



INDIA'S FY25 GDP GROWTH WILL SURPASS ECO SURVEY FORECAST: INDUSTRY

RAAVAN



Live from Parliament: 11a.m.

Continued on Page 2

All eyes will be on whether Sitharaman provides the much-expected tax relief for the middle class, leaving more money in their hands, as there is tax buoyancy. Besides, the market also expects staying on

Continued on Page 2

- Inside the House, YSRCP leaders disrupt the Governor's address with slogans and then stage a walkout

- Naidu is expected to release white papers on law and order, excise, and state finances during the five-day session.

- Inside the House, YSRCP leaders disrupt the Governor's address with slogans and then stage a walkout

Nadendla Manohar represented Jana Sena, and MLA Vishnu Kumar Raju represented the BJP. Notably, YSRCP leaders were absent from the BAC meeting.

Continued on Page 2

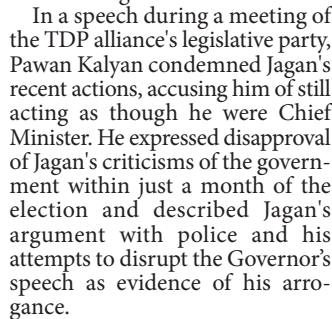
-PAGE: 2

-PAGE: 5

-PAGE: 8

-SPORTS

2



Discussing the murder of YS Vivekananda Reddy, Chandrababu accused YSRCP leaders of manipulating the situation to their advantage. He highlighted his swift response, directing the Director General of Police to expedite the investigation. He also criticized the YSRCP's handling of the Vinukonda incident, where personal rivalry was falsely portrayed as a state issue, and stressed the importance of maintaining law and order without compromise.

Continued on Page 2

Speaking to PTI, JD (U) MP Rampreet Mandal said that he had submitted his question in Lok Sabha pertaining to the issue of giving special status to Bihar much before party MP Sanjay Kumar Jha raised the issue at an all-party meeting on Sunday.

A detailed report on these matters has been submitted to Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. Attendees at the meeting included Agriculture Department Special Chief Secretary Budithi Rajasekhar, Horticulture and Fisheries Secretary A. Babu, Agriculture Department Commissioner and Director Dr. S. Dilli Rao, and Horticulture Commissioner K. Srinivasulu.

YSRCP raises ‘Save Democracy’ slogans

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On Monday, former CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, along with YSRCP MLAs and MLCs, arrived at the assembly premises wearing black scarves and raising slogans of ‘save democracy.’ Protesting against the allegedly deteriorating law and order situation in the state, the opposition leaders, led by YS Jagan, marched towards the Assembly. However, they were intercepted by police at the assembly gate.

The police reportedly snatched and tore the placards and papers held by the YSRCP MLAs and MLCs. YS Jagan confronted the police, questioning their authority to take such actions. The YSRCP legislators expressed intense displeasure at the police's behavior at the Assembly gate. YS Jagan stated that the police's heavy-handedness would not persist forever and issued a stern warning, reminding them



of their duty to protect democracy, not undermine it.

Highlighting the insignia of lions on police caps, YS Jagan said they symbolize the protection of democracy, not its destruction. He questioned the police's right to seize and tear the papers held by the MLAs and MLCs, demanding accountability for their actions.

Later, the YSR Congress Party staged a walkout from the State Assembly during the Governor's speech. Led by

YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, the party members expressed their dissent vehemently, obstructing the Governor's address.

Later in the day, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy tweeted on X, "In just 50 days, this government has failed on all fronts. Law and order has collapsed, causing public fear. They couldn't even present a full budget, relying on a vote-on-account for 7 months, exposing their inability to fulfill

promises. Chandrababu Naidu's government, fearing questions, creates chaos to divert attention, using violence to suppress opposition."

"In the current assembly, there are only two sides: the ruling party and the opposition. Our party should be recognized as the opposition, but the government fears this. Recognizing us and giving the right to speak in the assembly is the right of the opposition, which they avoided. Despite 50 days in power, Chandrababu Naidu's governance attempts to murder democracy remind us of Shishupal's sins, indicating that his day of reckoning is near."

"I, along with our party's MLAs, MLCs, and leaders, are heading to Delhi on the 24th to protest and highlight the State's misrule, political murders, and violence. We will advocate for President's rule in Andhra Pradesh and continue our fight along with like-minded parties."



Jagan joined hands with Viveka killers: Sharmila

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president, YS Sharmila Reddy, has strongly criticised her brother and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. She accused him of engaging in a politics of murder during his five-year tenure and alleged that he associated with those responsible for the murder of their uncle, former minister YS Vivekananda Reddy while neglecting her.

Sharmila Reddy stated that the ruling BJP has betrayed Andhra Pradesh by not granting Special Category Status (SCS) to the state. She criticised Jagan for not organizing a dharna in New Delhi to demand SCS and questioned why he did not protest there regarding YS Vivekananda Reddy's murder.

RRR's SURPRISE MOVE

A friendly greeting and a seat swap with Jagan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a delightful twist of events on the opening day of the Assembly sessions, TDP MLA Kanumuru Raghu Rama Krishna Raju (RRR) caught everyone off guard with a warm greeting for YSRCP president and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

As Raju strolled through the Assembly corridor, he cheerfully called out, "Hi Jagan!" To everyone's astonishment, Jagan responded with a friendly wave, and the two exchanged smiles. They shook hands and shared a few light-hearted words, with Jagan even giving Raju a friendly pat on the back.

Raju playfully nudged Jagan to attend the sessions regularly, and Jagan promised he'd be there.

Senior TDP leader and State Finance Minister Payyavula Kesav joined the scene, and



Raju wasted no time in asking if he could be seated next to Jagan in the House. Kesav, with a chuckle, agreed with a casual, "Sure."

For a brief period, Raju sat next to Jagan, adding a touch of camaraderie to the proceedings. However, the moment was short-lived as YSRCP members soon staged a walk-out in protest during the

Governor's address.

Interestingly, just a few days ago, Raju had been at odds with Jagan, even filing cases, including one for attempted murder, against him and several IPS officers. Given this backdrop, Raju's unexpected gesture of friendship has certainly turned heads and added a lighthearted twist to the day's events.

Many challenges...

Continued from Page 1

The Chief Minister called for a focus on achieving a zero crime rate and assured that even minor crimes by ruling party members would not be tolerated. Reflecting on his 53-day imprisonment, he maintained there would be no vengeful actions. He directed MLAs and MLCs to participate in monthly pension distribution and announced the establishment of Dokka Seethamma canteens as proposed by Pawan Kalyan.

Chandrababu highlighted the poor road conditions due to the previous government's inefficiency and emphasized the need for immediate repairs, estimated to cost between Rs 250 crore to Rs 300 crore.

He suggested postponing repairs until after the rainy season.

The Chief Minister also mentioned that the Centre is prepared to provide financial assistance to the state, following his discussions with Union Government leaders in New Delhi.

Tenant farmers urge NDA, YSRCP to discuss their issues in House

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Koul Rythula Sangham (tenant farmers) State president A. Katamaiah and General Secretary P. Jamaiah have urged the ruling TDP, BJP, JSP, and the opposition YSRCP to discuss the issues of tenant farmers in the upcoming assembly and parliament sessions. They stressed the need for a comprehensive approach to address the long-standing concerns of tenant farmers.

In a press statement on Monday, Katamaiah and Jamaiah emphasized the crucial role tenant farmers play in agriculture. Most of these farmers are small and marginal and do not own any land. Despite the increasing



number of tenant farmers each year, the state government has failed to recognize them, they lamented. They also highlighted lapses in the government's security and welfare measures for tenant farmers.

They alleged that the

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme and the farmers' insurance scheme are not being implemented for tenant farmers. They demanded that these schemes be extended to all tenant farmers. Additionally, they called for a crop loan of

about Rs. 1.60 lakh as per the Reserve Bank of India guidelines without requiring any collateral.

Furthermore, they criticized the state government for not issuing identity cards to tenant farmers and for the lack of commitment to providing financial assistance, subsidies, crop insurance, and input subsidies. They noted that the government prioritizes landowners who are not involved in cultivation practices.

They argued that without tenant farmers, there would be no cultivation in the country. Despite this, they claimed that less than 10% of the expenditure incurred by the state and central governments reaches tenant farmers.

Chekuri Keerthi takes over as APTRANSCO JMD

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

IAS officer Chekuri Keerthi assumed the position of Joint Managing Director (JMD) of AP TRANSCO at the Vidyuth Soudha in Gunadala, Vijayawada, on Monday. Before this role, she served as the Commissioner of the Guntur Municipal Corporation. Her recent transfer led to her appointment as JMD at AP TRANSCO.

Following her appointment, Keerthi met with AP TRANSCO Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) K. Vijayanand for a courtesy visit. In her address, Keerthi expressed her commitment to enhancing services for consumers and emphasized the importance of cooperation with officials and staff to achieve these goals.



sumers and emphasized the importance of cooperation with officials and staff to achieve these goals.

YSRCP MLA raps TDP for 'lies and deception'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP MLA Tatiparthi Chandrasekhar has sharply criticised the TDP Coalition Government for what he describes as blatant lies and deception in the Governor's speech delivered in the State Assembly. Speaking to the media on Monday, Chandrasekhar accused the government of falsely portraying their administration positively while attacking the previous YSRCP government with baseless claims. He asserted that the coalition government is using the Governor's address to shift blame to the previous administration and to self-praise while neglecting critical

public issues. Chandrasekhar also condemned the government for failing to outline their plans for the state. Chandrasekhar demanded answers from the TDP regarding the status of key issues such as the completion of the Polavaram project, the state's stance on special status, the development of Amaravati as the capital, and the implementation of the 'Super Six' promises made before the elections.

He criticized the government for its inability to deliver on promised schemes due to poor financial management and questioned the use of Rs 14,200 crore borrowed in the past month, calling for accountability for these funds.

BAC finalises...

Continued from Page 1

The meeting focused on strategies for the upcoming sessions and key topics to address. Concerns were raised about the YSRCP's conduct on the first day of the House session, with some members noting the apparent impatience of YSRCP members, including Jagan Mohan Reddy.

During the session, the government plans to introduce two bills during the sessions: one to repeal the AP Land Titling Act and another concerning the renaming of the Health Sciences University. Alongside these, the government will present three remaining white papers. Additionally, the government will release white papers on law and order, excise policy, and the state's financial status during the previous administration. These topics are expected to be discussed over the five days.

CM PROPOSES 4 PANEL SPEAKERS

After the BAC meeting, Assembly Speaker Ch Ayyanna Patrudu revealed that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu suggested the appointment of four panel speakers.

Patrudu also mentioned that new MLAs will receive training before the next session. He noted that 80 per cent of MLA and MLC residential buildings have been completed, with the remaining finishing works expected to be completed and handed over within nine months.

YSRCP, BRS plan to take political fight to Delhi

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

Former chief ministers K Chandrasekhar Rao of Telangana and YS Jagan Mohan Reddy of Andhra Pradesh are following similar political strategy in facing their respective State governments. Both the former chief ministers want to fight with their State governments with Delhi as a centre. BRS working president K T Rama Rao, along with his party leaders met Telangana Governor CP Radhakrishnan recently and submitted a memorandum complaining against the State government for encouraging the MLAs' defections and protocol violations. In a similar way, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, along with his party leaders, met Andhra Pradesh Governor S Abdul Nazeer recently and complained over the attacks on his party leaders by the ruling TDP leaders.

In the first step both BRS in Telangana and YSR Congress in Andhra Pradesh met the Governors of their respective states and made a



complaint against the State governments. In the second step the leaderships of both parties have decided to take the agitation with Delhi as a centre to attract nation-wide attention.

Now YSR Congress party has decided to stage a dharna in Delhi. YSR Congress president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy said that he would stage a dharna in Delhi on July 24 in protest against the sustained attacks on his party workers allegedly by the ruling TDP leaders.

YS Jagan said that there is no law and order in Andhra Pradesh and that he is going to protest on the streets of Delhi. Meanwhile, BRS working president KT Rama Rao said that they will also meet all the constitutional heads in the country, including the

President of India to make a complaint against the State government over the attack on the Constitution. The BRS in Telangana and the YSRCP in Andhra Pradesh are facing pressure from their respective State governments.

The leaderships of both parties thought if they sit silently on this, the party leaders will lose confidence in them and on their party.

They have decided to bring the State governments' attitude towards their parties to the attention of the national parties. For this, they have decided to run the politics with Delhi as the centre. While in Telangana the Congress is in power, in Andhra Pradesh the TDP alliance in which the BJP is also a part, is in power.

Even though the BRS is fighting against the Congress, the BJP may not support it and some political parties may support it.

The YSR Congress is fighting against the TDP government. The Congress and other anti-BJP parties may support its agitation.

Budget to spur consumer...

Continued from Page 1

The full Budget is expected to provide better-than-earlier projections as there has been tax buoyancy.

The government has projected fiscal deficit at 4.5 per cent of the GDP in FY26.

* **Capital Expenditure:** The government's planned capital expenditure for this fiscal year is budgeted at Rs 11.1 lakh crore, higher than Rs 9.5 lakh crore in the last fiscal year. The government has been pushing infrastructure creation and also incentivising states to step up capex.

* **Tax Revenue:** The Interim Budget had pegged gross tax revenue at Rs 38.31 lakh crore for 2024-25, an 11.46 per cent growth over the last fiscal. This includes Rs 21.99 lakh crore estimated to come from direct taxes (personal income tax + corporate tax), and Rs 16.22 lakh crore from indirect taxes (customs + excise duty + GST).

* **GST:** Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection in 2024-25 is estimated to rise to Rs 10.68 lakh crore, an increase of 11.6 per cent. The tax revenue figures will have to be watched out for in the final Budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year.

* **Borrowing:** The government's gross borrowing Budget was Rs 14.13 lakh crore in the current financial year as per the Interim Budget. The government borrows from the market to fund its fiscal deficit. The borrowing number will be watched by the market, especially on the back of more-than-expected dividend

LS, RS likely to have 20-hr general...

Continued from Page 1

In Rajya Sabha, sources said, a discussion for eight hours is likely to be scheduled on the appropriation and finance bills, and a four-hour debate each on four ministries, which are yet to be identified.

A Congress MP said his party highlighted its demand for short-duration discussions on issues like the Agnipath scheme and the NEET row during the Lok Sabha BAC meeting. However, it was decided that the discussion related to different ministries would allow all parties to raise their issues.

A government source said a 20-hour time slot for the general discussion on the budget will also provide different parties an opportunity to raise a range of issues to which Sitharaman will reply.

Issues like paper leaks, including in the prestigious NEET, can be covered when the debate related to the demand for the grant to the education ministry comes, a source said

from the RBI and financial institutions.

* **Nominal GDP:** India's nominal GDP growth (real GDP plus inflation) in the current fiscal year is estimated to be 10.5 per cent to Rs 327.7 trillion as per the Interim Budget. In view of expected normal monsoon, improvement in revenue collections and pick up in rural consumption, is expected that there could be upward revision in growth estimate. Real GDP growth in current fiscal

is projected at 7.2 per cent, as per the RBI.

* **Dividend:** The interim Budget had projected Rs 1.02 lakh crore from RBI and financial institutions. This will be revised upwards as the RBI has already made surplus transfer of Rs 2.11 lakh crore earlier in May. At the same time, Rs 43,000 crore expected to be garnered from CPSEs. * Spotlight would also be on spending on key schemes, like NREGA, as well as key sectors like health and education.



GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
TRIBAL WELFARE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

NIT No.1 to 30/2024-25/SE/TWIDB
Online tenders have been invited for execution of 30 works under the limits of Visakhapatnam Tribal Welfare Engineering Circle with an estimated cost of Rs. 1650.00 lakh. Commencement of tender schedules: After 4 pm on 24-07-2024. For details, contact www.apecurement.gov.in or call 9891-2783210.
Sd/- Superintending Engineer,
Tribal Welfare, Visakhapatnam

Date: 18-07-2024

1.44 lakh cusecs of inflows to Srisaillam from upper reaches

Authorities expect water level to touch 860 feet

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The heavy rains in the upper catchment areas of the Krishna Basin have resulted in significant inflows into the major reservoirs located upstream. Specifically, the Almatti and Narayanapur reservoirs in Karnataka State have reached their Full Reservoir Level (FRL) capacity due to these inflows.

Consequently, the downstream reservoir Srisaillam has been receiving around one lakh cusecs (cubic feet per second) of floodwater. This situation underscores the impact of monsoon rains on water management in the Krishna Basin.

When upstream reservoirs reach their FRL, excess water flows downstream, affecting the operation and management of the Srisaillam Project and other downstream facilities. At present, the average inflow into the Almatti Reservoir was 1.15 cusecs and the present storage was 97.52 TMCs of water at 1,698.56 feet.

However, Almatti's FRL is 1,705 feet and the storage capacity is 129.72 TMCs. With the continuous inflows coming from the upper region, this project is just 34 TMCs away from reaching its FRL. Besides, Almatti discharged 1.44 lakh cusecs of flood water downstream.

On the other hand, Narayanapur Reservoir is receiving 1.36 lakh cusecs of water from Almatti and the storage capacity increased to 36.72 TMCs as against the total storage of 37.64 TMCs. So, the authorities released 1.47 lakh cusecs into River Krishna



Srisaillam Dam

When upstream reservoirs reach their FRL, excess water flows downstream, affecting the operation and management of the Srisaillam Project and other downstream facilities. At present, the average inflow into the Almatti Reservoir was 1.15 cusecs and the present storage was 97.52 TMCs of water at 1,698.56 feet.

towards the Srisaillam Reservoir.

The present storage in Narayanapur is 36.72 TMCs at 1,613.93 feet as against the full storage capacity of 37.64 TMCs at 1,615 feet. The Narayanapur Reservoir authorities expect that this reservoir will reach its FRL soon and the surplus will be discharged downstream. Meanwhile, the Jurala Project received 1.17 lakh cusecs of water and discharged 1.16 lakh cusecs into Krishna.

As a result, the storage capacity of the Srisaillam Project gradually increased to 50 TMCs of water. Cumulative inflows in this water year, the

Srisaillam Project received more than 13 TMCs of water within 10 days. It will be helpful to fill the Nagarjuna Sagar Project downstream of Srisaillam.

Unless Srisaillam fills up and water is released downstream, there is no way Nagarjuna Sagar's water levels will rise. According to the latest information from the Srisaillam Project authorities, the reservoir is currently receiving a substantial inflow of approximately 1.45 lakh cusecs of water from the Jurala Reservoir.

As a result of these inflows, the Srisaillam Project has been

able to store approximately 50 TMCs of water, which corresponds to a reservoir level of 830 feet. It's worth noting that the total storage capacity of the Srisaillam Reservoir is 215.81 TMCs at a full reservoir level of 885 feet.

A senior official overseeing the water levels mentioned that they are closely monitoring the situation and expect to have a clearer estimate of the project's storage by the end of Monday. The current influx of water is significant and is anticipated to be beneficial in further filling the Srisaillam Reservoir. When compared to the previous year, storage at this time was 33.62 TMCs at 808.80 feet, he said.

Meanwhile, one of the top officials of the Water Resources Department said that they expect the level of the Srisaillam Project to reach 860 feet. After a week, they will have a clear-cut picture of the water released to Nagarjuna Sagar.

Krishna Delta depending on Srisaillam

The entire Krishna Delta comprising Krishna, Guntur, Prakasam, and West Godavari districts' Ayacut depends upon the water storage of the Srisaillam Project. Unless the reservoir is filled, there will be no releases to the Nagarjuna Sagar and Pulichintala projects.

Generally, around 13.07 lakh acres are being irrigated in Krishna Delta. At present, the storage in Nagarjuna Sagar is 121.87 TMCs at 312.05 feet as against the storage capacity of 504.10 TMCs at 590 feet. As there is no inflow from the upper catchment areas to the Pulichintala Project, the present water storage is 0.86 TMCs at 101.11 feet as against the total storage capacity of 45.77 TMCs at 175 feet.

At this stage, the Krishna Delta Ayacut depends upon the Pattiseema Lift Irrigation Scheme (PLIS). The inflows to River Godavari are spate and around 5.10 lakh cusecs of water was discharged into the sea through the Sir Arthur Cotton Barrage at Dhavaleswaram. Subsequently, the surplus water is being lifted to Krishna via PLIS into the Polavaram Right Main Canal for the irrigation needs of the Krishna Delta.

According to the Krishna Delta officials, as of now, there is no scarcity of irrigation water. At present, the region receives sufficient rainfall and the paddy plantation is at a brisk pace, they said. However, there may be water requirements for the delta in the next couple of months, officials said.

No water pipeiline in V'wada to pass through drains any longer



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dr. A. Mahesh, the In-charge Commissioner of the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC), has issued a directive regarding the placement of water pipelines in the city. He instructed the engineering officials that drinking water pipelines should not be located within the side drains of Vijayawada.

During a field visit on Monday to KT Road, Milk Project, Lambadipeta, and Sitara Junction to Gollapudi Road, Dr Mahesh observed that drinking water pipelines are currently situated in these drains. He has directed the engineering authorities to remove these pipelines from the side drains by July 30. Additionally, he emphasized that any leakages in water

pipelines should be immediately repaired.

Dr. Mahesh also instructed officials to monitor the drinking water supply to ensure there are no interruptions. He directed them to remove silt from the major and medium drains in the city. Furthermore, he advised all departmental officials to be vigilant during the rainy season to prevent seasonal diseases.

Flood of complaints against MDUs

Some MDUs still operating in alignment with previous government's directives



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A storm of complaints has erupted against numerous Mobile Dispensing Unit (MDU) operators in the city. Alarmingly, reports indicate that essential details about goods distributed to cardholders are not being communicated to the relevant dealers, fuelling widespread frustration and distrust among the public and officials alike. In a shocking revelation, sources suggest that some MDUs are still operating in alignment with the previous government's directives, causing substantial headaches for both dealers and the Civil Supplies Department. Dealers assert that while a few MDUs have adjusted to the new coalition government's policies, many continue their old practices, exacerbating the situation.

MDUs are mandated to distribute goods from the 1st to the

17th or 18th of every month and then hand over comprehensive records of distributed goods, money, and empty bags to the dealers, with remaining details to be entered online.

However, adherence to these protocols is reportedly lacking, leading to significant discrepancies and confusion.

For instance, a dealer in the Marripalem area reported that the MDU failed to provide the necessary distribution details. Even more troubling are reports of an MDU threatening a woman dealer in the Sandhill and HB Colony area, and another dealer in Maddilapalem raising complaints about not receiving proper accounts. Allegations have surfaced that MDUs in the Thatchetlapalem and Kotaveedhi areas are engaging in irregularities, particularly in the distribution of rice, and failing to account for the number of empty bags.

Samoon assumes charge as SAAP VC & MD



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Manazir Jeelani Samoon, a 2012 batch IAS officer from the Nagaland cadre who was recently allotted the Andhra Pradesh cadre, has taken over as the Vice Chairman and Managing Director (VC & MD) of the Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP). He officially assumed his new role on Monday at the SAAP headquarters, located within the Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation (IGMC) Stadium.

Previously, Samoon was serving as the Managing Director of APMARFED and was assigned the Full Additional Charge (FAC) of SAAP VC & MD following a recent reshuffle of IAS officers.

During the transition, SAAP officials extended a warm welcome to Samoon. Subsequently, the SAAP authorities introduced him to the officers and staff.



7 red sanders logs seized, three smugglers arrested

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The Task Force police seized seven red sanders logs and arrested three smugglers at Rayavaram village in Rajampet forest division.

DSP Chenchu Babu told the media that on the directions of Tirupati SP L Subba Rayudu, and monitored by Task Force SP P Srinivas, a task force team led by RI (Operations) Suresh Kumar Reddy conducted combing in

the forest area.

They spotted some people sitting on three motorcycles. On seeing the police they started fleeing but the police chased and apprehended three of them.

The three persons told the police about the red sander logs which they concealed in the forest.

The police seized seven red sander logs, and three motorcycles and arrested G Suresh, G Ashok and P Tirumalaiah.

Prime accused in Vizag kidney racket case held

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a significant breakthrough, the Dwarka police have arrested Mamidi Anil Kumar, the prime accused in a kidney racket linked to a private hospital. This scandal came to light on July 5 when Moola Venkata Satyanarayana Gopi filed a complaint against Dr Vani and Anil Kumar, alleging fraud in arranging a kidney transplant for his wife, Sarada Lakshmi. According to Gopi, Anil Kumar, posing as an agent, promised to secure a kidney donor for Rs 27 lakh. Trusting his word, Gopi paid an advance of Rs 10 lakh. However, after receiving the payment, Anil Kumar vanished without fulfilling his promise, leaving Gopi in a desperate situation.

The police, after a thorough investigation, successfully



tracked down and apprehended Anil Kumar. He has been remanded to 15-day custody while authorities delve deeper to determine if Dr Vani and others are complicit in the scam. This incident is the latest in a troubling series of kidney racket cases that have plagued Visakhapatnam since 2015. The first major case in 2015 saw the Enforcement Directorate arrest several individuals, including Dr N Prabhakar Babu, director of a

Seven Hills Hospital in Ram Nagar. In that case, Namita Nayak, driven by poverty, agreed to donate her kidney for Rs 10 lakh, but received only Rs 50,000.

Another scam surfaced at a private hospital in Maharanipeta, where Thambulla Pardhasaradhi from Hyderabad sold his kidney through an illegal transplant facilitated by Dr. M. Manjunath and Dr. Doddhi Prabhakar. In 2019, a kidney racket operating out of a private hospital in Pendurthi was exposed, with Narla Venkateswara Rao identified as the ringleader. The recurring kidney racket cases in Visakhapatnam underscore the grave and persistent issue of illegal organ trade in the region. The Dwarka police are determined to unearth the full extent of the current scam.

Centre urged to expedite release of Rs 1 L Cr to stimulate pvt sector

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Chairman of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Visakhapatnam, Grandhi Rajesh, has called upon the Central government to expedite the release of the Rs. one-lakh-crore fund announced in the Interim Union Budget 2024-25. The fund, offering 50-year interest-free loans, is poised to stimulate private sector investment in R&D and innovation.

Rajesh emphasised the robust pharmaceutical sector and skilled workforce in Visakhapatnam, positioning the city as a key player in attracting R&D investments in critical areas such as Renewable Energy, Chemicals, Food Processing, and Biotechnology. He underscored the urgency for industries to focus on environmental responsibility and sustainability, referencing essential measures announced at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to tackle climate change.

"In the Union Budget 2024,



there should be a specific allocation of funds for building sustainable and climate-resilient infrastructure under the PM Gati Shakti Plan," Rajesh stated. He also highlighted the necessity for incentives to promote sustainable practices, which will assist businesses in aligning with global sustainability standards and contribute to India's broader environmental goals.

Acknowledging the importance of the Ports Sector in Visakhapatnam's economic framework, Rajesh advocated for favourable policies and increased budgetary allocation

Rajesh emphasised the robust pharmaceutical sector and skilled workforce in Visakhapatnam, positioning the city as a key player in attracting R&D investments in critical areas such as Renewable Energy, Chemicals, Food Processing, and Biotechnology

for Medium and Heavy Freight Vehicles (MHFVs) to encourage the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs). This initiative, he noted, would drive the city towards a more sustainable economy.

Rajesh also proposed the introduction of an employment-linked incentive scheme for labour-intensive sectors such as agri-services, textiles, apparel, tourism, logistics, and the pharmaceutical sector. Potential benefits of this scheme could include tax breaks for companies hiring new employees and wage subsidies for additional jobs cre-

ated within a specific time-frame. Furthermore, he stressed the importance of funding skill development initiatives and easing regulatory processes to foster economic growth.

In addition, Rajesh highlighted the transformative impact of granting infrastructure status to the travel and tourism sector in Visakhapatnam. This status could enhance access to finance, secure funding for tourism projects, and attract significant investment for the development of iconic tourist destinations. Such initiatives, he argued, have the potential to boost visitor numbers, stimulate local economies, and generate substantial employment opportunities. "Major allocations of investments in large-scale projects like highways, railways, and urban development can spur economic growth, create substantial employment opportunities, and improve supply chains and costs for manufacturing companies."

Focus on research: AU V-C to professors



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Andhra University (AU) Vice-Chancellor Prof. G Sashibhushana Rao has underscored the institution's dedication to excellence, linking its esteemed reputation to the performance and commitment of its faculty. During a comprehensive meeting with the teaching and non-teaching staff of the Arts College, held at the academic senate hall on Monday, VC Sashibhushana Rao addressed critical issues and outlined a clear vision for the future.

Prof. Rao, in his address, emphasised that the prestige

of AU is intricately connected to the dedication and efficiency of its teaching staff. "The university's reputation is built on the shoulders of its faculty," he stated, calling for robust management of classes and research activities. He encouraged professors to actively pursue research projects, highlighting the importance of commitment and punctuality among the staff. "Instances of tardiness must be rectified to maintain our high standards," he added.

In a bid to ensure the welfare of students residing in hostels, VC Rao directed wardens and chief wardens to

conduct regular inspections. He stressed the need to prevent non-boarders from residing in the hostels and called for improved performance of hostel staff to maintain a ragging-free environment. The impending renewal of ISO certification was also discussed, with Rao urging departments to provide necessary cooperation and timely information.

Prof. Rao assured the faculty and staff of his unwavering support, pledging to visit each department personally to gather suggestions and address their concerns. During the meeting, concerns were raised by profes-

sors regarding the shortage of classrooms in the Commerce Management Department and the lack of teaching staff in the Economics Department. The VC assured prompt resolution of these issues.

Principal Acharya A. Narasimha Rao and Registrar Acharya N. Kishore Babu also spoke at the event, echoing the VC's sentiments and reinforcing the importance of collective effort in achieving academic excellence. Arts College department heads, Board of Studies chairmen, professors, non-teaching staff, and other key stakeholders were present.

Crucial files destroyed in alleged fire mishap

Chief Minister takes a serious view of the incident; DGP orders probe

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Crucial files related to the land acquisition were destroyed in an alleged fire at the sub-collector's office in Madanapalle, Annamayya district, on Monday.

The fire reportedly broke out around 11:30 p.m. on Sunday in the office, specifically in the room where important 22A land records were kept. Most of these files were lost in the blaze. A fire truck arrived promptly to douse the flames, but not before significant damage had occurred to crucial documents related to land holdings and allocations.

Sources revealed that while the Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO) was informed of the incident, he failed to notify the District Collector. Sub-Collector Megha Swaroop, who assumed her position on Monday, is expected to address the situation.

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has expressed serious concern over the fire and the destruction of vital documents. He has directed the Director General of Police (DGP) Dwaraka Tirumala Rao and the CID



Chief to conduct a thorough investigation, travelling to Madanapalle by helicopter for this purpose.

The DGP, upon arriving, noted that the circumstances surrounding the fire raised suspicions. He remarked that the fire's location in the room housing 22A land files, combined with the lack of notification to the Collector, was troubling. The fact that the information reached the Circle Inspector (CI) but not the Collector added to the concerns. The DGP dismissed the theory of a short circuit, citing the absence of power fluctua-



tions, and suggested possible sabotage. Evidence, including matchsticks found at the window and burnt files outside the

room, further supports this theory.

Ten special teams have been formed to investigate the incident. The DGP stated that a decision on transferring the case to the CID would be made by Tuesday or Wednesday. The investigation will determine whether the fire was an accident or an act of sabotage. Sub-Collector Sridhar C reported that the destroyed files included records from 25 divisions, including details on dotted and prohibited lands. Efforts are ongoing to identify which specific files were lost.

WG Collector visits flood-hit ST colony



PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari Collector Chadalavada Nagarani on Monday visited the flood-affected ST colony at Guttulavaripalem village.

As soon as district Collector Nagarani got information about the breach developed to the embankment of the Gosthani River, she immediately reached Guttulavari village and Mogallu village of Palakoderu mandal and ordered the officers to take steps to plug the breach on war footing.

The Collector interacted

with the colony denizens and inquired whether they had Aadhar cards and getting ration. They told the Collector that their livelihood is fishing and they are facing problems getting drinking water.

The Collector directed the RDO to take steps to provide drinking water to the colony. She also ordered the officials to keep ready anti-venom injections since there is a scope for snake bites.

RDO B Srinivasa Raju and MPDO Anugya were among those who accompanied the Collector.

KTR asks Govt to clarify stance on new crime laws

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KTR issued an open letter demanding the Telangana government and the ruling Congress to publicly declare their stands on enforcing the new criminal laws.

In his open letter, KTR said the 'draconian' laws, which have elicited substantial opposition from diverse groups, are being condemned for encroaching on fundamental civil rights and personal freedoms. He pointed out that critics fear that these laws could potentially establish a police state within the nation.

He pointed out that the Chief Ministers of West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka have already opposed these laws and emphasised that the Telangana government must take a clear stance to uphold the State's image as a champion of civil rights.

He said the Telangana government must clarify whether it will implement these new criminal laws or introduce amendments, following the examples set by other states. KTR demanded immediate

action from the Congress government and asked them to send a letter to the Centre demanding amendments to the 'autocratic' sections of these new laws.

He also called for passing a resolution during the Assembly session which would be sent to the Centre. Failure to do so would result in the TG government being perceived as authoritarian and anti-people, he added.

The new criminal laws which replaced the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), and the Indian Evidence Act (IEA) with the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA), came into effect nationwide since July 1.

Many provisions in these laws are viewed as serious violations of basic civil rights and personal freedoms. Civil rights activists and legal experts said that these laws disproportionately favour the police and the government, and would suppress legitimate protests.

TIDCO houses to be handed over soon: Kolusu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Housing and I&PR Minister Kolusu Parthasarathy announced that the TIDCO houses, initiated under former Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, are nearing completion. He noted that 80 to 85 per cent of the construction is finished but criticised the previous YSRCP government for neglecting the remaining work. The current administration will address the remaining infrastructure needs to ensure that these houses are completed and handed over to the beneficiaries.

During a press conference in Machilipatnam on Monday, the



Minister revealed that of the 20 lakh houses promised for the poor, 6.80 lakh have been constructed to date. He highlighted that the houses were initially

sanctioned under NTR Housing by former Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, with financial assistance provided to beneficiaries ranging from Rs 50,000

to Rs 2 lakh. The Minister criticized the previous government for failing to utilize central funds allocated for this project.

Minister Parthasarathy emphasized the state government's commitment to development and the welfare of its people. He acknowledged the financial difficulties faced by the state due to the previous YSRCP government's policies but assured that efforts are being made to restore stability and progress. The Minister also outlined the state government's plans to generate employment across various sectors and advance industrial and agricultural development. He

Heavy flooding in Godavari region continues, several villages submerged

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Despite no rainfall on Monday, the Godavari, habari, Pedavagu, and Yerrakaluva rivers continue to receive heavy inflows. As a result, several villages remain submerged, and road connectivity is cut off.

The Sabari River is experiencing heavy inflows, with 70,000 cusecs of water discharged into the Godavari. However, flood levels in the Vashishta, Gowthami, and Vainateya rivers are below the danger level.

The Krishna River is also in spate, with the Srisailem project receiving 1,33,497 cusecs of water. The water level at the Srisailem reservoir stands at 827.60 feet, against a full capacity of 850 feet.

In Eluru district, road connectivity to 15 villages in Velerupadu remains cut off as floodwaters have submerged the roads. Residents of Srirampuram have been relocated to safer areas. The Papayamma irrigation tank has breached at five locations, submerging crops across 1,000 acres. Additionally, water levels in Kolleru Lake are rising.

Konaseema district Collector Mahesh Kumar announced the establishment of 45 relief centres for flood victims, with an NDRF team ready to respond if necessary. Despite continued flooding in the Godavari, no rain has occurred in the past 12 hours.

Villages such as Vegeswarapuram, Tallapudi, and Prakkilanka in Tallapudi mandal are inundated with Godavari floodwaters. Farmers cultivating horticultural crops on island villages have seen their fields submerged.

Collector Mahesh Kumar visited some flood-affected villages in Mummidiavaram and P Gannavaram constituencies on



The Sabari River is experiencing heavy inflows, with 70,000 cusecs of water discharged into the Godavari. However, flood levels in the Vashishta, Gowthami, and Vainateya rivers are below the danger level. The Krishna River is also in spate, with the Srisailem project receiving 1,33,497 cusecs of water. The water level at the Srisailem reservoir stands at 827.60 feet, against a full capacity of 850 feet.

surrounding villages.

Road connectivity to 50 villages in Pedasi Tanapalli, AG Koderu, and Musunuru mandals is cut off as floodwaters overflow onto roads. Residents along the Shabari River are being relocated to safer places. AP State Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA) Managing Director R Kurmanadh announced on Monday that the first warning level has been issued at Dowleswarum Barrage due to heavy inflows into the Godavari River.

Kurmanadh noted that floodwater outflows have reached 11.36 lakh cusecs at the barrage, following heavy rainfall over the past week. "The second warning level may be issued by tonight. The situation is being continuously monitored from APSDMA's state control room," he stated in a press release. He advised residents to contact the control room toll-free numbers 1070, 112, and 18004250101 in case of an emergency.

Road connectivity to several villages hit in Eluru district

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector K Vetri Selvi visited some of the flood-affected villages in Kukunuru and Velerupadu mandals on Monday.

She accompanied by SP K P S Kishore and other officials, sailed on a boat on the flood water to reach the villages. The road connectivity to the villages was cut off as flood water was overflowing on the roads.

The Collector interacted with the flood victims and the children at Tirumala-puram and Narlavaram in Velerupadu mandal and knew their problems. Later the Collector also visited the R&R colony at Dacharam. The Collector told the flood victims that rice, red gram, oil and five varieties of vegetables are being supplied to them for three days.

MP Ramesh unveils grand development plans

Outlines development blueprint requiring 5,000 acres of land



PNS ■ ANAKAPALLI

In a decisive move to generate employment opportunities and fulfil election promises, Anakapalli MP C M Ramesh has announced the creation of industrial clusters in the Madugula and Chodavaram constituencies. Speaking to the media following a meeting with BJP workers, Ramesh outlined an ambitious development blueprint requiring approximately 5,000 acres of land for these clusters.

The MP emphasised the importance of collaboration with key government figures, including the Assembly Speaker, Home Minister, and local MLAs, to ensure the successful implementation of these projects. Highlighting major initiatives, Ramesh revealed plans for the construction of a six-lane national highway from Anakapalli to Rajamahendravaram. Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has

committed to incorporating essential underpasses and overpasses along this route. The tendering process for this project is set to begin soon, with construction to follow promptly. Additionally, the national highway from Anakapalli to Lankalapalem will undergo significant development.

Ramesh also announced comprehensive upgrades to the region's transportation infrastructure, including the construction of flyovers and a metro system linking Anakapalli to Bheemunipatnam and Bhogapuram. Furthermore, funds have been allocated for the development of the Sabbavaram to Sheelanagar road.

In a significant boost to the local economy, representatives from BPCL Petrochemical have expressed interest in establishing a new industry in the district, requiring 5,000 to

6,000 acres of coastal land. Ramesh plans to discuss land acquisition with the District Collector in areas such as Elamanchili, Anakapalli, and Payakaraopeta. Additionally, consultations with farmers and local representatives will be conducted to explore the conversion of closed sugarcane factories into ethanol production facilities.

Addressing pressing concerns over drinking water, Ramesh assured that mineral water plants will be established in 1,500 villages across the district. This initiative aims to ensure safe drinking water for all residents, with funding sourced from CSR contributions by GAIL, NTPC, and Hinduja.

BJP State secretary K Surendra Mohan, TDP district president B Tathaiah Babu, former TDP MLC Buddha Naga Jagadeesh, and leaders Nageswara Rao and Srirama Murthy were present.

Officials directed to take steps to check spread of seasonal diseases

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Collector S Nagalakshmi directed the medical, health and municipal officials to take steps to check the outbreak of seasonal diseases in the district.

The Collector held a meeting with the officials and reviewed the steps being taken to prevent seasonal diseases, implementation of the mid-day meal programme, and issuance of CCRC cards and integrated certificates.

Speaking on the occasion,

District Collector S Nagalakshmi said that sanitation programs should be carried out properly to prevent the spread of insect-borne diseases in rural and urban areas. As dengue-causing mosquitoes grow more, measures should be taken without storing water in empty spaces and canals, and anti-larvae programs should be strictly implemented.

She directed the officials to hold every Friday dry day program as per the prescribed



guidelines and the field-level employees are required to go to every house and enter the details of local conditions in the hygienic app. The officials of the concerned departments should resolve the issues entered in the app immediately, she told them.

In the areas where the seasonal diseases are registered, the officials should conduct a full-scale survey and take necessary measures to prevent their spread. The MPDOs and Municipal Commissioners

should pay special attention to the areas where diseases outbreak frequently and take steps to improve the conditions there.

Measures should be taken to ensure safe drinking water supply to the people in rural and urban areas. Water quality tests should be conducted properly, MPDOs, Tahsildars and Special Officers visit schools at least once a week along with Education Department officials to ensure quality mid-day meals in government schools, she told the officials.

In the backdrop of heavy rains and heavy flood water to the Krishna River, the revenue authorities should continuously monitor the situation in the river catchment villages upstream and downstream of the Prakasam barrage and take necessary measures without any inconvenience to the people. Special deputy Collectors Lakshmi Kumari, Gangaraju, CPO Seshadri, DMHO Dr Vijayalakshmi and DEO Sailaja were among those who attended the meeting.

Biden bows out

Joe Biden opts out of the race to US presidential elections, endorses Kamala Harris to take on Trump

Amid speculations about his health, Joe Biden has finally decided to withdraw his candidature from the US Presidential elections. In his place Kamala Harris, the US Vice President is likely to be the Democrat Candidate. It would be now Kamala vs Trump who is seeking re-election after he lost to Joe Biden in the previous election. President Biden, who will be 82 years old by the time of the election, cited personal reflection and a desire to pave the way for new leadership as the primary reasons for his decision. In his address from the White House he expressed confidence in Vice President Kamala's ability to continue the administration's agenda and lead the nation forward. President Biden stated that, after much thought and consideration, he and his wife believed it was time to pass the torch to a new generation of leadership. He mentioned that Vice President Harris had been by his side through the most challenging times of his presidency and that he had seen firsthand her dedication, intelligence, and unwavering commitment to the American people. Kamala's candidacy is historic in many ways. If elected, she would become the first female president, as well as the first Black and South Asian American to hold the office. Harris, who has served as Vice President, has been a prominent figure in the administration, particularly in areas such as criminal justice reform, immigration, and climate change. However, Harris will face significant challenges as she navigates the primary race and potential general election campaign. She will need to address concerns from both progressive and moderate factions within the Democratic Party and present a compelling vision for the future to win over undecided voters. Her



campaign is expected to highlight the achievements of the current administration, including economic recovery efforts, the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, and initiatives aimed at promoting social justice and equality. Joe Biden's decision is unprecedented as no presidential candidate have ever opted out so late. Two significant events might have influenced his decision. First, his lacklustre performance in the presidential debate led opponents to question his credentials to lead the country. Second, the assassination attempt on Trump has put him in the limelight and drawn widespread sympathy. These two incidents, though unrelated, may have compelled Democrats to consider other options. On the Republican side, the announcement has prompted a reassessment of strategies. With Biden out of the race, potential Republican candidates will now focus their efforts on countering Kamala's policies. Donald Trump, and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis are among those expected to vie for the Republican nomination. The coming months will reveal how Kamala positions her campaign, addresses the pressing issues facing the country, and seeks to build a broad coalition of support. Her candidacy opens a new chapter in American politics, one that could redefine the future of the Democratic Party and the nation.



Artists decorate a wall for the 46th Session of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee, in New Delhi

A silent revolution in mica mines of Jharkhand

The mica mines in Jharkhand's Koderma district are now free from child labour. This is a significant milestone in the region where child exploitation is rampant

On the 5th of July, the Chairperson of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), Priyank Kanoongo, declared that the mica mines in Jharkhand's Koderma district were free from child labour. NCPCR's announcement holds immense significance given that child labour in Koderma's mica mines has been an open secret for decades. Despite the International Labour Organization considering mining and quarrying as hazardous work and one of the worst forms of child labour child labour continues to persist throughout the world, especially in the marginalised sector. Children's small size makes them ideal for navigating the narrow caves and tunnels of mica extraction. In the wake of stringent environmental regulations including the 1980 Forest Conservation Act, legal mica mining paved the way for illegal trade thriving in Koderma and the rest of the mica belt looping through the dense forests of northern Jharkhand and southern Bihar. I've witnessed this journey up close. I've seen



Koderma transform from a district where every family's children were engaged in mica mining and collection to a district with all children from these mines enrolled in, and going to schools. Back in 2005, while searching for the children involved in mica mining and collection, I was in for a rude shock. The place resembled a parallel universe—schools shut down for months, CRPF battalions camping in schools, curfew-like atmosphere post 5 pm, no roads, mobile towers, electricity or tap water. I realised that the mica, which gave shimmer to our cars, cosmetics and electronic appliances, was coming from a place, which was oblivious to development and rights. Over the last 20 years, over 32,000 children identified as working in mica mining and

collection, withdrawn from work, enrolled and retained in schools through the efforts of NGOs under the Child Labour Free Mica banner. And over 22,000 in the last two years alone. This monumental change was achieved by applying a multipronged strategy at a scale in the targeted geography: Research: Data was gathered to assess the problem and plan their solutions. In 2019, over 20,000 children, a majority of them school dropouts, were found working in mica mines. Participation: Children's councils were formed to allow the participation of children in decision-making on issues they were facing. This model broke the systemic barriers of oppression in access to rights and injustice. Hundreds of awareness programs were organised in mica mining villages to prevent child labour. Protection: Based on information received from credible sources, children were rescued from mines from time to time. Additionally, in 2019, the findings of a study conducted on out-of-school children were submitted to

NCPCR. As a result, the stakeholders were able to monitor the school attendance of children to ensure that rescued children were retained in schools and no child was leaving school to work in mica mines. Partnerships: MoU with the Jharkhand state government, partnership with the NITI Aayog, local NGOs and NCPCR enabled the Child Labour Free Mica program to reach the farthest corners of the mica mining areas in Koderma. Enhancing social security: People in mica mining-dependent villages were connected to social security schemes. Labour cards were made for daily wage labourers; and people were linked with the public distribution system and pension schemes. The above interventions, had following impact: 20,584 children withdrawn from labour and 30,364 children were enrolled in schools- Change is possible, the child labour-free mica program has proved this. (The author is a child rights activist and founder of Just Rights for Children; views are personal)



BHUWAN RIBHU

Tackling new wave of terror in Jammu

As administrative setups suffer, urgent and coordinated action is imperative to counteract these well-orchestrated threats and restore stability



UMANG KOHLI

There has been a spate of terror attacks in the Jammu Region in the last few months. These terror attacks clearly show that the enemy has changed its tactics to strike into regions that had otherwise become peaceful. After the revocation of Article 370, China and Pakistan felt rattled about the new dynamics. China then tried to capture territory in Leh and Galwan took place. We all know Galwan was a well-planned operation by the PLA. This led to the movement of Indian Army Troops from the hinterland particularly from the Jammu region. The void of boots on the ground in near peace regions of Jammu has led to a vacuum as far as the intelligence network is concerned. Normalcy has to be maintained for some time, also with fewer boots in the Jammu Region the human intelligence that gets developed over some time gets depleted.

Most of the army posts in Jammu and Kashmir have an administrative setup based on locals. These locals provide fresh food, logistic support and other admirative material. Even in winter cut-off posts locals provide wood, and admirative backup in both Jammu and Kashmir. Now when troops are depleted all of a sudden, the intelligence gathering in the area dries up. It also leads to a shortage of earning opportunities for the locals making them more vulnerable to the lure of money to facilitate enemy design. This vacuum of this intelligence is being exploited by the enemy and make no mistake China is fully involved in helping Pakistan in this. The attacks are well-planned and deliberate. Pakistan has started refuelling its Over Ground Workers in the Jammu region specifically. There have been a lot of FIRs registered by the army against these OGWs over the years but little or no action has been taken on them. It's about time we took action against these FIRs. Special courts must be set up to fast-track cases filed by the army against underground workers. Many of the men move to Himachal in search of work from Doda during summers. Some of them also



make hideous for terrorists during winter for them to come there and stay during summer. Once the men move out, there are a lot of women in the Doda area who help terrorists. These women give food and information to the terrorists. The terrorists generally hide in Guwardi (resting place Gujars make) and hideouts made during winters in higher reaches of Doda and these women provide them food there. They also provide them with information about force movement and then help them go to the other side of the ridge. Many women work for money yet others get physically involved with these terrorists. The army is not allowed to interrogate these women or to search them. Even after the AFSPA the rules to interact with women are very strict. If the soldiers try to check the movement details of these women, false FIRs are sometimes lodged against them. It would be prudent to provide Special Women Officers in army posts who could search these women and also interro-

gate them. Also, a lot of dog squads could come in handy to chase away these women after smelling them. Till 2003 special women police officers used to stay at far-off army posts in Doda, however as comparative normalcy returned the practice was let go. Special women units in city centres like Doda, Jammu, Udhampur etc could also help. Doda has also had a history of women moving as guides of terrorists. They provide them with local SIM cards which terrorists keep disposing of. The movement of forces from one place to another is also communicated by these OGWs. However, rape of these women by terrorists is not uncommon. One odd local terrorist generally accompanies these Pakistani terrorists to act as a physical guide. Security forces in Jammu and Kashmir work together and police and army share information and intelligence, however when two different organisations share intelligence chances of overlap and double cross increase. It will be prudent to share intel-

ligence but not mix standard operating procedures which may be different for the two organisations. Lungars of jawans of both forces must remain different at all times. Also, each piece of information and intelligence shared must be carefully corroborated by other sources independent of each other. It is also advised not to rush into situations based on half-corked information. The encounters in Jammu region is an effort by the enemy to showcase that there is no region in Jammu and Kashmir that is peaceful. They want to also show that the revocation of Article 370 has made no difference to their effort to bleed India. The entire effort of the enemy is hinged on Foreign Terrorists who are helped by local Over Ground Workers. Hoping fast action is taken against OGWs while the army eliminates these terrorists sent by Pakistan on the instructions of China. (The author has firsthand experience of encounters in Doda Forests for three long years; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

STUDENT UNREST IN BANGLADESH

Madam — The unrest in Bangladesh due to student protests is a matter of concern for India. Students from Dhaka University are outraged about the government's quota system in education. The dissatisfaction among locals from the Awami League is evident, with reports of killings in the Chittagong district. Quotas and reservations were initially tools to promote equity in society, but their continued existence raises questions about government accountability. This issue is not unique to Bangladesh; India also has a complex reservation and quota system that makes it difficult for average students to access good education and job opportunities. Brilliant students succeed on their own merits, while others rely on quotas, leaving average students frustrated. The governments of India and Bangladesh, along with other countries that adhere to quotas and reservations, need to address this critical issue to prevent future unrest among students. A number of Indian students are still to be evacuated. Their families are anxiously waiting any news about them as most communication channels are blocked. This situation not only highlights the immediate need for safety and support for the students by the Indian government. The international community, including neighboring countries like India, is closely monitoring the situation, recognizing the potential for wider regional implications. It is imperative that the Bangladeshi government takes swift and decisive action to address the students' concerns and restore normalcy to ensure the well-being and future of its young population. Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

POLITICAL AGENDAS: A REFLECTIONS

Madam — The All-Party meeting called by the ruling dispensation seems intended to push through its agenda for this

Mumbai's monsoon mayhem



Despite the BMC's tall claims of rain readiness, waterlogging has been a persistent issue at focal points in Mumbai.

Initial rains inundate low-lying areas and block vehicular traffic, creating chaos on the roads. The widespread presence of potholes on Mumbai roads and highways exacerbates the problem, keeping road users on edge. Subways suffer from poor lighting and potholes, adding to the fears of road users. Waterlogging, traffic snarls, train delays, and fallen trees worsen the situation. The lethargy of BMC workers is evident, and public miseries go unaddressed. It is so unfortunate that the authorities take people for granted and despite enormous resources at their disposal do not act in time. It is now up to the people to take precautions during the rains and help others to avoid mishaps. Helping each other during floods is a practical solution to the pressing problems faced by the people of Mumbai. C K Subramaniam | Mumbai

session of Parliament without opposition hurdles. Every party, state, and individual leader has a wish list. The former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, who previously demanded Special Category Status for the state before assuming office, was expected to achieve this goal with an absolute majority. However, to everyone's surprise, he never addressed this issue and focused instead on implementing Union government programs. Now, having lost power, he has again raised the issue of Special Category Status for Andhra Pradesh. People have come to understand the leaders and their parties; it is now up to the leaders to understand the people and their demands. A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

CELEBRATING INDIAN TENNIS LEGENDS

Madam — It was a significant day at Newport, Rhode Island, as Indian tennis legends Leander Adrian Paes and Vijay Amritraj were inducted into the prestigious International Hall of Fame. Leander Paes, a Padma Bhushan and

Padma Shri awardee, is renowned as one of the all-time great doubles players, holding the record for the most doubles wins in Davis Cup. His illustrious career includes eight men's doubles and ten mixed doubles Grand Slam titles. In 1999, he, along with Mahesh Bhupathi, became the first pair in the Open era to reach the finals of all four Grand Slams in men's doubles in the same calendar year. Vijay Amritraj, a Padma Shri awardee, was inducted in the contributor category, recognizing his visionary leadership and transcendent impact on the sport. In 2022, Amritraj was honored in London by the International Tennis Hall of Fame and the International Tennis Federation for his lifetime contributions to tennis. Their achievements continue to inspire and shape the future of tennis. Kudos to both Paes and Amritraj for making India proud. Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

It can liberate the mind from perpetual conflict and lead to inner peace



RAVI VALLURI

Recall the iconic lines, of Amitabh Bachchan in the movie Deewar — looks intently at the idol of Lord Shiva and says, “Bahut khush hoge tum!” Bachchan, in the movie, essayed the role of an atheist smuggler. However, eventually, in the final stages of his life, he surrenders to the Supreme Power and seeks forgiveness. True enlightenment is the art of living compassionately. The human mind and heart reach a point of inflexion where an act of pardon remains an inescapable reality.

A prosaic individual might not be able to separate the chaff from the grain. His mind is full of antipathetic thoughts that he cannot transcend the barrier and is unable to exonerate anyone who has inflicted pain or hardship on him. The mind, full of gloom-ridden and obstructive thoughts cannot perceive the divinity in others. It remains perpetually in a state of conflict. Such an emotionally distraught person would castigate even angelic and divine figures out of callowness. Several organised and structured religions lay prominence on the art of forgiveness. If an individual does not rise to the sublime spheres of compassion and forgiveness, then he gets trapped in the whirlpool of cause and effect. The unabated Karmic cycle continues without any resolution.

The pivot is to fortify and protect the human mind to make it robust and compassionate. It attempts to extricate the self from the cause and effect of actions and even non-actions. Action and non-actions of humans indeed leave an indelible impression on the human mind. It would be perspicacious to pose as to how non-actions are also a kind of Karmic activity and in what manner it impacts the human mind and consciousness. Non-action in a way represents not taking up the gauntlet. Sage Ashtavakra, who authored the treatise, Ashtavakra Gita, posits a theory that an individual should break the bondage of guilt and anger to invoke the grace of remission. There is a poignant Zen story that explains the exemplary tenets of compassion and forgiveness. Aeons ago a Zen Master summoned his tutees in a Temple of Knowledge and asked them if they harboured the antipathetic emotion of hatred in their minds. “Yes!” exclaimed the disciples. The Master directed his disciples to place a potato each



in their bag and always travel with it as a reminder that despite the practice of meditation and breathing exercises their prana level was not high enough to expatriate hatred and inculcate compassion. The number of potatoes was to increase depending on the quantum of anger and would be directly proportional to the antipathy in their minds. Some young monks ended up carrying a bagful of potatoes, which over a period became malodorous. In sheer exasperation, the harried disciples sought refuge in the grace of the master to dispense away with the bag. The Zen Master guffawed and chided his students to abandon the negative trait of abhorrence from their minds, lest the malodour of these traits become a burden all through their lives. To lead a warm and healthy life, individuals should embark upon the path of forgiveness and compassion.

This suffuses the mind with immense strength and courage of conviction. It would be insightful for any individual to make positive affirmations, reinforcing love for every animate and inanimate object to build a divine society. Such affirmations would train the mind to remain unruffled and spread the quintessential gospel of forgiveness. Thereby humans would truly embrace fellow beings. If we construe the human mind to be the hardware, compassionate thoughts and forgiveness are part of non-negotiable software.

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

A blueprint for boosting rural economic growth



MONICA B SOOD

India’s rural sector stands at a pivotal juncture, poised for transformation through small-scale and green enterprises. It has potential to become India’s growth engine



India’s rural sector must be transformed for inclusive growth and sustainable development. This change relies on small-scale and green enterprises to boost the rural economy, empower women, and employ unskilled workers. By channelling resources such as the extra Rs 1 lakh crore RBI dividends into capital projects and innovative schemes, India can foster self-sustainability in rural areas, mitigate youth distress, and rejuvenate the demand side of the economy.

This comprehensive approach not only addresses immediate employment needs but also lays the foundation for long-term capital formation and environmental preservation.

Incorporation of small-scale and green industries as the engine of growth

Micro enterprises have always been the backbone of the Indian agriculture-based economy. These labour-intensive enterprises perfectly capture the unskilled and semi-skilled manpower from the farming communities, therefore, creating employment and improving existence standards without much training. The development of these industries generates a massive multiplier effect on the creation of other business lines that support them and the general economy. Green industries are therefore leading this change. Encompassing renewable energy, organic farming, and sustainable manufacturing, these sectors offer dual benefits: employment opportunities for production and environmental management.

The establishment of green industries in the rural region targets to solve social problems like climate change and environmental degradation and at the same time create a sustainable means of living. This was done by allowing biogas and biofuel plants, solar energy farms, Ayurvedic and Unani medicine industries, and cooperative organic farming. These measures create employment, lessen the dependency on fossil energy and foster the preservation of the environment.

Women empowerment Out of the total rural population of India, the female population is about 30 % which is a great unexplored talent pool. It is shown the pro-



THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GREEN INDUSTRIES IN THE RURAL REGION TARGETS TO SOLVE SOCIAL PROBLEMS LIKE CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND AT THE SAME TIME CREATE A SUSTAINABLE MEANS OF LIVING

motion of employment and entrepreneurship in these women brings substantial socio-economic returns. Micro and sustainable industries remain essential in empowering women since they create employment, skills development, and business opportunities for women. Self-help groups, women-based cooperatives and micro enterprises are the best way to ensure women’s productive participation in the rural economy. These initiatives exist in areas where women dominate including handicrafting, production in textiles, manufacturing of alternative/Ayurvedic products, processing of raw materials, farming organically, milk production, and food processing. Credit, training, and market linkages also enable women to set up and expand their businesses besides improving on household incomes and community development.

Public private partnerships

A Channel for Facilitating PPP for Rural Development PPP is a powerful platform for pooling resources and skills to promote rural development. Thus, PPP models can initiate the development of small and green industries in rural areas with the support of the government and private investors. The government can provide policy support and an environment for development and financial backing while the private players bring in funds, technical expertise, and managerial skills. As per this model, to encourage rural development, a part of ₹1 lakh crore RBI dividends can be spent to co-finance with private entities. It can be used to fund the development of industrial clusters, renewable energy projects, and training institutions with efficient implementation and compliance with social and environmental responsibility.

Capital formation and rural employment

These are two basic objectives of

the growth process that need to be understood and analysed. To sum up, the provision of ₹1 lakh crore RBI dividends for capital investments in the form of sustainable rural development plans provides a strong base. Construction of infrastructure such as roads, bridges, renewable energy facilities, and development of industrial estates can offer employment in the short run as well as in the long run spur economic development. A targeted investment can engage millions annually, thus erasing rural unemployment and distress to a large extent. In this way, employment of non-skilled and semi-skilled people from rural areas is possible, and thus future generations are protected from unemployment migration to urban areas, and rural-urban disparity. The placement of rural youth through placement in local schools, hospitals, and government offices helps in the tackling of manpower issues leading to improved service delivery and welfare of the populace.

Funding rural transformation

Funding the strategic rural development agenda calls for out-of-the-box funding acquisition strategies to tap several sources of funds. To the Rs 1 lakh crore RBI dividends, contributions from CSR, and own finances of panchayats and municipalities, and specific cess on fuel, income tax, and GST can be added. For example, the mandatory 25% contribution from CSR funds can be used to direct corporate money into rural development causes. While a 0.5% cess on luxury items, cars, aeroplane fares and GST can fetch a huge additional amount. However, it revealed that additional resources can be mobilized from the Skill Development Schemes (SKS) and hospital’s SKS funds for support of wages in essential sectors. The introduction of a small cess on share trading can also produce a fairly good revenue for such

a scheme in turn funding the rural employment programme permanently.

Addressing rural unemployment

At the moment, unemployment has touched the figure of 8% in India. 1 per cent of the nation’s unemployed populace is comprised of rural youth. If PM wants to bring the unemployment rate down to 6% and this is considered nearly equal to the employment rate observed in the developed countries, the scheme should ensure employment generation for at least 1 crore rural youth. The scheme should aim at offering low-wage employment to the increase in unemployment among the rural youthful population while at the same time ensuring that such employment offers incentives to make the youth stay in their given community without competing for skilled employment opportunities. This way the scheme means setting wages at ₹ 10,000 per month with 80:20 work distribution will sustain rural households’ income and at the same time does not hinder organised labour employers markets.

A Roadmap to rural rejuvenation

Additional Rs1 lakh crore of RBI dividends coupled with idea capitalisms as sources of funding open the doors of a scheme that has the potential of providing a road map for rural rejuvenation. As a result, the small-scale industries, green industries, women and unskilled rural labour can make the scheme self-sustainable, reduce unemployment and bring a long-lasting impact on the environment. PPP and the focus on capital development will help the scheme to be sustainable and grow in scale, thus painting a better picture for rural India.

(The writer is Chairperson of the National Unity & Security Council; views are personal)

Bihar again misses out on Olympic representation

Bihar’s chronic issues in sports infrastructure, funding mismanagement, and administrative neglect continue to hinder its representation on the global stage

Bihar is bereft of a berth in the Olympics again. By Gyan Bhadra The last week of this month is going to witness the glistening inaugural ceremony of the Olympic games of 17-days duration in Paris. In its wake sports pundits in India are preempting and counting on their fingers the medal tally Indian athletes will bag for the country. However, at the time of writing this piece, the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs had put its imprimatur on the list of 117 athletes along with 140 supporting Staff. Now the question crops up: Is there any athlete from Bihar representing India in the Paris Olympics? The answer is a resounding “no”. As in the Tokyo Olympics; so in the



GYAN BHADRA

Paris Olympics, there is no representation of Bihar’s sportsmen. The reasons behind it are threefold. One, as far as sports infrastructure in Bihar is concerned, there is a lack of an adequate number of stadiums, sports-related training centres and the ablest guidance of coaches. The reasons could be attributed to the fact that government investment in the sports sector is abysmally low. Even central financial

assistance given to the Bihar government to the tune of 50.83 crores as part of the “Khelo India” scheme was seemingly not utilised for either the development of infrastructure or the honing of skills of athletes in the state. The patterns of allocation of funds to the sports sector are depressingly alarming. It has been observed that money meant for the overall growth of the sports sector is diverted as per the whims and fancies of politicians. This invariably puts a toll on the sports industry which finds itself in a quandary and struggling always. Two, it goes without saying that the association of politicians with prominent sports bodies is an age-old pastime.



Every politician worth its salt desires to be a member of sports bodies. Whether it be BCCI or sports bodies at the state level, every political leader wants to usurp icing on the cake of huge funds invested in the sports bodies then how could Bihar be left behind? Instead of being deeds heroes, espousing the

cause of sports development in Bihar, politicians, once getting a coveted position in sports bodies, exploit available resources to serve their ends. Public memory is short. But not so painfully short that it will forget the fact that former Chief Minister Lalu Yadav, when, at the helms of Bihar Cricket Association as President, did not do enough in the realm of training budding talents of Bihar. The lack of Lalu’s political will to promote cricket could be gauged by the fact that during his tenure as BCA president, no cricket player from Bihar had got a berth even in the Ranji Trophy squad; what to talk of big league matches at an international level. Now

sports pundits may arguably put a contention that during Lalu’s tenure as BCA president, Bihar did not have a State Ranji Team as partition of Bihar caused losses to Bihar concerning sports facilities. Jharkhand carried takeaways of a major chunk of sports facilities with itself. However, taking refuge in this excuse by sports pundits held no water for scores of young cricket players then. This is more so because, during that period, RJD was led by Rabri Devi at the helm of state affairs; and Lalu could have done a lot about setting up a proper state Ranji Team and appointing the ablest coaches to train state’s cricket players. Three, the role of the Bihar

Olympic Association (BOA) in preparing athletes for the Olympic games leaves much to be desired. Going by records, BOA officials do not take the trouble to organise events and trials for grooming athletes to the level of world-level Olympic games. So it springs no surprise that no athlete from Bihar had figured in the list of 117 athlete-member teams for the Paris Olympics. What is worse, there is a blame game between BOA and the state government over this sorry state of sports affairs. BOA puts the onus on the state government for sheer negligence about the lack of infrastructure and trained coaches. This results in BOA finding itself unable to organise

events at regular intervals. On the other hand, the state government absolves itself of essential responsibilities about BOA by saying that BOA is an independent entity and the government cannot interfere with its functioning. In this ongoing war of attrition, budding talented athletes are the losers. Eventually, it could be summed up that the scheme “Medal Lao, Naukri Pao” may seem to be alluring to a large number of youth at first glance. However, due to the lack of necessary sports wherewithals in Bihar, the scheme would not cut much ice with scores of young talents.

(The author is a columnist, views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

Air India flagship Airbus A350 set to fly to US from Nov

Air India on Monday said its flagship wide-body aircraft Airbus A350 will start operating on ultra-long haul routes from the winter schedule this year, starting with Delhi-New York JFK flight from November 1. From January 2, 2025, the airline's Delhi-Newark flights will also be operated by Airbus A350-900, Air India said. The Tata Group airline has six A350 in its fleet while 34 more are on order. Air India said it will also offer premium economy class, along with business and economy classes, on these flights. These routes are currently being operated by Boeing 777-300ER planes. "This (the introduction of Airbus A350) is a significant leap forward for our US operations that also underscores our commitment to continuous improvement," said Campbell Wilson, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director at Air India. Air India at present operates to five destinations in the US -- New York, Newark, Washington, San Francisco, and Chicago.



Jana SFB Q1 net profit jumps 89% to Rs 171 crore

Jana Small Finance Bank on Monday reported an 89 per cent jump in its post-tax net profit to Rs 171 crore for the April-June quarter. The lender had reported a profit after tax of Rs 90 crore in the year-ago period. The core net interest income grew to Rs 610 crore from Rs 462 crore in the year-ago period on the back of a 25 per cent growth in advances and a 0.4 per cent expansion in the net interest margin to 8 per cent. The non-interest income was flat at Rs 189 crore for the reporting quarter. Amid the sluggish deposit growth in the system, the bank seems to have ducked the trend with a 41 per cent growth in the number. Its gross non-performing assets ratio increased to 2.62 per cent in June against 2.11 per cent at the end of the preceding March quarter, which was attributed to seasonal and event-driven factors by its managing director and chief executive Ajay Kanwal. The overall capital adequacy as of June 30 stood at 19.3 per cent against 18.7 per cent in the year-ago period.



Gold rises Rs 100 to Rs 75,650 per 10 grams amid firm global cues

Gold prices rose by Rs 100 to Rs 75,650 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday on increased buying by jewellers amid a firm global trend. However, silver prices plunged by Rs 600 to Rs 91,000 per kg. In the previous session, it had settled at Rs 91,600 per kg, as per the All India Sarafa Association. On Saturday, the precious metal rates had closed at Rs 75,550 per 10 grams. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also rose by Rs 100 to Rs 75,300 per 10 grams. It had ended at Rs 75,200 per 10 grams in the previous session. Traders attributed the rise in gold prices to fresh demand by local jewellers and a firm trend in the international markets. The white metal has declined Rs 3,400 per kg in the past four sessions since July 18 when it had fallen by Rs 400 to end at Rs 94,000 per kg. Globally, Comex gold is trading higher at US\$ 2,453.60 per ounce, up by US\$ 6.80 per ounce from the previous close.



Will reduce pending litigations under companies law: FM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has taken several steps, including the withdrawal of prosecutions and compoundable cases, to reduce litigations under the companies law, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said Monday.

Sitharaman, also the Union Minister of Corporate Affairs, said in Lok Sabha that 14,247 prosecutions were withdrawn in the first special drive conducted in 2017 and a decision has also been taken for withdrawing 7,338 compoundable cases identified in the second special drive in 2023. "Till July 15, 2024, a total of 6,294 applications for withdrawal have been filed before various courts. However, serious or non-compoundable offences will continue to be prosecuted," she said in Lok Sabha.

The minister said the MCA has taken several steps to review pending prosecutions in various courts. In 2017 and



She said one of the objectives of decriminalisation has also been reduction of litigation burden in judicial courts and shifting the prosecution cases towards adjudication

later in 2022, a committee of senior officers of the ministry was set up to give recommendations on withdrawal of prosecutions.

The objective was to free judicial courts from dealing with offences that are procedural and technical in nature to ensure that such courts are able

to focus on serious offences, Sitharaman said, adding it was envisaged that cases of procedural and technical nature may be handled through an adjudication process. She said that to improve ease of doing business and enhance corporate

governance, the MCA has taken several major steps including decriminalisation of 63 offences under the Companies and Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) Acts.

She said one of the objectives of decriminalisation has also been reduction of litigation burden in judicial courts and shifting the prosecution cases towards adjudication. Zero fee for incorporation of company with authorised capital up to Rs 15 lakh, setting up of a centralised registrar of companies (CRC) for incorporation, setting up of a Central Scrutiny Centre (CSC) for centralised scrutiny of e-forms filed under Straight Through Process (STP), conversion of more than 50 forms to STP which earlier required approval of field offices, setting up of a Central Processing Centre (CPC) for centralised processing of specified non-STP e-forms are some of the steps taken by the government, she said.

Sensex, Nifty settle lower ahead of Budget

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower on Monday, dragged down by heavy selling pressure in Reliance Industries and Kotak Mahindra Bank ahead of the Budget.

Besides, a weak trend in global equity markets also hit investors sentiment, traders said. Falling for the second day in a row, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 102.57 points or 0.13 per cent to settle at 80,502.08. During the session, it tanked 504 points or 0.62 per cent to 80,100.65. The NSE Nifty dipped 21.65 points or 0.09 per cent to 24,509.25. During the day, it dropped 168.6 points or 0.68 per cent to 24,362.30.

Among the Sensex pack, Reliance Industries declined over 3 per cent after the company reported a 5 per cent drop in its June quarter net profit. Kotak Mahindra Bank also fell more than 3 per cent after its June quarter earnings failed to cheer investors. ITC, State Bank of India, HCL Technologies and IndusInd Bank were the other big laggards. NTPC, UltraTech Cement, HDFC Bank and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the gainers.

PE/VC investment rises 8% to US\$ 31.5 bn in Jan-Jun: Report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Private equity funds and venture capital funds investments have risen 8 per cent year-on-year to US\$ 31.5 billion in the first half of 2024, a report said on Monday. The amount of funds invested is 30 per cent higher than the July-December 2023 period, the report by industry lobby grouping IVCA and consultancy firm EY said. From a volume perspective, the number of deals increased to 654 during the six months from 441 in the preceding six months and 439 transactions in the year-ago period. "Notwithstanding valuation challenges, India continues to be a bright spot for deal-

making, with its PE/VC ecosystem innovating to find opportunities for investments and make the best of the buoyant exit conditions," the consultancy firm's partner Vivek Soni said. Pure play PE/VC invest-



ments (excluding real estate and infrastructure sectors) at US\$ 18.6 billion in H1 2024 were 20 per cent higher compared to US\$ 15.5 billion in the year-ago period. There were 69 large deals of over US\$ 100

million each totalling US\$ 22.6 billion in the first half of 2024, against 61 large deals aggregating to US\$ 18.1 billion in the preceding six months. These included Brookfield's acquisition of ATC India Tower Corporation for US\$ 2 billion, followed by two US\$ 1.5 billion deals, including Macquarie's acquisition of Vertelo and ADIA and KKR's investment in Reliance Retail Ventures warehousing assets. Exits were up 18 per cent in terms of value at US\$ 11 billion, compared to the year-ago period's US\$ 9.4 billion, but were down by around a third compared to the preceding six months' US\$ 15.5 billion.

Govt issues guidelines for Rs 4,950 cr incentive to Discoms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi on Monday said the New & Renewable Energy Ministry has issued guidelines to provide Rs 4,950 crore incentive to discoms under the PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana.

Criteria for incentivising Discoms include achievement of installation of additional grid-connected rooftop solar capacity beyond the baseline level, the New & Renewable Energy Minister said in a post



on X. "Rs 4,950 crore incentives to Discoms under @PMSuryaGhar. The guidelines have been issued for effective disbursement of incen-

tives," he said. The scheme guidelines for implementation of incentives to Discoms were notified by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) last week on July 18, an official statement said. The scheme has an outlay of Rs 75,021 crore and will be implemented till FY 2026-27, MNRE said. Under the scheme, Discoms are designated as state implementation agencies (SIAs) responsible for facilitating var-

Govts should renounce some powers to help improve governance: Eco Survey

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The finance ministry's Economic Survey on Monday suggested that governments renounce some of their powers as it would be good for 'both the governed and the governing'.

the social and economic transformation of democratic India is a remarkable success story, the document, authored by a team lead by Chief Economic Advisor V. Anantha Nageswaran, stated. "We have come a long way. The economy has grown from



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman tabled the Economic Survey 2023-24 a day before the Union Budget in the Lok Sabha.

While contemplating the challenges that lie ahead, one should not be daunted because

around US\$ 288 billion in FY93 (1992-93) to US\$ 3.6 trillion in FY23," it said. India has generated more growth per dollar of debt than other comparable nations and abject poverty has all but been eliminated. Human develop-



Confident India's FY25 GDP growth will surpass Eco Survey forecast: Industry

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Industry bodies on Monday expressed confidence that India's GDP growth will surpass the 6.5 to 7 per cent forecast by the Economic Survey, and hoped that the upcoming Budget will roll out measures to help unlock the country's growth potential. Reacting to the Economic Survey 2023-24, tabled in Parliament, Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General,

CII, stated that it is "pragmatic" in its approach and offers a futuristic vision to move India boldly towards achieving the developed economy status by 2047. "The survey is positive about the India growth story, and I am confident that India's GDP growth for FY25 will surpass the forecast given in the Survey and basis certain conditions, it has the potential to be at 8 per cent," CII President Sanjiv Puri said.

educated, the 476-page document said.

"However, it would be a missed opportunity -- as there have been many in the past -- not to strengthen a system to steer the country through a future that has become immeasurably uncertain," the authors said. Nageswaran's team noted that after nearly eight decades of relative peace at the global level, the world is moving towards a larger and wider conflict with longer-term effects.

"The Indian state can free up its capacity and enhance its capability to focus on areas where it has to by letting go of its grip in areas where it does not have to," it said.

The licensing, inspection and compliance requires that all levels of the government continue to impose on businesses is an onerous burden.

Tax policies to have major role in tackling income inequality

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Tax policies will have a major role to play in tackling income inequality in the coming years as deployment of technology, like AI, can have a more deleterious impact on employment and income, the Economic Survey said on Monday. It said globally, widening inequality is emerging as a crucial economic challenge confronting policymakers.

The 2022 State of Inequality in India report observed that in India, the top 1 per cent accounts for 6-7 per cent of the total incomes earned, while the top 10 per cent accounts for one-third of total incomes earned.

The Economic Survey 2023-24 tabled in Parliament on Monday said the government places significant focus on this issue and all the critical policy interventions being undertaken with a focus on

creating jobs, integrating the informal sector with the formal sector, and expanding the female labour force are aimed at effectively addressing inequality. "Tax policies on the treatment of capital and labour incomes will likely play a more important role in the coming years, especially since the deployment of technology like AI may have a more deleterious impact on employment and income," it added.

Stock markets close lower on muted earnings, caution ahead of budget

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Stock markets closed lower on Monday with benchmark Sensex dropping 102 points due to selling in index heavy-weight Reliance Industries and Kotak Bank on muted earnings and caution ahead of the Union Budget. Falling for the second day in a row, the 30-share BSE Sensex

dropped by 102.57 points or 0.13 per cent to settle at 80,502.08. The barometer fell by 504 points or 0.62 per cent to hit an intra-day low of 80,100.65 but recovered most of the losses as Infosys and HDFC Bank advanced. The broader Nifty of the NSE dipped 21.65 points or 0.09 per cent to 24,509.25. During the day, it dropped

168.6 points or 0.68 per cent to 24,362.30. Among Sensex shares, Reliance Industries declined over 3 per cent after the company reported a 5 per cent drop in its June quarter net profit. Kotak Mahindra Bank also fell more than 3 per cent after its June quarter earnings failed to cheer investors.

Rich nations' planned carbon taxes on imports against spirit of Paris Agreement

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The European Union's planned carbon tax on energy-intensive goods imported from developing countries is in contravention of the spirit of the Paris Agreement, India said on Monday.

The government's 'Economic Survey 2023-24' highlighted that even as developed countries prepare to impose a carbon tax on imports, they are ramping up energy demand like never before due to their obsession with artificial intelligence (AI). "Developing nations are also being threatened with a carbon

tax at the border, in full negation of the spirit of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective national capabilities that was supposed to have undergirded the Paris Agreement," the report on the state of the economy in the previous year said.

This means that India not only has to deal with climate change and undertake energy transition but also confront the protectionism of developed countries, it said. The European Union is on course to implement its Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), and both the United Kingdom and the United States are in different

This means that India not only has to deal with climate change and undertake energy transition but also confront the protectionism of developed countries, it said

stages of imposing their versions of it in due course. The EU argues that this mechanism creates a level playing field for domestically manufactured goods, which must adhere to stricter environmental standards, and help reduce emissions from imports. However, other nations, particularly developing countries, worry that this would

harm their economies and make it too expensive to trade with the bloc. The move has also sparked debate at multilateral forums, including UN climate conferences, with developing countries arguing that, under UN climate change rules, countries cannot dictate how others should reduce emissions.

Massive shift in capital expenditure likely: Expert

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

The Union Budget will likely focus on expanding capital investment in several sectors, including infrastructure, construction, manufacturing and green energy, a professor of a top business school said. Over a period of time, the central government has increased capital expenditure by around 30 per cent every year, and this year, a massive shift is expected in this regard, said Dr Trilochan Tripathy, Professor of Finance at XLRI.

Govt should actively support MSMEs in digitisation processes

PNS ■ CHENNAI



External Affairs to help MSMEs access new markets, especially in the case of first time exporters. "The government needs to continue actively supporting MSMEs in their digitisation processes and implementing Industry 4.0," he said in a statement. Ponnuswami said MSMEs have plenty of opportunity for growth in Defence, Electronics, EV manufacturing,

"The government needs to undertake outreach programmes in Tier-2, Tier-3 and rural areas," Ponnuswami, who is also the Chairman and Managing Director of Pon Pure Chemical India Pvt Ltd said. "We appreciate the enhancement of credit access to MSMEs through Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises, by raising the guarantee limit of Rs 2 crore to Rs 5 crore. The disbursement of Rs 3,000 crore of NSIC Venture Capital to MSMEs in FY24 was a significant achievement," he added.

Action director Oh Se-Yeong speaks up about creating *Kill!*

Not unfamiliar to Indian cinemagoers is renowned action choreographer Oh Se-Yeong, who most recently collaborated on the movie *Kill!*. He has contributed to the *War* and *Tiger* franchises and his most recent action design, in the Raghav Juyal and Lakshya film, has received positive reviews. Oh Se-Yeong exclusively discussed *Kill!*, creating the action piece, and his motivation in an interview. Oh Se-Yeong, a well-known figure in Korean cinema, also considered the cultural distinctions between Indian and Korean cinema and whether or not he is in any way pressured by K-content becoming more widely available. Oh Se-Yeong admitted that Jackie Chan and the action movies of the 1980s in Hong Kong are his main sources of inspiration, but he also said that he often modifies Chan's films to match the storyline of each one. In an interview, he opened up, saying, "I think the heart of taking revenge on each goon is

expressed with violent action. So, I discussed several times with director Nikhil Bhat, sir, how Amrit [Lakshya] should take revenge on each goon and how we should show it on screen. Nikhil sir gave me very fresh inspiration and my job was to express it as realistically as possible. At the back of my mind, I was always concerned about whether it was correct to show all the cruelty and whether the censor board would approve the film to be released in theatres." The action director further recalled having a long discussion with Nikhil about Tulika's death scene. "Because her death is the turning point of the film. We also discussed the ways of designing the action and the various emotions of the characters in this sequence. Those who have experienced such moments of crisis would know that the moment feels so long as if it's happening like a high-speed shot. I contemplated whether we should express her death directly (in real time), or



whether we should show her death to the audience through Amrit's feelings. I suggested both options to the director and he gladly accepted the latter."

"I think if I received the *Kill!* script from a Korean producer and the director, it would have had a different action style," the director further revealed. "And it is because of the

differences in cultural sentiment. Just like how the Indian audiences would have different standards on the level of cruelty than those of the Korean audiences. So, I feel meeting the satisfaction of that country's audiences is more important than incorporating elements from my culture. If *Kill!* is praised for having good action, that is because the director, the actors and the crew members worked hard to incorporate what fits well with the sentiment of the audience. I think Indian films are very fresh and powerful just by themselves." He also shares that in the Indian film industry, sometimes the director and the actors suggest certain action beats. "I heard it's called 'masala action.'" I am lucky enough to have worked in the Indian film industry long enough to understand the meaning of it and I feel it's also needed to meet audiences' tastes. Nowadays, I ask whether they (the director and/or the actors) can suggest some action beats. To keep me inspired about the masala action."



Karan Aujla announces India dates for *It Was All A Dream World Tour*

Karan Aujla has rapidly ascended to popular culture stardom with his recent Vicky Kaushal collaboration, and he's following it up with a massive multi-city Indian headlining tour!

Hot on the heels of making history at the JUNO Fan Choice Award, the critically acclaimed Punjabi music superstar will be bringing his highly anticipated *It Was All A Dream World Tour* to Indian shores later this year.

The India leg of the world tour will mark the India-born, Canada-based artist's maiden arena tour in the country. Billed as a culture shifting mission to take this modern Punjabi sound forward and make it a part of global music conversations, *It Was All A Dream World Tour* is already selling out record-breaking tickets across global territories.

KATE THOMAS CONDEMNS MEDIA'S 'MISOGYNISTIC' SCRUTINY

Kate Tomas, Andrew Garfield's girlfriend, criticised the public's perceived "misogynistic" curiosity in their relationship. Kate stated in an interview that she would rather not live under a man's "shadow." Recently, Andrew and Kate were spotted together during the Wimbledon final. In the interview, she said: "It's frustrating that no matter how accomplished or impactful a woman is, it's always going to be more interesting if they are in a relationship with a man. I don't want to sit under anybody's shadow. They [the paparazzi] will take maybe 150 pictures, then they choose the four where you look worst. F*****g hell, nothing could prepare me for having literally thousands of women telling me I'm ugly, I'm unattractive, I'm less than in every conceivable way." After several months of courting, Andrew and Kate are finally a couple. When they went on a double date in April with comedian Bo Burnham and singer Phoebe Bridgers, the two were first seen holding hands.



Shiloh absolves on dropping Pitt from her name



Shiloh, the daughter of Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt, has spoken out about her decision in the wake of the newspaper's report that she had legally dropped the "Pitt" from her name. Shiloh submitted her application for a name change on her eighteenth birthday and the Los Angeles Times published a legal notice announcing her decision. Peter Levine, Shiloh's lawyer, gave an explanation for the newspaper's publication of this, calling it a "significant decision." "The media should be more careful in their reporting, especially when covering a young adult who is merely following the legal process and has made an independent and significant decision following painful events," Levine stated. He continued, "Shiloh Jolie did not take out an 'ad' announcing any name change or any press reporting that is inaccurate. As Shiloh's attorney, I am required to publish a legal notice because the law in California mandates that of anyone who wants to change their name. That legal notice was published in the Los Angeles Times, as required." Levine's statement is in line with remarks made by a legal expert, who stated that the official name-change procedure could not have moved forward without the public name-change announcement in a newspaper. She needs to submit a formal petition to the court in order to alter her name, according to family law attorney David Glass of California, who spoke with People. She has to notify both of her parents in writing and run an advertisement for four weeks straight prior to the hearing date.



Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez not getting together anytime soon

According to reports, Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez have no intention of getting back together and have chosen not to pursue a romantic connection. But according to people close to the pair, it's not quite time to call their love story over just yet! Even though they are having some difficulties, a full-blown breakup does not appear to be coming soon. After living apart for more than a month, the pair just spent their second wedding anniversary separated from one another and insiders think the union is already finished. Ten years later, the former flames, who had previously called off their engagement and parted ways with other partners, fell in love once more and tied the knot. A source recently told, "They are not getting back

together." Insiders also revealed that the pop star was determined to make the marriage work at any cost, but Ben now seems like a different person to her. "They are not trying to work it out," the source added. For more than a year, the couple has lived apart. JLo has primarily been on vacation to avoid LA, while Ben has been renting a place in Brentwood. Though they haven't reconciled, the insider asserted that "they have no plans to announce that they are not a couple right now." Affleck is still in Los Angeles, but Lopez is now in the Hamptons. "They have zero plans to announce this anytime soon."

FUN

ARCHIE



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



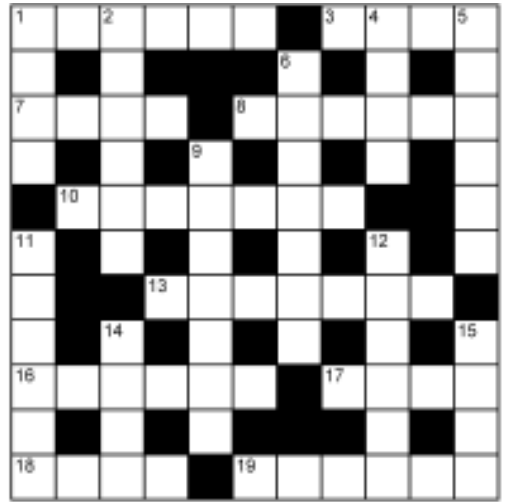
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

| Yesterday's solution | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 3 |
| 3 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 4 |
| 5 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 8 | 6 |
| 4 | 6 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 9 | 7 |
| 2 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 5 |
| 7 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 2 |
| 1 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 9 |
| 8 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 1 |
| 9 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 8 |

- 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

- Opposite of brother
- A fairy's magic stick
- A bird's bill
- To stay
- Ripping
- A deer's horns
- Weapons with long blades
- A tube in the body which carries blood
- Seven days
- A paper handkerchief

- Houses for dogs
- A small bomb made for throwing
- A puzzle with lots of pieces
- Welcomes
- Stopped sleeping
- One time

DOWN

- Cries with big gasps
- Frightened
- A camel rider in the desert
- An animal like a small horse with big ears

SOLUTION

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| E | L | E | P | H | A | N | T | S |
| I | O | N | H | | | | | |
| S | T | O | N | E | C | H | E | E |
| E | N | T | H | E | E | | | |
| R | O | B | | | | | | |
| A | C | T | O | R | S | | | |
| A | C | T | O | R | S | E | C | H |
| N | O | I | A | N | | | | |
| T | O | E | L | | | | | |
| C | O | O | K | S | | | | |
| E | L | I | | | | | | |
| P | R | E | S | I | D | E | N | T |



‘I HAD TO CONSULT A THERAPIST BECAUSE GOLU WAS OVERPOWERING SHWETA’

Shweta Tripathi Sharma, better known as “Mirzapur ki Rani,” is now overwhelmed with the affection her character Golu Gupta has been showered with, particularly in the aftermath of Season 3. The Pioneer goes into greater detail regarding her character and how it has affected her in this exclusive interview



TEJAL SINHA

The “chulbuli-bubbly” Zenia Khan, who we first saw in Disney’s *Kya Mast Hai Life* and as Minnie in *Suite Life of Karan and Kabir*, has been a part of the most popular *Mirzapur* franchise, Golu Gupta and has been making “Bhaukaal.” Naturally, with the release of the third season of *Mirzapur*, there has been a lot of discussion about the incredibly gifted Shweta Tripathi Sharma and her flexibility and on-screen prowess.

She is now known as “Mirzapur ki Queen” due to the enormous influence her character has had on OTT. “Even as creators, we never stop learning and developing,” an overjoyed Shweta says in an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*. “We have an obligation to consider the audience and the message we are conveying. It’s crucial to explain ‘why’ a character is acting a specific way rather than just what they are doing, regardless of how the character is written. It is more about the relationships that individuals have than it is about the violence. It talks about how when someone pushes someone else into a corner, they get punished or labelled as monsters. It’s about using various powers to win. Madhuri’s line, *Hum Yahan Gungli Gudiya, banne nahi aaye hai*, is one of my favourites.”

She was called ‘Mirzapur ki Queen’ and ‘Dearest Golu’ in a note she got on a napkin a few days ago while out on a date with her spouse. She had just become tearful due to this affection. “Yeah, *Mardon ki duniya main*, there’s this one girl who is standing her ground and for me, that is a win. The feeling was really pleasant. Because I can convey to boys and girls alike—through my performances—that your gender or ethnicity will not define you. You won’t believe guys are dubbing me ‘Golu King’ (we laugh), because it’s not about what you’re doing; it’s about how you think and your actions have more meaning and impact.”

For all the love that she’s been getting, she credits the team and other departments for the same. During this chat, she also highlighted something that we also didn’t think of. “In the third season, which I recently watched, Golu is wearing a shirt with grey, pink and blue blocks on it when she returns. I was genuinely curious to know what the designer had in mind for this. That’s exactly how I feel in my mind. I possess the strength of both a girl and a boy. Certain small things have a profound effect on us, even though at first we are unable to comprehend them.”

She learned from Golu to be “strong-headed” and “honest.” And as the character grows across the entire series, we get to experience that. She claims that Golu has actually helped her realise that failure is completely OK since, the next time you try some-

thing new, you’ll learn from your mistakes and improve. The *Masaan* actress laughs as we talk about the series’ most popular term. “*Mirzapur* has so many different sizes of ‘Bhaukaals,’ but yes, Golu is definitely the biggest ‘Bhaukaal’ of the series.”

There’s no denying that Golu has had a big impact on a lot of viewers. “I’m so happy that there are girls on Instagram who dress like Golu.” We couldn’t agree more with her as she continued, saying, “I feel Golu has become an emotion and Golu exists in all of us. For me, Golu represents a renegade fighter who is aware of the art of combat, the value of listening to one’s inner voice and the strengths and flaws of others.” Even though her character isn’t shown to us for a number of episodes in *Mirzapur*, the scene in which she is threatened, assaulted and tortured by Chote Tyagi (played by Vijay Varma) gives the viewer shivers.

She also says, “I feel in action; your physical fitness really matters,” in reference to the action sequence that she brings to the screen. “It takes more than just good looks and attire to be a successful actor. Being prepared is crucial for every action scenario. I made sure that, as soon as I learned about the season, I trained with my amazing trainer, Tridev Pandey, for a full year. We used to work on everything—from mobility to strength training to floor training. I used to practice yoga as well, and I still do since it’s a great way to engage specific muscles.”

As our conversation continued, she continued to praise her co-star, Vijay Varma, with whom she had collaborated on both *Kaalkoot* and the series. She describes an event, saying, “You won’t believe that while I was performing those scenes, I felt like I was possessed. There was also an incident where set *mai hulchal hua tha*.” Vijay said, ‘Don’t talk to Shweta right now; she’s in her zone.’ When your other actors hold you in such high regard that the scene takes on greater significance than it does, it’s an amazing feeling. I am therefore supporting Vijay. Whenever I collaborate with him, my work consistently improves.”

Without a doubt, both the actors and some of the of the characters have an effect on us as viewers. Golu has been a special character in Shweta’s life, but the role has had an effect on her personally.

As we dug deeper into the impact, the *Yeh Kaali Kaali Aankhein* star said, “I went off in another zone. ‘Yaar, it’s very dark, which is more than bad,’ she giggles. “It was difficult for me because *Mirzapur*’s environment is so gloomy, but luckily I was able to recognise it. My husband alerted me to the fact that he could sense someone else more than I did. I was lying down when I realised what had transpired and had the impression that this was Golu and not Shweta when I returned to the sets in Benaras. I used to dress in her style. Accessorising is something I adore wearing. Though I adore DisneyLand vibes, I had a conversation with a therapist after something similar happened to Golu. I wanted to know the truth and was relieved to learn that the character was taking control of me. I hadn’t lost Golu at all. That being said, I would repeatedly do it for Golu because I believe that *woh jaan meri leleti hai par mai usko lena nahi deti*. She is worthwhile, after all.”

EXPOSING THE TRUTH

Age-related pattern hair loss in women

Traya revealed startling results from a large study that involved 2.8 lakh women in India. According to the poll, medium to advanced widening, or female pattern hair loss, affects 71.19% of Indian women; this indicates that hair loss is a serious issue that affects people of all ages. The survey found that more than half of women between the ages of 36 and 40 are already experiencing medium-to-advanced stages of hair loss. It emphasises the critical need for increased awareness and early intervention because the main underlying causes are stress, low energy and hormone problems.

The study revealed that poor energy and stress are common among Indian women. The most shocking finding was that moderate to severe stress affects 88.6% of women who have hair loss. The high stress levels of modern life exacerbate the problem of hair loss, which is significantly influenced by stress and anxiety. The study also discovered a link between poor sleep habits and hair loss, finding that 48.14% of women who have hair loss also have trouble sleeping. Dandruff were out to be a significant factor in hair loss in women, which is consistent with the results of survey on male hair loss. In order to effectively reduce hair loss, it is imperative to manage dandruff, as over 70% of women attribute their hair loss to it, with 22% experiencing severe cases. Moreover, poor

energy levels were observed by 90% of the 2.8 lakh women who took part in the study, highlighting the critical need to combat hair loss from inside. Also, among young women between the ages of 18 and 25, PCOS has been found to be a growing cause of hair loss.

Speaking on the findings, Saloni Anand, co-founder of Traya, stated, “Hair loss is predominantly considered to be an issue faced by men, leading many women to ignore or feel uncomfortable discussing it. However, it is a significant and growing concern for women, requiring effective and comprehensive intervention. Our study aims to help women understand the various causes of hair loss and tackle them effectively. The issue is quite complicated for women, where damaged hair strands and low hair volume pose significant problems too. There have also been psychological implications linked to hair loss, such as anxiety and diminished self-esteem.” She adds, “In today’s fast-paced world, many women encounter early hair loss but turn to quick fixes that offer temporary solutions rather than addressing the root causes. This only prolongs the problem and makes it harder to treat effectively. We wish to educate women on the importance of early and comprehensive treatment, steering them away from superficial solutions and towards long-lasting results.”



Conquering fear & embracing challenges

AARTI SREENATH

Aditi Sharma shares her journey from dreaming about *Khatron Ke Khiladi* as a child to conquering its challenges. “I always wanted to do *Khatron Ke Khiladi* since I was a kid,” Aditi revealed with excitement. Despite her early industry successes, she only recently had the opportunity to fulfill this dream.

Preparation for the show was no easy feat. Aditi dived into a rigorous regime of calisthenics, weight lifting, functional strength training, yoga and meditation to ensure both her physical and mental readiness. “Yoga and meditation helped me stay mentally strong,” she recounted. Every stunt on the show tested her limits, but two in particular stood out. Aditi, who is claustrophobic, faced her fear head-on in a stunt involving scorpions in a box. “I started chanting Shiva’s mantra and went into a meditative state. I did the stunt and even though I had just five minutes, I completed it. I was not expecting to succeed,” she shared. However, an underwater stunt proved too much, as a high fever and severe cold hindered her performance. “I couldn’t stay underwater due to the pressure and my condition,” she admitted.

A memorable highlight for Aditi was receiving praise from host Rohit Shetty, who clicked a picture with her. “That moment made me feel very proud,” she said, reflecting on the special bond she formed with fellow contestants, particularly Krishna Shroff, Aashish Mehrotra and Nimrit Kaur. Participating in *Khatron Ke Khiladi* had a profound impact on Aditi, both personally and professionally. “People now know me as Aditi Sharma, not just by my character names. It has humbled me and made me more sensible about handling life’s challenges,” she explained. Overcoming her claustrophobia was a significant personal victory. “I feel proud of myself for conquering that fear,” she declared.

Viewers might be surprised to learn just how challenging the show truly is. “It’s way more difficult than it looks on TV. The pressure, timing, competition and weather make it a hundred times harder,” Aditi revealed.

Looking ahead, Aditi plans to leverage her *Khatron Ke Khiladi* experience in future projects. “Every experience helps. I’m sure this will be valuable in ways I don’t yet realise,” she mused. Beyond acting, she finds solace in playing the guitar, singing, reading mythology and working out. “I love working out, but I don’t post about it until I’m in the shape I imagine for myself,” she said.

Balancing professional and personal life is crucial for Aditi. She insists on a 9-to-9 work schedule to ensure time for herself and her loved ones. “As actors, we are sensitive and emotional. I need to remember that Aditi is different from her characters,” she emphasised.

Offering advice to aspiring actors, Aditi stressed the importance of hard work and time management. “Set a timeline, have a plan and give your 100%. But have a backup plan. This industry can be tough,” she advised. Reflecting on the reality show experience, she warned of the prevalent politics and favouritism, suggesting that mental strength is key to survival.

She finds inspiration in many, especially older actors who remain dedicated despite challenges. “I admire their professionalism and humility,” she said.

Summing up her experience, she described *Khatron Ke Khiladi* as a once-in-a-lifetime adventure filled with learning and unforgettable moments. If she could have any superpower for the show, she would choose to be the smartest person to outwit her opponents. “This game is beyond physical strength; it’s mental. I wish to be smart enough to manipulate and win,” she concluded.

After a tough day of shooting, Aditi finds relaxation in a Jacuzzi and steam room. “It soothes me after the bruises and challenges,” she said, highlighting the importance of self-care amid the intense competition.

ACTRESS ADITI SHARMA EMBARKED ON A NEW ADVENTURE WITH HER ENTRY INTO THE WORLD OF ROHIT SHETTY’S KHATRON KE KHILADI. SHE DISCUSSES HER DREAM COME TRUE MOMENT OF GETTING IN THE SHOW, PREPS AND ALSO DISCUSSES HER FEARS WITH THE PIONEER



Good for TRP but my relationship with Kohli is personal, declares Gambhir

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India's newly-appointed head coach Gautam Gambhir on Monday declared that his much talked about relationship with batting mainstay Virat Kohli "is between the two of us and not for TRPs", asserting that they are going to be "on same page" in the coming times. Gambhir and Kohli had not been the best of friends, something which was evident from the multiple confrontations between the two in the IPL. However, the duo will now be working together starting with the white-ball tour of Sri Lanka from July 27. "Good for the TRP, but my relationship is not public. What kind of a relationship I share with Virat Kohli... I

think it's between two mature individuals," Gambhir said. Gambhir was addressing a press conference along with chief selector Ajit Agarkar ahead of India's tour of Sri Lanka where they will play three T20 Internationals and as many ODIs. In the context of Kohli, Gambhir added, "On the field, everyone has got the right to fight for their own jersey and come back to a winning dressing room. "But at the moment, we're representing India, representing 140 crore Indians and I'm sure we're going to be on the same page and try and make India proud." Kohli, who recently announced retirement from the T20 International format, is part of India's ODI squad



against the island nation and ahead of that, the former India skipper has apparently communicated to the BCCI that he's ready to begin this new phase with a clean slate. Gambhir said the two share a very good relationship (with him) off the field. "...And will continue to do that. But yes, to make it more public, what kind of a relationship... I think it's between two individuals. I've had a lot of chats with him (Kohli)... We've shared messages. "Sometimes, just because we want headlines, it's not important. Right now, the most important thing is we both are going to be working extremely hard to make India proud. And that's our job." THE SUPPORT STAFF QUESTION: Former India

all-rounder Abhishek Nayar and Netherlands batter Ryan ten Doeschate, who worked with Gambhir in the IPL 2024 during his stint as mentor of the Kolkata Knight Riders, are joining the Indian team coaching staff for the Sri Lanka tour. Gambhir said the full details of his support staff will be known only after the Sri Lanka tour. "Really happy with BCCI. They've agreed with most things I've asked for. The crux of the support staff will remain as they are. "The rest of the staff will be finalised after the Sri Lanka tour. (For now) Abhishek and Ryan as assistant coach. T Dilip will continue as fielding coach. Sairaj Bahutule as interim bowling coach for the Sri Lanka tour."

We wanted someone who was likely to be available more often: Agarkar on Suryakumar as T20 captain

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Fitness, feedback from the dressing room and consistent availability swung the pendulum in Suryakumar Yadav's favour when it was decided to appoint him captain of the Indian T20 team ahead of Hardik Pandya, chief selector Ajit Agarkar said here on Monday. Agarkar was addressing a media conference along with newly-appointed head coach Gautam Gambhir ahead of India's tour of Sri Lanka where the team will play three T20 Internationals and as many ODIs against the hosts starting July 27. "Why Surya was made captain? Because he is one of the deserving candidates. The one we know has been around the dressing room over the last one year, you get feedback from the dressing room a lot. He has got a good cricketing brain and he is still one of the best T20 batters in the world," Agarkar said during the joint press conference. "You (would) want a captain that's going to be more likely to play all the games. We think he's a deserving candidate and hopefully we'll see over time how he develops into the role." The chairman of selectors said they wanted a captain with a proven fitness record and not someone who was prone to injuries as Pandya is believed to be. "But in regards to Hardik (Pandya), he's still a very important player for us and that's what we want him to be that player that he can be because those sorts of skill sets are very difficult to find what he has, Agarkar said. "Fitness, obviously, has been a challenge for him over the last few years and then it becomes a little bit more difficult for him and even as selectors," he said. "We're trying to now, we've got a bit more time till the next T20 World Cup when we can look at a few things. It's not rushed at the moment." "We want him to be, you know, as I said, he's an important player for us and hopefully his performances are more important - that was the thought behind it. The fitness is a clear challenge and we want someone who's likely to be available more often than not," Agarkar said. As regards to former vice-captain KL Rahul being



overlooked, he retorted, "I wasn't there when KL was superseded; I wasn't the selector firstly." "We've got a little bit more time now till the... Since I've come, there's been a 50-overs World Cup, almost followed by the T20 World Cup. Fitness is a concern, not just that, we also feel that Surya has the necessary qualities to be a good captain. "Two years is a long time, so at least it gives us a bit more of a chance to try and look at some things differently. The main thing is we want guys who are available all the time. In this way, we also feel we can manage Hardik a little bit better," he said. JADEJA WAS NOT DROPPED: Agarkar admitted the selection committee should have clarified that senior all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, who also retired from T20Is after the World Cup, was not "dropped". "It would have been really pointless to take both him and Akshar for this short series. We know what Jaddu has done. He's had a terrific World Cup (T20). So, no, not at all dropped," he said. "All options are open. But there

was (a chance that) either of them would have played all three games if we'd taken both. There's a big test season coming up where he's (Jadeja) likely to feature in a lot of the Tests. I don't think three games would have mattered. "We probably should have clarified that after the selection that he's not getting dropped. He's still within the scheme of things and very important as a player," said the former India pacer. LEADERSHIP DOOR OPEN FOR RAHUL, RISHABH, PANDYA: Agarkar said the door is not shut for the former deputies like KL Rahul, Rishabh Pant and even Pandya as far as leadership role is concerned. "We need to get him (Pant) back playing, that's the first thing. He's going to be a key to us as a player; hasn't had a lot of cricket. We'll see what he can do," he said. "We don't want to burden somebody again who's just coming back after over a year out of the game. KL has not been part of T20 now for a little while," he said. "We've got a chance to reset the button a little bit. We've got a bit more time to plan. We want

to try and see... I mean, this time (in) T20 (against Afghanistan), frankly, when Hardik did get injured was a little bit of a challenge. "At that point, Rohit wasn't playing but was still around (and) made our life a lot easier that he could come and play. We don't want that situation going forward again," he continued. CHANCE FOR GILL TO LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE: Agarkar said the selectors wanted vice-captain Shubman Gill to learn from the experience as well as from the senior players. "Shubman is a guy that we feel is a three-format player and seems to have shown a lot of quality over the last year or so that we hear from the dressing room," he said. "You try and have somebody who can also learn from a couple of the senior guys that are there. "Surya in this instance or Rohit who's still around so we don't face the same challenges (that) suddenly (you are) trying to look for a captain in case there are injuries or loss of form somewhere," he explained. "He's shown some decent leadership qualities. We want to try and get him the experience that he can put forward. There are no guarantees in life but at this point, that's the thought," he said. PACE BOWLING COMBINATION IN FUTURE: Agarkar admitted that while playing Tests in India the team may not need three seamers but going forward they will be discussing the fast bowling lineup too. "Some of the guys, some of the fast bowlers are at the NCA. We hope that for the next month or so, they'll be back up playing," he said. "I think he has (Mohammed Shami) started to bowl which is a good sign for us. (The) 19th September is the first Test. That was always the goal," he added. "We don't quite know whether that's the timeline at the moment. That I have to speak to the guys at the NCA but that's the aim. "There are so many Tests coming in India; maybe you don't play three seamers in the eleven. But, going forward, there's a lot of cricket or Test cricket that's coming. We need some conversation around it," he said.

Gambhir-Agarkar in sync: Players won't be allowed to pick and choose series for workload management

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gautam Gambhir's plain-speak and Ajit Agarkar's lucidity is set to make for a heady combo as the new head coach and the chairman of selectors looked completely in sync while spelling out, in no uncertain terms, that days of cherry-picking series by citing workload management could be over. They explained certain tough calls while in a few things, they were subtle yet said enough to allow people to read between the lines. Physically, neither Gambhir nor Agarkar have an imposing presence but ask anyone in the periphery of Indian cricket and people will swear by the fact that these are two individuals with sharp and informed takes, which don't change readily. As they put up a united front in their first joint media interaction, it was clear that they were ready to put their money where their mouths were. Technically, it might seem that Agarkar enters his second year of chairmanship but perhaps like Gambhir, this is also a fresh start in which the duo can create a road-map for the 2027 ODI World Cup. So what was the biggest takeaway from the Gambhir-Agarkar joint press briefing ahead of the tour of Sri Lanka? Workload management seems to be the biggest one. The prickly word in Indian cricket will again dominate air space but this time, it is crystal clear that rules will be different for batters and bowlers. "I've said it before, workload management for someone like (Jasprit) Bumrah is important.



If you are a batter who is in good form, might as well play all the games," Gambhir was as straight as ramrod in his reply when asked about his take on the issue. It was widely believed that both ODI and Test captain Rohit Sharma and team's premier batter Virat Kohli will skip the three games in Sri Lanka but their presence ultimately is an indicator that both the seniors will probably play as many series as possible. "Now that Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli will play only two formats, I expect them to be available for most games," Gambhir addressed the issue with a lot of clarity just like chairman Agarkar was up and ready to explain what went against Hardik Pandya, who was considered to be a natural successor to Rohit, at least in the T20 format. "You (would) want a captain that's going to be more likely to play all the games," one couldn't get a more crystal clear answer to a pointed question. What was more refreshing was that unlike selection committee chairmen of the past, Agarkar just didn't go by

his gut feeling about the leadership qualities but also took the view of the change room. ""Why Surya was made captain? Because he is one of the deserving candidates. The one we know has been around the dressing room over the last one year, you get feedback from the dressing room a lot. "He has got a good cricketing brain and he is still one of the best T20 batters in the world," Agarkar elaborated. In the 27-minute media conference, one thing was reiterated time and again. Stars can no longer pick and choose. While acknowledging that a player of Pandya's skill-set is a rarity, Agarkar made it clear that the selection committee cannot be taken for granted. "Fitness, obviously, has been a challenge for him over the last few years and then it becomes a little bit more difficult for him and even as selectors," he said. Agarkar handled the tricky query on KL Rahul being ignored for captaincy with similar eloquence. "I wasn't there when KL was superseded; I wasn't the selector firstly."

Then there was the issue of Duleep Trophy and Agarkar was clear that if not all, most of the Indian Test team contenders will be playing at least one match of the tournament before India's rare season of 10 Tests commences on September 19. In case of Ravindra Jadeja, Agarkar was clear that the senior all-rounder wasn't dropped from the ODI team but his explanation did indicate that one might not see two players with pretty identical skill-sets in ODI set-up. "It would have been really pointless to take both him and Akshar for this short series...So, no, not at all dropped," he said on Jadeja. And then Gambhir had to address the elephant in the room - the conjectures about his relationship with Kohli, something the straight-shooter rejected as "good for TRP". Gambhir might be perceived as a 'My Way or High Way' man but his messaging was that he wants to be the agent that keeps the dressing room happy. And what qualifies as a happy dressing room?

Mumbai City FC sign Supratim Das for three years

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Mumbai City FC on Monday announced the signing 19-year-old midfielder Supratim Das on a three-year contract which will keep him at the club till Indian Super League (ISL) 2027. Das is known for his technical abilities, game awareness and "excels at holding the ball under pressure and delivering incisive passes as a midfielder", the club said in a statement. Das, who is from the Reliance Foundation Young Champs, played a crucial role in winning the sub-junior I-League title in the 2018-2019 season and in their runner-up finish in the MFA



Super Division League during the 2022-23 season. He also participated in the Reliance

Foundation Development League 2022-23 and 2023-24 and earned qualification for the Premier League Next Gen Cup in 2023. Das has been a part of the RFYC's exposure trips to Spain in 2017, 2018 and 2019 and to Japan earlier this year. "The club is known for developing young talents and it is a fantastic opportunity for me to develop my skills and polish my talent at the top level," Das said. MCFC's head coach Petr Kratky said, "We had our eyes on him for some time and are happy he has decided to join us. His vision, technical ability, and understanding of the game will benefit our team."

Dominant India Women face Nepal, eye semifinal berth in Asia Cup

PTI ■ DAMBULLA

Bouyant India will look to extend their winning run and seal a semifinal berth when they face Nepal in their final Group A Women's T20 Asia Cup match here on Tuesday. India registered convincing wins in their first two matches of the continental tournament, beating traditional rivals Pakistan and United Arab Emirates by seven wickets and 78 runs respectively to put one foot in the semifinals. Minnows Nepal hardly have any time to recover from the thrashing they received at the hands of Pakistan in their previous outing on Sunday, the same day when the tournament's overwhelming favourites and defending champions India bulldozed the hapless Emirates side. While India are primed to

enter the last-four, Pakistan improved their net run rate with the comfortable win over Nepal lifting them to the second spot in Group A. India will, however, not be bothered by how the other teams are doing and will look to sustain the momentum they have gained with two convincing victories heading into the semifinals. India have flexed their muscles in both batting and bowling so far in the tournament, and are likely to continue in the same vein come Tuesday. If the swashbuckling opening duo of Smriti Mandhana and Shafali Verma fired with the bat in the victory over Pakistan, after the bowlers' excellent display, skipper Harmanpreet Kaur and Richa Ghosh led the show in the middle-order in the hammering of the UAE. The big-hitting Ghosh,



especially, was in destructive mood as she carted 64 in just 29 balls while Kaur compiled 66 in 47 deliveries. While Kaur played the anchor's role to perfection, it was Ghosh's blazing knock which helped India score their first-ever 200-plus total in T20Is. As far as the Indian bowling is concerned, the likes of Renuka Singh, Pooja Vastrakar and Deepti Sharma have been doing a wonderful job of both containing runs and taking wickets. Even Tanuja Kanwar, who was roped in as a replacement for injured off-spinner Shreyanka Patil, performed her duty with aplomb, giving away only 14 runs while taking a wicket in her full quota of four overs. The Indu Barma-led Nepal, which started the tournament with a historic six-wicket victory over the UAE, is well

aware of the task. They will certainly take confidence from their first-ever win in the event but the Himalayan nation will need a lot more than that to even come close to challenging a dominant India. TEAMS: India (from): Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Jimimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh (wk), Uma Chetry (wk), Pooja Vastrakar, Deepti Sharma, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh, D Hemalatha, Asha Sobhana, Radha Yadav, Tanuja Kanwar, Sajana Sajeevan. Nepal (from): Indu Barma (C), Kajol Shrestha, Rubina Chettri, Sabnam Rai, Sita Rana Magar, Rajmati Airee, Puja Mahato, Bindu Rawal, Roma Thapa, Mamta Chaudhary, Kabita Joshi, Kabita Kunwar, Dolly Bhatta, Kritika Marasini, Sanjhana Khadka.

DIRECTOR VENKATA SATYA UNVEILS MYSTERY BEHIND OPERATION RAAVAN

K. RAMYA SREE

In the ever-evolving world of cinema, where audiences constantly crave innovation, director Venkata Satya is setting a new benchmark with his latest film, *Operation Raavan*. Starring Rakshit Atluri and Radhika Sarathkumar and produced by Dhyani Atluri, the film promises to captivate viewers with its fresh take on the suspense thriller genre. Set for a grand release worldwide on July 26, *Operation Raavan* is generating significant buzz. We caught up with Venkata Satya to discuss the film's intriguing premise, his directorial journey and what audiences can expect from this cinematic venture.

In an age where psychological nuances are gaining prominence in storytelling, Satya delves into the complexities of human thought in *Operation Raavan*. He explains, "Mythology suggests that our enemies and achieving salvation lies in understanding them. Practices like yoga and meditation aim to control our thoughts. In movies, villains typically engage in wrongful acts driven by their thoughts. I wanted to explore these underlying ideas through *Operation Raavan*."

Drawing inspiration from the epic *Ramayana*, Satya's film offers a contemporary perspective on classic themes. "The *Ramayana* is inherently a thriller," he notes. "In *Operation Raavan*, we incorporate elements like Garudman, Ravana and Guhu, but with a modern twist. Ravana's disguise involves a mask, which is central to our film's title. We explore the psychological aspects of characters, delving into why



Coming up with his new film *Operation Raavan* on July 26, Director Venkata Satya interacts with *The Pioneer*, sharing his directorial journey, film's premise and more about the upcoming film.

some individuals display extreme behaviours in relationships."

Satya's film also reflects on today's societal reactions and judgments. "We witness varied responses when individuals face challenges. For instance, a boy's unreciprocated love might label him as a 'psycho', just as a girl's subsequent interactions might draw similar judgment. Our movie explores the reasons behind such extreme behaviours and aims to resonate with audiences by presenting a nuanced view of these social dynamics." Working with his son Rakshit Atluri added a personal dimension to Satya's directorial journey. "Directing Rakshit didn't greatly affect me," he shares. "He was a bit apprehensive during fight scenes and I worried about potential injuries. The fight master reassured me and Rakshit performed admirably. We recently released a single-shot poem by Karuna Sri, showcasing Rakshit's talent. Saravana

Vasudevan's music also complements the film beautifully."

Radhika Sarathkumar's role in the film is pivotal and Satya acknowledges her contribution. "Approaching Radhika with the story was challenging, but once on set, she followed my directions meticulously. Her dedication and willingness to adjust her performance according to my instructions were commendable. Radhika believes *Operation Raavan* will be her most memorable film, given her character's complexity across different time frames."

Satya reflects on the unpredictable nature of filmmaking compared to other industries. "Running a business is more predictable; a well-brewed cup of tea generally pleases the customer. Cinema is an art form with no guarantees—what one person admires, another might not. While there are supporters in business, the film industry often lacks a safety net, leading to complexities."

Despite working with a modest budget, Satya has ensured high technical standards for *Operation Raavan*. "While directors like SS Rajamouli have elevated Telugu cinema to international acclaim with high-budget films, we crafted *Operation Raavan* with a budget of four to five crore rupees. Our focus was on maintaining high technical standards throughout."

In a unique initiative, Satya plans to reward keen-eyed viewers. "We've announced that each of the first thousand audience members who correctly identify the 'psycho' character within an hour of the movie's start will receive a silver coin. It's a fun way to engage with our audience and add an interactive element to the viewing experience."

Looking ahead, Satya reflects on his directorial journey and future plans. "I completed *Operation Raavan* within the planned budget and schedule. Directors like KV Reddy, Aadurthi Subbarao, Rajamouli and Steven Spielberg inspire me greatly. Post-*Operation Raavan*, I'll focus on planning my next project, alongside ongoing work on *Palasa 2*. Our production aims to release one film annually."



Game Changer faces delay

Shankar's highly anticipated political thriller, *Game Changer*, featuring Ram Charan and Kiara Advani, has been generating significant buzz since its announcement. Initially slated for a Dussehra release, the film's release has been postponed. This news was confirmed by producer Dil Raju of Sri Venkateswara Creations during a recent event.

Dil Raju made the announcement at the pre-release event for Dhanush's *Raayan* in Hyderabad, where he was a guest. Amidst the audience's enthusiastic chants of *Game Changer*, Dil Raju responded with a smile, saying, "Game Changer? Let's meet during Christmas."

While it was previously reported that Ram Charan had completed shooting for *Game Changer* in July, it has now been revealed that filming is not yet fully finished. Some segments of the film remain incomplete. The delay is

attributed to Shankar's focus on the post-production of *Indian 2*, starring Kamal Haasan. The director is expected to complete the remaining shoots within a few weeks.

Game Changer boasts a screenplay crafted by Shankar, Vivek Velmurugan and Sai Madhav Burra, with a story penned by Karthik Subbaraj. In the film, Ram Charan plays an IAS officer who ascends to the role of chief minister and is reportedly seen in triple roles.

The cast includes Jayaram, Srikanth, Sunil, SJ Suryah, Anjali, Samuthirakani and Nassar alongside Ram Charan and Kiara Advani. The film features music by S. Thaman, cinematography by Tirru and editing by Shameer Muhammed.

Game Changer will be released in Telugu, Tamil and Hindi, though the official release date is still to be announced.

KANGUVA SINGER ALL PRAISES FOR DSP AHEAD OF FIRST TRACK RELEASE

Studio Green's highly anticipated film *Kanguva*, starring Suriya, is one of the year's biggest cinematic events. As excitement builds, the makers are gearing up to unveil the film's first track, the *Fire Song*, which will be released today (July 23). The new poster featuring Suriya has only intensified the anticipation for this energetic track.

The *Kanguva* team recently shared a video where crew members praised the *Fire Song* for its intense and dynamic energy. In the lead-up to the release, singer B Praak, who recorded the Hindi version of the song, took to social media to express his enthusiasm and gratitude towards Devi Sri Prasad, the composer. He posted, "It's always amazing working with you, Sir @thisisdsp. Thank you for giving me the chance to collaborate with you again on this super song. I never thought I'd sing something like this. People will experience a new vibe in my voice, all thanks to you. What a composition, what music, and what a humble man you are, Sir. Can't wait for *Fire* to drop soon!"

Kanguva is touted as one of the most expensive films of the year, with a staggering budget of over 350 crore, surpassing major hits like *Pushpa* and *Singham*. Filmed across seven countries and featuring one of the largest battle scenes with over 10,000 participants, the movie promises a grand spectacle set in a unique prehistoric period. Studio Green is preparing for a global release of *Kanguva* on October 10, 2024, having partnered with leading distribution companies to ensure a massive rollout.



'My goal is to release at least six films a year under SMK Films'

The upcoming film *Ram NRI*, starring Ali Reza of *Bigg Boss* fame and Sita Narayanan, was celebrated with a grand pre-release event on Sunday. Directed by N. Lakshmi Nanda, the movie carries the tagline "Power of Relationship" and is produced by Muvva Satyanarayana under Muvva Creations, with SMK Films Singuluri Mohankrishna as the presenter. Set to hit theaters on July 26th, the film's trailer was unveiled during the event. The event featured notable guests including Prasanna Kumar, Lion Sai Venkat, Ramakrishna Goud and Ramasatya Narayana, who shared their thoughts on the film.

SMK Films Singuluri Mohankrishna praised the film's quality, stating, "The movie has come out exceptionally well. I'm grateful to everyone who helped make this release possible. I see echoes of *Uyyala Jampala* and *Shatamanam Bhavati* in this film. My goal is to release at least six films a year under SMK Films. We are committed to supporting smaller films and are working on a solo project with Lakshmi Nanda. I hope the audience appreciates our efforts." Producer Muvva Satyanarayana expressed enthusiasm, stating, "The film has turned out wonderfully. We enjoyed working on it and are optimistic about its success. We hope everyone supports our movie."

Sarath Kumar's new look as 'Nathanadhudu' out

The expectations of Vishnu Manchu's big-scale spectacle and epic actioner, *Kannappa* reached new heights, after the teaser of the movie was launched. Recently, the makers had launched the character poster of actor Sarath Kumar as 'Nathanadhudu'. The poster looked extremely ferocious and intriguing. One of the most costly and eagerly awaited Pan India movies is *Kannappa*, which was directed by Mukesh Kumar Singh and produced by Mohan Babu. A strong cast of actors, including Mohan Babu, Prabhas, Akshay Kumar, Mohan Lal and Kajal Aggarwal, also appears in the film.



Dhanush wants to collaborate with Jr NTR for a multi-starrer

Renowned for his stellar acting, Dhanush is currently in the lime-light promoting his upcoming film, *Raayan*. With an impressive portfolio in Indian cinema like *SIR*, *Aasuran* and *Aadukalam*, as well as notable international projects, Dhanush continues to capture the audience's attention.

During a recent promotional event for *Raayan*, Dhanush was asked in a rapid-fire round which actor he would like to collaborate with in a multi-starrer. Without missing a beat, Dhanush named the "Man of Masses," NTR Jr. He responded enthusiastically, saying, "Tarak, NTR Jr.," sparking excitement among fans of both actors and fueling speculation about a potential cross-industry collaboration.

NTR Jr., celebrated for his powerful performances and mass appeal, paired with Dhanush, known for his intense acting, could create an electrifying on-screen partnership. Their combined talent and unique skills promise to deliver a cinematic experience that fans would eagerly anticipate. Here's hoping a filmmaker takes note and brings this dream collaboration to life!

Modern Masters: S S Rajamouli captures a closer look at his journey

Over the years, the visionary S S Rajamouli has captivated millions with his iconic filmography. Quite extraordinarily, he did not attend film school or earn a college degree — instead, he learned storytelling through comic books. On Monday, Netflix, in partnership with Applause Entertainment and Film Companion Studios, has released the trailer for *Modern Masters: SS Rajamouli*, offering a glimpse into the remarkable journey of the celebrated global filmmaker. Directed by Raghav Khanna, the docu-film will stream on August 2.

The fierce, world-famous characters of Rajamouli's films, from *Eega* to *RRR*, reflect the legendary director's unparalleled vision. Not only have his characters made a global impact, but his songs have also made the world groove, earning international acclaim and setting new records in Indian cinema. Hosted by the renowned film critic and journalist Anupama

Chopra, the documentary delves further into Rajamouli's incredible work, spanning from Hyderabad to Hollywood. From his childhood fascinations and family influences to moments of doubt and triumph, the documentary unveils the unseen, human side of the legend, allowing fans to truly get to know the man behind the camera.

"Storytelling is the heart of my existence — it's what I am passionate about and will always continue to pursue. I am overwhelmed by the immense admiration and love that audiences have shown for my work," S S Rajamouli reflects. "It's truly humbling to see Netflix, Applause Entertainment, and Film Companion Studios come together to share my story. This docu-film is a way of expressing gratitude to my fans and loved ones for being an integral part of my journey. Their support inspires me to keep creating and entertaining."



'RASHMIKA IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN WIN HEARTS IN 56 WAYS'

Rashmika Mandanna, celebrated for her radiant smile and captivating charisma, is affectionately known as the "golden girl" and "national crush." Her charm and talent have endeared her to audiences across the globe, making her a beloved figure not only for her acting skills but also for her warm and engaging personality. In a recent interaction, actor Vicky Kaushal was touched by a video message from Rashmika. His reaction was heartwarming as he reminisced about their collaboration. Vicky shared, "Rashmika is the only person who can win hearts in 56 different ways. She is such a sweetheart. We worked together for the first time in our upcoming film *Chhaava*, and she brought an incredible amount of positivity to the set. Her heart is as beautiful as her smile." Rashmika Mandanna's smile has a unique ability to brighten any space, and she has become a symbol of warmth and positivity in the entertainment industry. Her fans cherish her not only for her talent but also for her genuine connection with them. Always keeping her followers updated, Rashmika makes sure they are involved in every step of her personal and professional journey.

