replace B Sai Sudharsan, who was selected only for the first two games. Samson will come in place of



Dhruv Jurel, who had a good outing behind the stumps. Dube, the only player who was a part of T20 World Cup playing XI, is likely to walk in to replace Riyan Parag. The imposing batter could be an even bigger nemesis for the Zimbabwean spinners during the back-10. As far as Zimbabwe is concerned, their batting has left a lot to be desired with scores of 115 while batting first and 134 in the second essay chasing 235. On the Harare Sports Club track where there is a bit of extra bounce available for the spinners, Ravi Bishnoi (6/24 from 8 overs) and Washington Sundar (3/39 in 8 overs) have proved to be unplayable at times. Bishnoi, who normally bowls 20 to 22 googlies in his 24 balls per match, has varied his pace brilliantly and with home skipper Sikandar Raza being kept quiet, the other batters haven't looked good enough to counter the Indian bowling attack. The 13-run shock

defeat in the opener was a timely wake-up call for the young visiting side and it did well to play without five specialist bowlers in the second game where batting first became an advantage. For skipper Gill, a good score would be a necessity after two dry games and he is just too good a player to fail thrice. That could prove to be an ominous sign for the home team bowlers, who don't have even one guy with express pace. In a nutshell, it could be another one-sided game. **TEAMS (FROM)** **India:** Shubman Gill (captain), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Abhishek Sharma, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Sanju Samson (wk), Shivam Dube, Rinku Singh, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Avesh Khan, Mukesh Kumar, Riyan Parag, Dhruv Jurel, Khaleel Ahmed, Tushar Deshpande. **Zimbabwe:** Sikandar Raza (captain), Faraz Akram, Brian Bennett, Johnathan Campbell, Tendai Chatara, Luke Jongwe, Innocent Kaia, Clive Madande, Wessly Madhevere, Tadiwanashe Marumani, Wellington Masakadza, Brandon Mavuta, Blessing Muzarabani, Dion Myers, Antum Nazri, Richard Ngarava, Milton Shumba.

FILMMAKER NAG ASHWIN DISCUSSES HIS THOUGHTS ON THE SUBJECT WHILE TAKING PLEASURE IN THE RECEPTION AND BOX OFFICE SUCCESS OF HIS MOST RECENT FILM, **KALKI 2898 AD.**

‘SECURING FINANCE WAS INCREDIBLY TOUGH IN KALKI 2898 AD’

PNS | HYDERABAD

Nag Ashwin, the director of the monumental sci-fi epic *Kalki 2898 AD*, expresses profound relief as the film grosses Rs 500 crore in its first week at the box office. Featuring an ensemble cast including Amitabh Bachchan, Prabhas, Kamal Hassan and Deepika Padukone, the film was a project of immense ambition and significance within the industry. “The response to a movie like this goes beyond us,” remarks Ashwin. “The stakes were high, not just for us but for the entire filmmaking community waiting for the verdict on this sci-fi venture. Its success opens doors for future projects.” Reflecting on the challenges faced during production, particularly navigating the pandemic and financial hurdles, Ashwin acknowledges, “Securing financing was incredibly tough, but the strong backing of our stellar cast and the goodwill from our previous successful collaborations provided some cushion.” Acknowledging viewer feedback about the film’s pacing, Ashwin comments, “It’s universally noted that the first half, drawing heavily from the Mahabharata, was perceived as slow. In a three-hour epic,



if audiences embrace most of it, I consider it a victory.” From the moment *Kalki 2898 AD* hit theatres, viewers have been quick to hail her as the ‘soul of the film’. With fans and critics alike praising her powerful presence and nuanced performance, Deepika Padukone walking through flames—a moment that has gone viral since the film’s release—has resonated deeply with audiences worldwide. The striking visual has led many to dub her the new “Khaaleesi”, drawing comparisons to the

iconic character from *Game of Thrones*. Director Nag Ashwin himself called the scene his favourite in the entire film. He said, “The visual of that scene and the way Deepika holds herself—the poise. I told her that if everything goes well, this is a movie poster that will probably live longer than you and me.” Nag Ashwin did not hesitate to emphasise Deepika’s critical importance to the storyline. He revealed that extensive discussions during the writing process underlined her character’s significance. “She is the most important part of the story. We had a lot of discussions about it when we were writing as well. I think the simplest answer that we arrived at was: whose character do you remove and the story does not exist? And that became Deepika’s character. Because if you remove her character, there is no story. There is no *Kalki*,” he added. Addressing speculation about Mahesh Babu’s role as Lord Krishna, Ashwin clarifies, “Krishna’s portrayal in the film was deliberate—maintaining his silhouette to preserve his divine essence without humanising him.” *Kalki 2898 AD* continues to captivate audiences with its grand narrative and visual spectacle, solidifying Ashwin’s status as a visionary filmmaker in Indian cinema.

PEKA MEDALU TRAILER OUT NOW

The eagerly anticipated trailer launch event for the film *Peka Medalu* took place, signaling its upcoming release on July 19th. Vinodh Kishan makes his debut as a Telugu lead actor in this film, following his roles in *Na Parama Shiva*, *Andhagaram* and *Gangs of Godavari*. Anusha Krishna stars opposite him as the heroine. The film is presented by Crazy Ants Productions, known for their previous work on *Evvariki Cheppoddu*.

The movie has already generated buzz, with its teaser and songs receiving positive feedback. A recent promotional video by Vinodh Kishan further impressed the audience, setting high expectations for the film. The trailer launch event today showcased innovative promotional strategies aimed at heightening anticipation among viewers.

Director Nilgiri Mamilla expressed his delight, stating, “It’s a pleasure to have the trailer launched amidst media personalities. *Peka Medalu* resonates closely with everyday life events, blending entertainment with poignant family emotions. We look forward to its release on the 19th and

seek the support of both media and audiences for its success.”

Producer Rakesh Varre extended his gratitude to the media for their continuous support, emphasising their innovative promotion techniques, including a successful QR scan initiative. “This film isn’t just a comedy; it explores a profound theme about women’s support for men, combining entertainment with emotional depth. We are confident audiences will embrace it when it hits screens on the 19th,” he remarked.

Anusha Krishna, the lead lady, thanked the media for their presence at the trailer launch, urging audience support to make *Peka Medalu* a triumph.

In his debut as a Telugu hero, Vinodh Kishan expressed his gratitude to director Nilgiri and producer Rakesh Varre for their faith in him. “I appreciate the media’s unwavering support from the start of promotions. I urge the audience to watch and support the film to ensure its success,” he concluded confidently.

With innovative promotions and a promising storyline, *Peka Medalu* gears up to captivate audiences when it releases on July 19th.



Thangalaan trailer announced

The trailer for *Thangalaan*, a period action film starring Chiyaan Vikram and produced by director Pa Ranjith, is set to release today. Renowned producer KE Gnanavel Raja is backing the project under the Studio Green Films banner. Parvathy Thiruvothu and Malavika Mohanan play prominent roles alongside Vikram in this film based on real events unfolding at the Kolar Gold Fields. The movie is preparing for a global theatrical release.

The makers announced the release date of the *Thangalaan* trailer. Scheduled for July 10, this announcement follows the enthusiastic reception of the film’s teaser. Vikram’s remarkable transformation for *Thangalaan* has sparked heightened anticipation for the forthcoming trailer.



Prasanth Varma clarifies amid speculations ‘No targeted dig at anyone’

Prasanth Varma, director of the anticipated film *HanuMan*, addresses recent speculations about a cryptic post on his social media, clarifying that it was not aimed at actor Ranveer Singh. The post, which stated “one day you realise every rejection was a blessing in disguise,” sparked rumours due to the duo’s previous collaboration attempt on the film *Rakshas*, which didn’t materialise reportedly due to creative differences.

Setting the record straight, Varma explains, “The post was a reflection on my journey and gratitude for where it has led me. Rejections early in my career eventually paved the way for projects like *HanuMan*. It was not directed at anyone specific.”

The 35-year-old filmmaker emphasises that his social media presence aims to inspire positivity, despite the misinterpretations that often arise. “I

refrain from posting frequently due to the fear of misinterpretation. People tend to connect dots baselessly. My intention is to inspire, and that sentence was meant as a general motivational quote.”

Regarding the fallout with Ranveer Singh over *Rakshas*, Varma attributes it solely to creative differences. “It was a matter of differing viewpoints on the films’ direction. I hold great respect for Ranveer as an actor and I believe he respects my work as well.”

When asked about finding a replacement for Singh in *Rakshas*, currently on hold, Varma states, “I haven’t considered anyone else at this point. It will take time to revisit that decision.”

Despite the project’s setback, Varma confirms that he and Singh maintain a positive relationship. “We are in touch and maintain cordiality. The film didn’t happen, but our friendship remains intact.”

Prasanth Varma concludes on a positive note, focusing on his ongoing projects and emphasising his commitment to delivering meaningful cinema.



‘SONGS AND FIGHTS IN INDIAN 2 ARE VERY UNIQUE’

Kamal Haasan spoke many good things about the highly anticipated *Bharateeyudu 2* (*Indian 2*), bringing back the iconic duo of Kamal Haasan and director Shankar. Scheduled for release on July 12th, the film promises to be one of the year’s biggest releases.

The star-studded cast includes Kamal Haasan, Shankar, Kajal Aggarwal, Siddharth, SJ Suryah, Rakul Preet Singh, Priya Bhavani Shankar, Bobby Simha, Brahmanandam, among others. Anirudh Ravichander has composed the music for the film, produced by Lyca Productions and Subhaskaran under the banner of Red Giant. The Telugu theatrical rights have been secured by Asian Suresh Entertainment LLP, with Sriakashni Movies acquiring the ceded rights. An extravagant pre-release event was held in Hyderabad, followed by a media interaction today where the film’s insights were unveiled. Expressing his excitement for the release, distributor Suresh Babu praised Kamal Haasan’s innovative approach to cinema, recalling their collaboration in *Indrudu Chandrudu*. He also commended Shankar for blending social issues with commercial elements in films like *Gentleman*. He extended his best wishes to the entire cast and crew, including Siddharth, Rakul, and Bobby Simha.

Kamal Haasan emphasised, “It’s the Telugu audience who made me a star. I have classic hits in Telugu. The dialogues spoken by the general in *Bharateeyudu 2* might also resonate in society. Are there songs and fights? Distributors are asking. They are indeed present, but in a unique form. I always tell Siddharth that I am his teacher, much like I once said to Shivaaji Ganeshan. Siddharth, I am one of Ekalavya’s disciples. The industry needs personalities like Kamal Haasan and upcoming talents like Siddharth. Everyone must watch *Bharateeyudu 2* and absorb its message. Therefore, media cooperation is crucial in bringing this film to the masses.”



So much action done for Aadiparvam: Manchu Lakshmi



Manchu Lakshmi takes on the lead role in the film *Aadiparvam*. Co-starring Shivakanth, Aditya Om, Esther Anil, Sreejith Ghosh, Venkat Kiran, Satyaprakash, Suhasini and others, the movie is jointly produced by Ravula Venkateswara Rao under Anyika Arts and AEI Entertainment. Directed by Sanjeev Moggoti, *Aadiparvam* is set to release globally in Telugu, Kannada, Hindi, Tamil and Malayalam as a period drama.

Speaking at the grand trailer launch event held in Hyderabad, actress Manchu Lakshmi said, “I did not think that a huge film like *Adiparvam* would be completed so soon, including CG work. Our director, Sanjeev, made a great effort for this movie. All the team members worked hard with passion. I spent the whole last year doing aerial stunts on ropes. So much action has been taken for this movie. I have worked in three locations. Thanks to all the team members at *Adiparvam*. We are showing such socio-fantasy stories to the audience. That is the best of our soil. We are on this powerful soil, which is the best of our soil, and we are able to make films with grounds. Stories with out-of-this-world characters are coming to me. Recently I did a *Yakshini* web series. Now I have done *Adiparvam*. I can say that *Adiparvam* will be liked by all of you.”

VN ADITYA’S AUDITIONS IN DALLAS FOR NEW FILM GARNER MASSIVE RESPONSE

Renowned director VN Aditya, celebrated for his successful films like *Manasantha Nuvve* and *Nenu nannu*, has established himself as a prominent figure in Tollywood, known for crafting heartwarming love stories and family entertainers. With nearly 25 years of industry experience, he recently announced his latest venture, produced by Dr. Meenakshi Anipindi under the banner of OMG Productions. Auditions for his upcoming film took place in Dallas on Sunday, the 7th of this month,

attracting a diverse array of aspiring actors from American, Spanish, European, African, Asian, Indian, Tamil, Kannada and Telugu backgrounds. VN Aditya expressed his delight at the overwhelming response from the auditions. OMG Productions will soon unveil details about the film’s auspicious ceremonies, muhurtam date and shooting schedule. VN Aditya is gearing up to bring forth a compelling narrative that promises to resonate strongly with audiences across various demographics.



PIC TALK

Legendary writer V Vijayendra Prasad and renowned writer Mamidi Hari Krishna unveiled the first look of Big Hit Productions’ upcoming film, *Production No-2* titled *Kalinga*. The event marked a significant moment as the team behind the acclaimed movie *Kerosene: A Burnt Truth* presented their next cinematic venture. Starring Dhruva Vaayu, Pragya Nayan, Deepthi Kondaveeli and a talented ensemble cast, *Kalinga* promises to be a compelling addition to the lineup of Big Hit Productions. The launch of the first look garnered attention, highlighting the anticipation surrounding the film’s release. Further details about the storyline and production schedule are expected to follow, as the project moves ahead under the guidance of seasoned writers and promising talent.

