





# Future of Rushikonda mansion in limbo after change of govt

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The fate of a sprawling mansion on Rushikonda beach, constructed during the YSR Congress Party's tenure to serve as the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), hangs in the balance following a dramatic political shift in Andhra Pradesh. The mansion, a key part of the controversial three-capital plan, now faces an uncertain future. The recent electoral victory of the TDP-led NDA, which has pledged to develop Amaravati as the sole capital of Andhra Pradesh, has effectively scrapped the proposal for decentralising the State's capital. The mansion, part of a larger Rushikonda development project, includes seven structures spanning 9.88 acres. Initially, a three-member IAS officers' committee had endorsed the site for its strategic and security benefits.

The YSRCP administration, advocating for decentralised development, invested around Rs 500 crore in the project. This included the demolition of the popular Hariatha Beach Resorts, managed by the

## Victory of TDP-led NDA has scrapped proposal for decentralising State's capital



Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC), to make way for the new structures. However, legal challenges have since hindered the establishment of an executive capital in Visakhapatnam, with ongoing cases in the National Green Tribunal and the Supreme Court.

In the wake of the election results, TDP supporters forcibly entered the mansion,

which was previously off-limits to the public, and raised their party flag. This act has fuelled widespread speculation regarding the future of the newly constructed buildings near GITAM Deemed University and Gayatri College.

Hariatha Beach Resorts, known for offering panoramic views of the Bay of Bengal, was a significant tourist attraction. Rushikonda beach itself,

recognised with the prestigious Blue Flag for meeting international environmental standards by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), is also part of the Government of India's Beach Environment and Aesthetics Management Services (BEAMS) project.

EAS Sarma, a prominent social activist and former IAS officer, has been vocal in his criticism of the previous government's environmental policies. Speaking to The Pioneer, he said, "The previous government caused significant environmental damage at Rushikonda, violating environmental laws for the CMO, despite clearance only for a tourism structure, which failed judicial scrutiny."

"Ironically, the earlier TDP government's unilateral decision to establish a grandiose capital at Amaravati also compromised the environment," he added.



## Ravichandra takes charge as CM's Principal Secretary

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

M Ravichandra assumed office as the Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh on Thursday. He has taken charge as the Principal Secretary of CM in the first block of the State secretariat. Vedic scholars gave him blessings on the occasion. The officials and staff greeted Ravichandra.

Later, he paid a courtesy visit to Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad.

TR&DB Principal Secretary Pradyumna, Guntur District Collector M Venugopal Reddy, SP Tushar Gudi, Judicial Department Secretary Satya Prabhakar, Protocol Director Bala Subrahmanyam Reddy, officials of various departments, trade union representatives and others met Ravichandra.

# Naidu, wife visit Durga Temple in Vijayawada

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, along with his wife Bhuvaneshwari, visited Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada on Thursday. Prior to assuming the chief minister's chair in the first block of the secretariat, Naidu had darshan of Durga Devi and offered special pujas.

Endowment Department Commissioner S Satyanarayana, Regional Joint Commissioner Ratna Raju, NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao, Temple Executive Officer (EO) KS Rama Rao and the Vedic scholars accorded the Chief Minister a warm welcome.

Amidst the traditional dance of students, the temple authorities took the CM and his wife to Rajagopuram, where they were welcomed with Vedic chanting. Later, the officials provided darshan for them.

After taking oath as Chief Minister for the fourth time, Chandrababu Naidu offered special pujas to the presiding deity in 'Antharalayam'. Later, temple scholars gave blessings



Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and his wife Bhuvaneshwari visiting the Kanaka Durga temple atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada on Thursday  
-Photo: Ch.Vijaya Bhaskar

to CM Chandrababu Naidu and Bhuvaneshwari at the Veda Ashirvachana Mandapam. The Endowment Commissioner and the EO presented them with silk robes and Durga Devi's portrait.

After that, they received Prasadam.

Meanwhile, Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath alias Chinni and his wife Janaki Lakshmi presented silk robes to them and accompanied them up to their convoy. Chandrababu

also interacted with temple priests. Minister Kollu Ravindra, MLC Panchumarthi Anuradha, Gudivada MLA Venigandla Ramu, former MLC Buddha Venkanna, TDP national official spokesperson K Pattabhi, senior leaders Nagul Meera, MS Baig, Vijayawada Municipal Commissioner Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar, Vijayawada RDO Bh Bhavani Sankar, and others accompanied Chandrababu Naidu.

## POCSO CASE



## Non-bailable arrest warrant against K'taka ex-CM Yediyurappa

PNS ■ BENGALURU

A Bengaluru court on Thursday issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against former Chief Minister and senior BJP leader B S Yediyurappa in a POCSO case. The Special Investigation Team of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) had moved the First Fast Track court seeking an arrest warrant against him since he failed to appear for questioning on Wednesday.

Yediyurappa had sought time to join the probe. The BJP veteran, who is also a member of the party's parliamentary board, is presently in Delhi, and he is likely to join the probe after he returns, sources close to him have said.

According to police, Yediyurappa has been booked under the POCSO Act and Section 354 A (Sexual harassment) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) based on a complaint by the mother of a 17-year-old girl who alleged that he molested her daughter during a meeting on February two this year, at his residence in Dollars Colony here.

The victim's brother had filed a petition in the court earlier this week alleging that though the case was registered on March 14, no progress has been made in the investigation.

# Venkaiah Naidu praises Amaravati farmers' agitation

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former Vice President of India Muppavarapu Venkaiah Naidu has lauded the Amaravati agitation that went on for 1,631 days. "It taught us a great lesson. The sacrifices made by farmers and labourers are an inspiration for the next generation. It is a great thing that the agitation continued for 1,631 days without any violence," he pointed out.

Venkaiah Naidu distributed certificates to the youths who completed the self-employment training at Swarna Bharati Trust located at Atkur of Ungutu mandal in Krishna district on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, Naidu said that the



Amaravati agitation was similar to the Freedom Struggle, as it was peaceful. Despite farmers and women facing many hurdles during their agitation, they continued it and finally, they organised a historical agitation in the State, he said.

Further, he stated that for the first time in the country,

around 33,000 acres of land were given away by the farmers for the construction of the capital. They had given their lands in their interest, he said. "The State should have only one capital. Legislature and administration should be situated in one place. Then it will be possible to work collectively and cooperatively," he added.

## Naidu takes...

Continued from Page 1

### 'ANNA' CANTEENS

The CM has also signed the order to revive Anna Canteens across the State. During the TDP government's term, there were 183 Anna canteens across the State and food was supplied at an affordable cost of Rs 5 a plate and three times meals at just Rs 15 a day. On an average, 2.5 lakh poor people used to have food at Anna canteens per day and then TDP government spent Rs 31.06 crore. However, the previous YSRCP government closed all the canteens.

# Kuwait vows to promptly investigate the incident

PNS ■ DUBAI/KUWAIT

Kuwait Thursday said authorities have identified the bodies of 45 Indians and three Filipino nationals killed in the tragic fire incident in a building housing foreign workers as the Gulf Kingdom vowed to promptly investigate the incident and assured full support in repatriating the mortal remains of the victims.

At least 49 foreign workers were killed and 50 others injured in the fire on Wednesday at the seven-storey building where 196 migrant workers were staying in the southern city of Mangaf.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf Al-Sabah, serving as the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior, and Minister of Defence, said that authorities have identified 48 bodies, among which 45 are of Indians and three are of Filipino nationality, English language daily Arab Times reported.

The efforts are still underway to determine the identity of one remaining body, said the first deputy prime minister.

Kuwaiti authorities are conducting DNA tests on the bodies of those killed in the devastating fire incident in southern Kuwait's Mangaf area and an Indian Air Force aircraft is on standby to bring back the

# AP Assembly sessions likely from June 18

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly sessions are likely to be held from June 18. The sessions will be for four sittings and the newly-elected MLAs will take oath on the first day. On the second day, the protom speaker will oversee the election of the Speaker. The speculations were rife about the Assembly post and the speculations say that senior TDP leaders Kala Venkat Rao, Ayyappa Patrudu and TDP MLA from Undi, K Raghu Ramakrishnam Raju are lobbying in full

throttle for the Speaker's post. Further other senior TDP MLAs and Jana Sena legislators are in the race for the Speaker post and CM N Chandrababu Naidu is considering various names for the post.

The Telugu Desam Party led by Chandrababu has won 135 MLA seats. Its allies Jana Sena led by K Pawan Kalyan bagged 21 seats and BJP won eight seats. The YSR Congress led by YS Jagan Mohan Reddy was limited to 11 seats. All are waiting to know whether YSRCP will get Opposition status as it requires 18 MLAs.

## No need to be...

Continued from Page 1

We had extended Rs 2.70 lakh crore worth benefits under welfare schemes," the YSRCP chief told his MLCs.

"We went to the elections after implementing the schemes and did good to the people. The five years period of 2019-2024 has passed in a speedy manner and 2024-2029 will pass similarly. No need to worry, as we will bounce back," he hoped.

"Let us give time to the coalition government in the state till their honeymoon period expires. We started infusing courage to those who were attacked by the TDP activists. We will reach out to people in the coming days," Jagan Mohan Reddy told his MLCs.

The former Chief Minister strongly believed that the good which the YSRCP had done to every household still existed. The people of the state still keep faith in the YSRCP as every household had got some benefit, he hoped.

Exhorting the MLCs to continue to be active and bolster the party, he reiterated that they would come back certainly but it takes some time, adding that they should give some time to the ruling party. "When their sins ripen, we will come up. What is important in politics is character, values and trust," he said. Jagan Reddy also felt that politics does not mean power.

## CM Naidu offers...

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TTD JEO Veerabrahmam received the dignitary and led him to the sanctum sanctorum for darshan. After offering obeisance inside the temple and to Dhvajasthambham, he was rendered Vedaseervachanam in Aseervada Mandapam followed by the presentation of Prasadam.

Meanwhile, Chandrababu complimented the TTD JEO for making elaborate darshan arrangements both at Tirumala and Tiruchanoor. Deputy EO Govindarajan, Agama Advisor Srinivasacharyulu, Tirupati Collector Praveen Kumar, SP Harshavardhan Raju and others were present.

### 'Will complete...

Continued from Page 1

He said that steps will be taken to make the airports environment-friendly. "Our aim is to bring airports to tier-2 and tier-3 cities and make aviation accessible to the common travellers. Former Minister Ashok Gajapathi Raju has done a lot for the aviation industry in AP."

# Cleansing will begin from TTD...

Continued from Page 1

He recalled that he survived the claymore mine attack at Alipiri and that it was lord Venkateswara who saved him. Then he realised what he had to do a lot for the State and the Telugus.

The CM said that their mission is to eliminate economic inequalities and transform Andhra Pradesh as a poverty-free State. The

family system is an energy booster and a great wealth. No matter how many difficulties arise, there will be partners to share. Chandrababu recalled that his family members stood by him when he was in prison.

The CM said that the rule has begun from Tirumala. Actions will be taken with special focus on prasadam and cleanliness of Tirumala. The govern-

ment aims to do good to all the people of the State and appealed to the people to be involved in development along with the government. Capital Amaravati and Polavaram have come to a grinding halt and completing them will be the primary focus of the government. "I aim to complete them. There will be no faction achievements," he said, and added that there will not be revenge politics.

"Let's make TTD the best place attracting tourists across the world. We will take steps to build Venkateswara Swamy temples all over the world. I don't have to give anything to my family. Business was set up for them, not depending on politics. Earlier, I had no time to spend with the family members. Now, it will be allocated," said Chandrababu.

# Grace marks withdrawn...

Continued from Page 1

Refusing to stall the counselling for NEET-UG, 2024, scheduled to commence from July 6, the top court made it clear that the admission of successful candidates to medical colleges and other institutions will be subject to the outcome of the petitions which have sought reliefs like cancellation of the examination held on May 5 on grounds of question paper leak and

other malpractices.

A vacation bench of justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta termed as "fairly reasonable" the decision to cancel the grace marks awarded to 1,563 candidates on the recommendation of a panel set up to look into the grievances voiced by the petitioners.

The National Testing Agency (NTA) conducts the all India pre-medical entrance test.

At the outset, lawyer Kanu Agarwal, appearing for the Centre and the NTA, said the committee set up to look into the grievances decided on June 12 to "allay the fears of the students".

It was of the view that the grace marks be withdrawn and replaced with an option of re-test for these candidates which will be conducted on June 23.

A notification to this effect will be issued during the day.



# Port City charts path to become domestic cruise tourism leader

Meeting outlines strategy to leverage city's strategic location and rich cultural heritage to attract cruise travellers

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Visakhapatnam is set to become the frontrunner in domestic cruise tourism, according to Dr M Angamuthu, Chairman of the Visakhapatnam Port Authority (VPA). In a crucial meeting convened by the VPA on Thursday, Dr Angamuthu outlined an ambitious strategy to leverage the city's strategic location and rich cultural heritage to attract cruise travellers.

The meeting, attended by prominent stakeholders including the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Forum (APTF), AP Chamber of Commerce, Tours and Travels Association of Andhra (TTAA), and the Federation of Hotels Association of Andhra Pradesh, centered on several crucial topics. Improving port infrastructure, introducing tourist-centric amenities, and promoting Visakhapatnam's natural beauty and cultural attractions were highlighted as key areas of focus.



District Tourism Information Officer K Gyana Veni emphasised the importance of unified efforts to unlock Visakhapatnam's potential as a premier cruise tourism hub. K Vijay Mohan, president of the Tours and Travel Association of Andhra (TTAA), expressed optimism about future prospects driven by planned investments in infrastructure and promotion-

al campaigns. He stressed the need for stringent safety standards and sustainable practices to ensure a seamless and responsible tourism experience.

A significant highlight of the meeting was the discussion on establishing a dedicated committee or board for cruise development. Engaging with major cruise lines such as Cordelia, Royal Caribbean,

Costa, MSC Cruises, Cunard, Norwegian, Silverseas, Celebrity, Holland America, and Resort World Cruises was identified as a priority. This initiative aims to include Visakhapatnam in their itineraries or relocation plans from Asia to Europe. The urgency of acting swiftly was noted, given that cruise schedules are planned well in advance.

# Founder Chancellor of SRM University meets CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

SRM University-AP Founder Chancellor Dr TR Paarivendhar and Pro-Chancellor Dr P Sathyanarayanan met Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Nara Chandrababu Naidu to extend their congratulations on his fourth tenure as the head of the State government. Upon assuming the office as the Chief Minister after his landslide victory, Chandrababu Naidu generously welcomed the institution leaders with the assurance and support for

the university's development and the provision of necessary facilities.

Founder Chancellor Dr TR Paarivendhar remarked, "Chandrababu Naidu is a visionary leader with an ambitious dream to revitalise the governance, economy, and businesses in the capital city of Amaravati. As the first educational institute to plant roots in Amaravati soil, we confidently look forward to the cordial support in developing SRM University-AP into a world-class university."

Pro-Chancellor of SRM

University-AP, Dr P Sathyanarayanan, congratulated the veteran leader on his political triumph and conveyed his best for his successful tenure. He said, "With Chandrababu Naidu, an exemplary commander at the apex of the state, Andhra Pradesh is set to transcend the frontiers of socio-economic development. SRM University-AP as an academic university will flourish with the development of Andhra Pradesh."

SRM University-AP was established in 2017 when Chandrababu Naidu was pre-



siding as the Chief Minister of the State. Currently housing the School of Engineering and Sciences, Easwari School of Liberal Arts and Paari School of Business, the university has a visionary plan to extend its campus to include a law school, medical school and other emerging schools and programmes. Chandrababu Naidu-led state support will propel the progress of the varsity, helping to provide quality education, employment and academic capital to the ground roots of Andhra Pradesh.

# Collector focuses on wellbeing of students in schools, hostels

Rs 11 crore announced to upgrade rooms, toilets, and dining halls in social welfare residential schools

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

District Collector Dr A Mallikarjuna has emphasised the importance of creating a positive and enriching environment for students in government schools and hostels managed by the Social Welfare Department for students belonging to Backward Classes (BC). During a meeting at the collectorate, Dr. Mallikarjuna commended the progress made on ongoing development projects in schools and hostels across the district. He announced an Rs 11 crore investment to upgrade rooms, toilets, and dining halls in social welfare residential schools. A key focus of the plan is to ensure a clean and healthy environment for students. This includes installing water purifier plants to guarantee a con-



sistent supply of safe drinking water and proper sanitation by mandating the installation of grease traps in toilets.

The meeting highlighted the "Visakha Vidya Vasati Vikasam" programme, a district-level initiative aimed at the holistic development of students residing in government schools and hostels. Dr. Mallikarjuna expressed his

appreciation for the significant contributions made by donors through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes and pledged to secure further support for the initiative's continued success.

The District Collector underscored the importance of fostering mental resilience and self-reliance in students. He advocated for inculcating discipline as a core value and proposed organising special workshops with psychologists to bolster student morale. Dr. Mallikarjuna outlined a vision for a supportive and enriching environment that prioritises student wellbeing. He suggested implementing a structured daily routine that incorporates exercise, yoga, and reading to promote overall health. He further emphasised the significance of providing nutritious meals and imple-

menting measures to prevent the spread of seasonal diseases.

The meeting acknowledged the potential negative impacts of excessive phone use and social media influence on students. Dr. Mallikarjuna called for measures to mitigate these influences. The importance of ongoing collaboration between all stakeholders was emphasised. Dr. Mallikarjuna directed the convening of regular advisory board meetings to ensure coordinated efforts by all officials involved in delivering optimal services to the students. The meeting included representatives from the Social Welfare Department, including DD Rama Rao and BC Welfare Officer Sridevi, as well as DEO Chandrakala, college and school principals, teachers, hostel wardens, and other relevant officials.

# Amaravati farmers welcome Babu with 1,000 kg flowers

Yellow and red flowers carpet Seed Access Road



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On his way to the secretariat to assume office on Thursday, N Chandrababu Naidu received a grand welcome from the Amaravati farmers along the road. The farmers welcomed Chandrababu with flowers and they spread around 1,000 kg of

yellow and red flowers on the Seed Access Road. It's none other than a red carpet welcome for Chandrababu. Amaravati farmers stated that Amaravati got its previous glory after Chandrababu took charge as Chief Minister.

Speaking on the occasion, he said the farmers and women participated in the years-long



Amaravati Parirakshana Agitation because their villages were neglected during the five years of the YSRCP rule. There was no development in all 29 villages. Until the TDP came to power, the Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) did not take care of the development of

their villages, they alleged.

Even though they organised the agitation for the protection of Amaravati, former CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy never tried to talk to them. At last, they were happy that the founder of Amaravati, Chandrababu Naidu took charge as Chief Minister, they added.

# Allegations against VC Prasada Reddy trigger inquiry calls

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Andhra University Vice-Chancellor Prof PVGD Prasada Reddy faces mounting accusations of mismanagement and political favoritism during YCP government's tenure. The allegations, centered around decisions purportedly influenced by the outgoing YCP government, have sparked widespread concern among educationists and the public alike.

Critics contend that Prasada Reddy's decisions have prioritised political gains over the university's global reputation. Accusations range from questionable appointments that allegedly violate the AP Universities Act and UGC regulations to administrative irregularities impacting the institution's academic integrity. The controversy has escalated with calls for a thorough inquiry into these allegations. Last year, the SC, ST, BC, and Minority Alumni Association took the matter to



the High Court through a Public Interest Litigation, seeking intervention by either a Lokayukta or a High Court Judge. Governor Abdul Nazir also forwarded complaints, underscoring the seriousness of the accusations against the Vice-Chancellor.

Among the specific grievances, it is alleged that Prasada Reddy appointed an under qualified individual from a private college as the temporary chair professor of the Ambedkar Study Center, raising questions about academic standards and due process. Additionally, concerns have been raised regarding administrative appointments, including the contentious

extension of tenure for Prof B Krishna Mohan, former Registrar, amidst procedural discrepancies.

Further complicating matters are allegations of irregularities in the appointment of adjunct and honorary professors, with claims that established protocols were disregarded in favor of expediency. One such decision involving the reallocation of faculty from aided degree colleges resulted in legal intervention and subsequent administrative challenges, adding financial strain to an already tumultuous situation. As the political landscape shifts with the prospect of a new government, stakeholders within the academic community are intensifying their demands for transparency and accountability. With the university's credibility at stake, there is a growing consensus for swift action to address these allegations and restore public trust in the institution's leadership.



# CPI State Secretary felicitates Chandrababu Naidu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

CPI State secretary K Ramakrishna and Assistant Secretary Muppalla Nageswara Rao met Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu at his chamber at the secretariat at Velagapudi on Thursday. They felicitated Chandrababu Naidu and extended their support to him. They made it clear that the CPI would support the government in every action

taken by the government for the state development.

Further, Ramkrishna lauded the government's decision to scrap the Land Titling Act and sign the enhancing the pension amount from Rs.3,000 to Rs.4,000. Also, the government should fulfil all its election promises without fail, he suggested. However, in view of people's problems, CPI is to fight against the government, he added.

# Raging debate sparks over fresh faces from north Andhra in cabinet

Newly elected MLAs favoured over seniority

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The recent formation of the BJP-TDP-JSP coalition government in Andhra Pradesh, under Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu for his fourth term, has sparked considerable debate and dissatisfaction among senior leaders from North Andhra Pradesh. Traditionally, cabinet formations in the State have favoured political veterans, but this time, the selection process took a different approach, emphasising newly elected MLAs over seniority.

Notably, only a handful of MLAs from North Andhra, such as Kinjarapu Atchannaaidu, Naidu, Vangalapudi Anitha, and Kondapalli Srinivas, managed to secure ministerial positions. Figures like former minister Ganta Srinivasa Rao and BJP's P Vishnu Kumar Raju were expected to feature

in the cabinet lineup but were ultimately overlooked. Similarly, hopes were dashed for Gajuwaka MLA-elect Palla Srinivasa Rao, despite his strong electoral mandate. Senior TDP stalwarts like Velagapudi Ramakrishna Babu and PVGR Naidu, with longstanding contributions from Visakhapatnam constituencies, were also left out, signaling a departure from past cabinet compositions.

The new cabinet reflects a strategic shift towards appointing MLAs-elect rather than relying solely on seniority and past contributions. This move is seen as an effort to infuse fresh talent and potentially align the government's priorities with new faces from diverse backgrounds. However, it has also raised questions about the criteria used in the selection process and the implications for governance.

Amidst speculation on the tenure of the newly appointed ministers—whether it will be the standard five years or a truncated two-and-a-half-year term—the decision-making rationale remains under scrutiny. Political analysts suggest that performance metrics and key result areas will likely dictate future reshuffles, potentially offering opportunities to sidelined leaders as the coalition progresses.

Sankar Rao, a final-year MA Political Science student at Andhra University, observed that although there was initial discontent among constituents and party loyalists, the inclusion of fresh faces from diverse backgrounds has been seen as a step towards achieving balanced regional development. Chief Minister Naidu's ambitious plans to establish Visakhapatnam as the State's financial hub add another layer of significance to the cabinet's composition.

# VMC chief inspects NH stretch ahead of beautification

Efforts on to increase greenery and reduce pollution at Benz Circle

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) Commissioner Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar, along with officials from the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) and the VMC, inspected the National Highway stretch from Benz Circle to Ramavarappadu Ring for beautification works on Thursday. The officials visited the Mahatma Gandhi Road (MG Road), Eluru Road junc-



tion, Benz Circle and service road.

Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar stated that since Benz Circle

Junction is one of the major ones, efforts should be made to increase greenery and reduce pollution there. He asked the

officials to ensure that side drains are cleared of silt and that there are no obstructions to the flow of water in the drains.

During the inspection, Swapnil was accompanied by Additional Commissioner (Projects) K Satyavati, Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) G Srujana, Executive Engineers ASN Prasad, Chandrasekhar, Deputy City Planner Jubin Cheeran Roy, National Highway Site Engineer Anil, and others.

# Vegetable prices hit roof in Telangana

Prices may come down when fresh crop arrives at the market

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Household budgets are taking a severe beating with vegetable prices rising by the day in Telangana. The rise in the vegetable price is attributed to shortage in supply. Vegetable crops had been hit by heatwave in the beginning and later by unseasonal rains.

The inflationary tendency of vegetables and other essential commodities hit the poor and middle classes. Very high temperatures during the summer and heavy rains lashing the Narayanapeta district led to vendors selling some vegetables at Rs 100 per kg and some others at Rs 80-90 per kg. The traders have been importing



vegetables from Raichur and Yadgir in Karnataka. Therefore, they pass on the incidental costs like the cost of transportation to the consumers and hence the very high price of vegetables in the open market.

The prices of the vegetables here are more by Rs 10 to Rs 20 in the open market when compared to their prices in Rythu Bazaars.

Bitter Gourd and green chillies sell at Rs 100 per kg, while the prices of ridge gourd and

beans exceeded Rs 100 by Rs 20 (Rs 120 per kg).

Capsicum is being sold at Rs 90 a kg, while long beans have been priced at Rs 80 a kg. Cauli flower is also being sold at Rs 80 a kg. Beans seeds are being sold at Rs 200-240 a kg.

The Rythu Bazaars have no variety of vegetables. They merely sell locally produced tomatoes, brinjals and spinach.

The prices will ease only when the Vanakalam vegetable crops arrives at the market. The South-West monsoon is active all over the state and farmers have been preparing the fields for cultivation of vegetables in the district. In Armoor of Nizamabad district, the prices of vegetables have almost dou-

bled in a span of just one week. The high prices are attributed to shrinking of the area under cultivation of vegetable and green and leafy vegetable crops. The consumers were heard commenting that the prices of vegetables have almost been on a par with the prices of chicken and meat. In Khammam, the traders in Rythu Bazaars have been selling vegetables at an exorbitant prices. Let alone speaking of high prices of vegetables in the open market.

The vegetable yield has gone down because of the high temperature in Khammam. The wholesale market imports 800-900 quintals of vegetables daily. Currently, the market imports only 400-500 quintals.



# Ministers hail CM for signing on DSC file

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Ministers Nimmala Ramanaidu, Dola Bala Veeranjanya Swamy and S Savita hailed Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu for making the first sign on the District Selection Committee file as assured before elections.

Talking to the media in the Secretariat, the three Ministers said that the Chief Minister signed on the files of DSC and enhanced the social security pension from Rs 3000 to Rs 4000 which would benefit lakhs of people extensively.

Nimmala Ramanaidu stated that as the Chief Minister signed on the DSC file 16,347 posts of teachers would be filled.



The Chief Minister also signed on the file revoking the Land Titling Act which provides security to the lands.

The government disbursed Rs 7,000 pension during July with arrears. The pensions for differently-abled people would be enhanced to Rs 6,000.

Ramanaidu said that the Anna Canteens were being reopened to provide tasty food for the poor at Rs 5. Dola Bala Veeranjanya Swamy said that people had kept faith in them and gave a clear and landslide mandate, adding that all assurances would be fulfilled.

## 72.66 % of candidates qualify in TG LAW CET, PGLCET

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

About 72.66 per cent of candidates qualified in both Telangana State Law Common Entrance Test (LAWCET) and PGLCET results that were released on Thursday.

According to the officials, the total number of the candidates registered for the exams was 50,684 out of whom 40,268 appeared for the test. About 29,258 candidates have qualified.

Out of 40,268 candidates who appeared for the tests, 26,875 are males, 13,389 are females and four transgenders. From among the qualified candidates, males are 20,237, females are 9,017 and four transgenders.

# BJP should be bolstered institutionally in AP: Leaders

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

BJP leaders felt that they should focus on strengthening the party institutionally and analyze the reason for the defeat in some constituencies. The BJP organized a meeting here on Thursday to review various issues including the defeat in some constituencies and laying focus on bolstering the party institutionally.

The meeting was held for eight long hours in which various issues were discussed thoroughly by the national Saha Sangatan General Secretary Shiva Prakash Ji and State president and MP Daggubati Purandeswari here on Thursday. A meeting was held separately with the newly elected MLAs and another meeting was held Parliamentary constituencies



wise. A meeting was also held with the State Election Management Committee and discussed various issues.

The BJP leaders said that priority should be given to resolve the grievances of people and should go forward with coordination in the coalition government. "We should take care not to commit the mistakes, which former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy had

committed during his regime. If we commit the same mistakes, the people will reject us too," the BJP leaders opined.

It is decided to focus on bolstering the BJP institutionally from July month onwards. The BJP has registered remarkable victories in some Assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies in Andhra Pradesh. At the same time, the party tasted defeats in some constituencies.

"We should review the defeats and ascertain reasons for the defeats," the BJP leader stated. National Saha Sangatana General Secretary Shiva Prakash said that BJP has registered victories in many States through the Election Management Committees. The services rendered by the Election Management Committee in the recently concluded elections in AP should be sent to the high command in the form of a document, he told the leaders.

BJP state president Daggubati Purandeswari made it clear that they worked in the elections following scientific aspects. BJP national executive member Somu Veeraj, Minister Y Satya Kumar and newly elected MLAs were among those who attended the meeting.

# Do not bring bouquets, shawls: PK tells cadre

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Jana Sena chief and Minister K Pawan Kalyan asked his cadres not to bring flower bouquets and shawls when they come to meet him.

In a statement here on Thursday, he said that he has been receiving wishes and congratulations from all the leaders and activists from all districts since he took oath as Minister.

"I will visit all districts and meet the leaders and activists. The JSP leaders, activists and

Veera Mahilalu are celebrating the JSP's election victory as a festival. I convey all my best wishes and thanks," he said.

Pawan Kalyan said that many leaders are meeting him to congratulate and convey their wishes. "I appeal to them not to bring flower bouquets and shawls," he told his cadres. Since he has to take charge as Minister, he would visit Pithapuram constituency, where he was elected to the state Legislature Assembly, after June 20, he made it clear.



# RRR condemns Vijaysai Reddy's accusations

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

TDP MLA K Raghurama Krishna Raju condemned the accusations made by YSRCP MP V Vijaysai Reddy in Delhi.

Talking to the media here on Thursday, Raghurama Krishna Raju said that people of state knew how badly the YSRCP men behaved. He said that he was not allowed in his constituency to erect a flexi banner.

The TDP MLA said that fearing to the government

that it would expose their corruption and misdeeds, the YSRCP leaders were creating an unnecessary ado to divert the attention. "Some people committed suicides after losing huge money in betting. The YSRCP now claims the betting victims are the YSRCP activists and committed suicides unable to bear the debacle of the party," the TDP MLA slammed. He ridiculed that Jagan Mohan Reddy may launch 2.0 Odaru Yatra to console the betting victims.



## NATIONAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

# OU inaugurates certificate course in fermentation tech

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Osmania University inaugurated the National Skill Development Programme's Certificate Programme in Fermentation Technology on Thursday at Prof. T Navaneeth Rao Central Facilities for Research and Development (PTNR-CFRD).

The programme is jointly run by Prof. T Navaneeth Rao Central Facilities for Research and Development (PTNR-CFRD) at Osmania University, CSIR-CSMCRI, Gujarat, and Abode Biotech India Pvt. Ltd. The CSIR Integrated Skill Initiative includes the three-day certificate programme. The curriculum attempts to teach the fundamentals and practical uses of fermentation technology to the students.

Prof. B Veeraiah, Principal, UCS, Osmania University, who served as the event's chief guest, explained to the students why they should take advantage of these tripartite collaborations.

Additionally, during the beginning of academic year 2023, the OU Department of Microbiology offered a new M.Sc. degree in Fermentation Technology. These kinds of training will help students develop their abilities and



prepare them for the future.

Dr Sourish Bhattacharya, a scientist and coordinator from CSIR-CSMCRI, Gujarat, spoke about how India was able to meet the needs of both the nation and the world for the Covid vaccine by mass producing vaccinations during the pandemic.

The directors of Abode Biotech India Pvt. Ltd., Madapati Sreenadh and Ranjith Kumar, emphasised that students had to make an effort to comprehend the industrial-level components and methodologies of fermentation technology. They talked about how they started off producing probiotics

on a modest scale and how, in less than ten years, they were able to scale up various technologies.

The programme conveners, Shalini and Dr Hameeda Bee, Chairperson Board of Studies, Dept. of Microbiology, elaborated on the significance of these certificate courses for students studying life sciences.

Furthermore, as COVID has raised public knowledge of probiotics, fermented foods, and novel medicinal biomolecules, these programmes will advance grassroots innovations to the proof of concept stage and expand their reach.

## Hyd CP conducts review meet ahead of Bakrid

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Commissioner of Police Kothakotta Sreenivas Reddy on Thursday conducted a review meeting ahead of Bakrid.

Reddy assured the stakeholders of full cooperation from the police department

for conducting the festival peacefully. "Rules and regulations will be followed and no one will be allowed to take the law into their hands.

Law and order and all arrangements will be made and all the community members will be able to celebrate

Bakrid without any hesitation," the Commissioner said.

The GHMC and officials from the electricity department and water works also assured full and uninterrupted facilities for peaceful & successful conduct of the festival.

## CPI Secretary Narayana thanks Naidu for revoking LTA

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

CPI National Secretary Narayana here on Thursday thanked Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu for abolishing the controversial 'Land Titling Act'.

Talking to the media, he said that Chandrababu Naidu signed abolishing the controversial 'Land Titling Act' immediately after assuming charge as the Chief Minister of the State.

Narayana recalled that one year ago he said that the Land Titling Act would lead to the downfall of Jagan Mohan Reddy government in the election. As he predicted, the Land Titling Act played a major role in the YSRCP's

debacle, he claimed.

"I predicted a year ago that the 'Dharini Land Scheme' in Telangana and the 'Land Titling Act' in AP would lead to the downfall of the governments and the same happened now," the CPI senior leader claimed.

Narayana said that the farmers in Andhra Pradesh vehemently opposed printing the image of Jagan Mohan Reddy on their pattadar passbooks. The farmers questioned why their passbook should carry the image of Jagan Mohan Reddy, Narayana stated.

The CPI leader appreciated and conveyed his gratitude to Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu for revoking the Land Titling Act.



## JSP activist injured in alleged attack by YSRCP activists

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

A Jana Sena activist was injured in an attack allegedly by some YSRCP activists at Kothapalem village in Mogaluru mandal.

Police said that Tadi Ravi Kumar is Jana Sena activist and he worked for the party's victory in the elections.

JSP leader M Rambab told the media that the victim Ravi Kumar erected flexi banners on the occasion Chandrababu Naidu assumed charge as Chief Minister of the state. Angered by that, about 10 people, said to be YSRCP activists, attacked the JSP activist in which he suffered serious injuries. He was admitted to the GGH in Narasapuram.



# Woman protests as RTC crew denies seat to her differently-abled son

PNS ■ WARANGAL

The free ride scheme in RTC buses for women has been in the news for wrong reasons.

In a recent development, a mother on Wednesday protested in front of an RTC bus as she was not allowed to help her differently-abled son board the bus. The driver drove away the bus before the mother helped her son board the bus.

The women broke into tears for not allowing her physically-challenged son to travel in the bus. According to reports, a woman made her two daughters board the Nekkonda-Mahabubabad RTC bus at Warangal bus station. As the woman got down the bus to assist her differently-abled son to board the bus, the driver zoomed past as she was yet to get into the bus. However, the

conductor asked her to travel by another bus as there is no room for her in the bus. The driver who was not aware of the woman's two daughters were in the bus, he drove past the bus.

The woman chased the RTC bus in a three-wheeler and forced it to stop and later staged a sit-in in front of the bus. The passengers in the bus tried to persuade her to call off her protest, but she did not relent.

## SCHOOLS REOPEN ACROSS THE STATE

# Education Dept distributing 'Student Kits' without the JVK logo to students

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

After summer vacations, all Government, Zilla Parishad, Aided, unaided and private schools were reopened in the 26 districts of the State on Thursday. As per the schedule, these schools should have been reopened on June 12, however, on that day Chandrababu Naidu was sworn in as Chief Minister and the government postponed the school re-opening date for June 13.

After 50 days, students went to schools to attend classes in full uniforms and met their friends. As usual, all school headmasters conducted school assemblies and later started classes.

As the schools were reopened, the Education Department officials issued directions for all schools to distribute kits. Earlier, the kits were distributed in the name of Jagananna Vidya Kanuka. After the government change, they are called 'student kits'. However, these kits' tenders were finalised before the elec-



Children were happy to meet their classmates as schools reopened in Vijayawada on Thursday -Photo: Ch.Vijaya Bhaskar

tion schedule. So, the previous government printed former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's photo along with the 'Jagananna Vidya Kanuka' on the kits.

Meanwhile, following the directions from the School Education Department, the officials have taken steps to distribute textbooks to all students

immediately after school reopening. As of now, the officials have distributed school bags that don't have the logo of 'Jagananna Vidya Kanuka' (JVK). As per the oral instructions to students even though the 'JVK' logo was printed on the kit bags. The kits include textbooks, notebooks, shoes, belts and others. However, the

(MEO).

However, a statement of CM N Chandrababu Naidu has been circulating on social media platforms that the 'Student Kit' bags were distributed to students even though the 'JVK' logo was printed on the kit bags. The kits include textbooks, notebooks, shoes, belts and others. However, the

State government has not released any official statement in this regard, MEO told The Pioneer. Until they receive directions from the government, the MEOs and headmasters do not start the distribution of the kits, he added.

The State government planned to distribute student kits to over 36 lakh students in all 26 districts. For that, the government spent Rs.700 crore. If these kits' distribution stops citing the cause of the 'Jagananna Vidya Kanuka' logo printed on them, it will be a big loss for the government. At this stage, those kits' distribution would depend upon the decision of the government, officials said.

The MEOs disbursed the student kits for all schools in their mandal to start the distribution from June 14. Now, the kits are stored at the mandal headquarters, and as per the indent, kits are distributed to all schools. By and large, at any cost, the distribution is to be completed within a few days, government-directed.



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Coal will play a vital role in eliminating power shortage, Union Coal and Mines Minister G. Kishan Reddy said and added that he will try his best to make India generate adequate power.

Speaking to the media after assuming office here on Thursday, Kishan said the country is importing some coal from other nations. He said that there is a need to pro-

duce adequate coal in the coming days.

He said that 10 years ago agriculture, industry and the IT sector faced power cuts due to coal shortage and that even in Hyderabad industries faced power cuts. Due to power cuts crops used to wither and many farmers committed suicide. However, in the last 10 years, he said Modi made the country free of power cuts.

Coal will play a vital role in eliminating power shortages

and I will try my best to make India free of power cuts. India is importing some coal from abroad. In future, there is a need to produce adequate coal. 10 years ago agriculture, industry and IT companies faced power cuts due to coal shortage. In the last 10 years, Modi has freed the country from frequent power cuts.

"I work under the leadership of Modi and will do my part to make India the third largest economy," Kishan said.



INDIA CORNER

### Gurugram man falls pray to sextortion trap, loses over Rs 78,000

Members of a sextortion gang allegedly duped a man of over Rs 78,000 here, police said on Thursday. According to a complaint filed by the man, on April 30, he got a video call on his WhatsApp from a girl who was nude. She later convinced him to take off his clothes during the video call and recorded it. "After some time, I got a call from a mobile number who posed as a crime branch officer. He asked me to pay Rs 20,000 and threatened me that he would circulate my nude video clip on social media," he said in the complaint. "I transferred Rs 20,000 but he again asked me that if I want to get the clip deleted, I will have to pay. After that I got scared and I had transferred Rs 58,999 again on a mobile UPI number. Later, I found myself duped and moved to the police", as the complainant said in his complaint. An FIR was registered under sections 419 (cheating by impersonation), 420 (cheating) of the IPC at cyber crime, west police station on Wednesday, said police.



### SC stays release of movie ‘Hamare Baarah’, criticises CBFC

The Supreme Court on Thursday stayed the June 14 release of Annu Kapoor's movie 'Hamare Baarah' after taking note of allegations that the film is derogatory to the Islamic faith and married Muslim women. Referring to certain "offensive dialogues" shown in the trailer, the top court expressed its anguish over the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) not removing them. "We have seen the movie trailer in the morning and all the offensive dialogues continue in the trailer... we are convinced that the CBFC, which is the statutory body entrusted under the Act, has failed to do its job," said a vacation bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta during the brief hearing. The bench took note of the submissions of lawyer Fauzia Shakil, who represented petitioner Azhar Basha Tamboli, and asked the Bombay High Court to decide the plea expeditiously.



### TN govt to operate LNG, CNG buses on experimental basis for select routes

With an aim at reducing the environmental impact of running buses using diesel and to save costs, The Tamil Nadu government on Thursday launched CNG and LNG buses for select routes, on an experimental basis. The move to run buses using alternative fuels would enable the government to save 7-20 per cent on the total expenses, and reduce the carbon footprint of the state transport department. According to an official release, about 1.76 crore people are served by the 20,160 diesel buses operated by the various transport corporations, every day. Nearly, 27 per cent of expenses incurred by the transport corporations account for fuels. Based on the orders of Chief Minister M K Stalin to use buses run on alternate fuels, Minister for Transport S S Sivasankar said that 14 buses using Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) would be operated by seven transport corporations, on an experimental basis.



# Armed forces ready to face every challenge: Rajnath

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The new government will focus on further bolstering national security by modernising the armed forces and significantly enhancing domestic defence production, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Thursday after taking charge of office. Outlining his vision for the next five years, Singh the government will work assiduously to increase the defence exports to Rs 50,000 crore by 2028-29 from current Rs 21,083 crore. The armed forces are being equipped with state-of-the-art weapons and platforms and they are ready to face every challenge, he told reporters after assuming charge as the defence minister for the second consecutive term. Singh also commended the



military personnel for protecting the unity, integrity and sovereignty of the nation with valour and commitment, in comments that came amid the lingering border row with China in eastern Ladakh. Reflecting growing salience of the Indian Ocean Region in India's defence calculus, Singh decided that he will undertake the first visit in his second term

as defence minister to the Eastern Naval Command in Visakhapatnam to interact with the officers and sailors. "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, our aim will be to further strengthen the security apparatus of the country, with focus on achieving self-reliance in defence manufacturing," he said.

### Three more held in Renukaswamy murder case

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Three people, including the close aide of Kannada star Darshan Thoogudeepa, were arrested by the police in connection with Renukaswamy murder case. According to police sources, Darshan's aide Nagaraj was looking after all the dealings of the actor. He was also taking care of Darshan's farmhouse in Mysuru. Nagaraj was on the run ever since police arrested Darshan, his friend and actress Pavithra Gowda and 11 other henchmen. Sources did not divulge details about his co-star Pradosh's role in the murder. Pradosh had appeared in minor roles in some movies where Darshan was the lead actor. Another henchman identified as Ravi surrendered before the Deputy Superintendent of Police on Thursday evening.

### India rejects ‘unwarranted’ references to J&K in China-Pak joint statement

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday categorically rejected "unwarranted" references to Jammu and Kashmir in a latest joint statement by China and Pakistan and asserted that the Union territory and Ladakh have been, are and will always remain its integral parts. The joint statement was issued in Beijing on June 7 following talks between Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chinese Premier Li Qiang. India also criticised mentioning of projects under the so-called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in the joint statement and said New Delhi rejects any moves to reinforce or legitimise Islamabad's illegal occupation of territories. The CPEC passes through Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir. "We have noted unwarranted references to the Union territory of Jammu & Kashmir in the joint statement between



China and Pakistan of June 7. We categorically reject such references," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. "Our position on the issue is consistent and well known to the concerned parties. The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and the Union Territory of Ladakh have been, are and will always remain integral and inalienable parts of India," he said. Jaiswal was responding to a media query on the joint statement.

"No other country has the locus standi to comment on the same," he said. The China-Pakistan joint statement said the Pakistani side briefed the Chinese side on the latest developments in Jammu and Kashmir. It said the Chinese side reiterated that the 'Jammu and Kashmir dispute is left over from history, and should be properly and peacefully resolved in accordance with the UN Charter, relevant UN Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements'. The MEA spokesperson also took strong note of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that featured in the joint statement. "The same joint statement also mentions activities and projects under the so-called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), some of which are in India's sovereign territory under forcible and illegal occupation by Pakistan," he said.

### ‘Modi hai toh mehengai hai’: Congress takes dig at PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday took a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over inflation figures for May, saying the PM has no solution to the "crisis". The opposition party's assertion came a day after government data released on Wednesday stated that retail inflation continued its downward slide to reach a one-year low of 4.75 per cent in May due to a marginal decline of prices in the food basket. Inflation in the food basket was at 8.69 per cent in May, marginally down from 8.70 per cent in April, according to the data released by the

National Statistical Office (NSO). "Modi hai toh mehengai hai! Food price inflation has been over 8.5% for four months. Pulses have completed a year of over 10% inflation, with prices rising 17.14% in May," Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said on X. "In the Congress Nyay Patra, we had put forth two solutions to price rise, particularly for pulses: Legal guarantee of MSP for pulses, with price determined by the Swaminathan Commission's Formula - this would have boosted domestic cultivation of pulses by farmers, who would now have an assured price and market," he said.

# No evidence of paper leak in NEET-UG

Minister Pradhan says oppn spreading lies without knowing facts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Thursday rejected allegations of paper leak or rigging in the medical entrance exam NEET-UG, saying there is no evidence to substantiate the claims, and accused the opposition of spreading lies without knowing facts. The results of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) were announced by the National Testing Agency (NTA) on June 4. "No concrete evidence of any kind of rigging, corruption or paper leak has been



found so far in the NEET exam. All the facts related to this are before the Supreme Court and are under consideration. The kind of politics being done on this issue is only an attempt to spread confusion and it affects the mental peace of the students," Pradhan said.

### Candidates protest, demand investigation into alleged exam paper leak

In the wake of the alleged NEET exam paper leak, students on Thursday voiced their concerns and demanded a re-examination and a thorough investigation. A group of students protested at the Jantar Manter here with the slogan "24 lakh students want exam, not scam" and a fair investigation into the paper leak matter. The results of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) were announced by the National Testing Agency (NTA) on June 4. Kashish, a candidate of the NEET

UG exam, said, "I got 670 marks and I want the seat I deserve. We all want a fair investigation into the paper leak issue as we have worked hard for the exam." Speaking about the Supreme Court's decision on grace marks, Kashish added, "I have no issue with the Supreme Court's decision on grace marks, but no one is addressing the paper leak issue, which is the major demand of each student here." Another student, Harsh Dubey, said, "No one is talking about the paper leak.

# Modi reviews J-K situation, asks officials to deploy counter-terror capabilities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday asked officials to deploy the "full spectrum of counter-terror capabilities" as he reviewed the situation in Jammu and Kashmir following a spate of terror incidents, including an attack on a bus carrying pilgrims. National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and other officials attended the meeting chaired by Modi, who also spoke to Home Minister Amit Shah and discussed the deployment of security forces and counter-terror operations, government sources said. They said Modi spoke to Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha as well and took stock of the situation in the Union Territory. Sinha briefed him on the efforts being undertaken by the local administration. In the meeting, the prime minister was given a full overview of the security-related situation in the region and was apprised of the counter-terror efforts being undertaken. "The prime minister asked them to deploy the full spectrum of our counter-terror

capabilities," an official source said. Terrorists struck at four places in Reasi, Kathua and Doda districts of Jammu and Kashmir over the past four days, killing nine pilgrims and a CRPF jawan and leaving seven security personnel and several others injured. Two suspected Pakistani terrorists were also killed in an encounter with security forces in Kathua, and a large quantity of arms and ammunition were recovered from them. On Sunday, terrorists opened fire on a 53-seater bus carrying pilgrims when it was en route to the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Katra from the Shiv Khori temple. The bus, ferrying pilgrims from Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Delhi, plunged into a deep gorge following the gunfire, killing nine people and injuring 41 others. On Tuesday, terrorists fired at a joint checkpoint of the 4 Rashtriya Rifles and police at Chattergalla in Bhaderwah while a search party in the Gandoh area of the district was attacked on Wednesday, resulting in injuries to seven security personnel, including a policeman.



### Bhagwat likely to meet Yogi

PNS ■ GORAKHPUR (UP)

Rashtriya Swayam Sevak chief Mohan Bhagwat on Thursday attended a 'karyakarta' camp here and discussed political situation, social issues and the organisation's expansion. Bhagwat reached Gorakhpur on Wednesday and is likely to stay here for five days. Sources said he is also likely to meet Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in Gorakhpur in "a day or two". Around 280 RSS volunteers from Kashi, Gorakhpur, Kanpur and Awadh regions are participating in the 'Karyakarta Vikas Varg' at the SVM Public School in Chitutha area of the city. The camp started on June 3. Requesting anonymity, a senior Sangh office-bearer said, "The RSS chief provided suggestions to the volunteers on increasing the number of Sangh branches and expanding the organisation. He also emphasised on the expansion of various projects undertaken by the Sangh." In his address, the RSS chief put emphasis on social responsibility of volunteers and also discussed the role the Sangh played in facing national challenges. During his five-day stay, the RSS chief will hold separate meetings with volunteers and trainers. Tight security arrangements have been made both inside and outside the venue, and only selected volunteers are permitted to enter the event site.

### ‘NDA govt will fall in a year; INDIA bloc may pose as alternative’

PNS ■ NOIDA

Aam Aadmi Party leader Sanjay Singh on Thursday claimed that the coalition government at the Centre will not be able to run beyond a year and the INDIA bloc will present itself as an alternative whenever there is an opportunity. The Rajya Sabha MP also said that if any of the NDA allies puts up its candidate for the post of Speaker in the Lok Sabha then INDIA bloc parties may consider extending support to them. The AAP leader, who was in Noida for a meeting of the party's Uttar Pradesh unit, also slammed the BJP over the jailing of the opposition leader. "Today you have put our chief Arvind Kejriwal in jail, Manish Sisodia, Satyendar Jain, Hemant Soren in jail. I too was in jail for six months. Sanjay Rawat, Anil Dshmhukh etc are in jail. The BJP will break down its ally parties. You want to do politics by suppressing the opposition, the people of this country will not tolerate this," Singh said. The AAP leader said the way the BJP gave "token ministries" to allies, was "a clear indication that the BJP will

break its allies and this coalition government will not run beyond one year." "We have seen one NDA government fall down in 13 days, another in 13 months and now this third government of Narendra Modi will not be able to complete one year. "We are monitoring the political activities and whenever there is an opportunity for an alternative government, the current government, the dictatorial government, will be removed," Singh told reporters. He said the AAP has appealed to TDP and other NDA partners that if the BJP does not appoint their leader as Speaker, the INDIA bloc parties "will consider extending support to them." "This is my personal opinion that if the Speaker belongs to the Bharatiya Janata Party then there will be three major losses. First, it will shatter the Constitution. "Second, we have seen for the first time that 150 MPs were suspended and sent out of the parliament for the first time in history ... The third point is that small parties which have two or three MPs will be broken down.



### Six dead, three injured in blast at explosives factory near Nagpur

PNS ■ NAGPUR

Six workers including five women were killed and three injured in a blast at an explosives manufacturing factory near Nagpur city on Thursday afternoon, police said. The incident took place around 1 pm at Chamundi Explosive Pvt Ltd at Dhamna village under Hingna police station limits, around 25 km from here. A total of nine injured persons were brought to two private hospitals in the city, said Nagpur police commissioner Ravindra Singh. Of them, five women and a man died during treatment, he told mediapersons. Most of the victims were working in the factory's packaging unit when the explosion took place, another police official said. Further probe was on, he added. Union minister and Nagpur MP Nitin Gadkari took to X to express condolences for the deceased. The BJP leader also appealed local party workers to cancel a program organised here in the evening to welcome him to the city after he again took oath as Union road transport minister following the Lok Sabha elections, his office said in a statement.



# ‘Hot, cold exposure may impact brain’s white matter’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Children and foetuses exposed to hot and cold environments impact their brain's white matter, responsible for connecting various brain regions and enabling communication, a new research has found. Researchers said that children are especially vulnerable to extreme environments as their bodies' temperature regulation processes are still immature. They also found that early exposure could have lasting effects on the microstructure of white matter in the brain. These findings are published in the journal Nature Climate Change. "We know that the develop-

ing brain of foetuses and children is particularly susceptible to environmental exposures, and there is some preliminary evidence suggesting that exposure to cold and heat may affect mental well-being and cognitive performance in children and adolescents," said lead researcher Mónica Guxens, Barcelona Institute for Global Health (ISGlobal), Spain, and the study's corresponding author. However, there is a lack of evidence with regards to how such exposure can bring about structural changes in the brain, Guxens said. The research team studied the exposure of close to 2,700 preteens to monthly temperatures from birth until they



turned eight years old. They used magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) brain scans. The impacts of the exposure were measured between nine-12 years of age. For this, the

researchers assessed the preteens' white matter connectivity by measuring how water flowed and spread in their brains, or 'mean diffusivity'. In more mature brains, water flows more in one direction than in all directions, showing lower mean diffusivity, the study said. The team found that exposure to colder-than-usual temperatures during pregnancy and the first year of life, and exposure to hotter-than-usual environments from birth until three years of age were linked with more mean diffusivity at preadolescence, pointing to a slower maturation of their white matter. "The fibres of the white matter are responsible for connect-

ing the different areas of the brain, enabling communication between them. As the white matter develops, this communication becomes faster and more efficient," said first author Laura Granés, a researcher at ISGlobal. "Our study is like a photograph at a particular moment in time and what we see in that image is that participants more exposed to cold and heat show differences in a parameter -- the mean diffusivity -- which is related to a lower level of maturation of the white matter," said Granés. Previous studies have shown changes in mean diffusivity to be related with poorer cognitive function and mental health problems.



# Looming catastrophe

The ongoing heat and water crisis across north India is claiming lives, and there is no relief in sight

A serious heat and water catastrophe that has already claimed lives and is threatening many more is plaguing the northern parts of India, including the Capital. An unfavorable weather pattern marked by extreme heatwaves and weak rainfall is making it worse. For millions of people, the situation is getting unbearable as temperatures rise and water supply becomes scarce. North India is experiencing one of the worst heatwaves in recorded history. Many locations have regularly seen temperatures above 45 degrees Celsius, with some recording considerably greater values. Many occurrences of heatstroke, dehydration and other heat-related ailments have been reported. There is an increased danger for vulnerable groups, especially for youngsters and the elderly. The number of people enduring the heat in hospitals is overwhelming, and the availability of healthcare resources is limited. Compounding these problems, the monsoon season has started abnormally slowly. Rain, which



usually provides much-needed relief, has been irregular and delayed. There are serious ramifications for both urban and rural communities from this delay. The lack of rain in cities like Delhi makes the heat unpleasant and living conditions nearly intolerable. The delayed monsoon in rural areas is disastrous for agriculture as it greatly depends on timely rainfall. Food security and livelihoods are expected to be threatened by crop failures and lower yields. There is severe water deficiency in northern India as a result of the heatwave and delayed monsoon. The levels of major rivers and reservoirs are perilously low, and groundwater has fallen.

Delhi's water supply is significantly impacted by the historically low levels of the Yamuna river; in fact, some areas get water for only a few hours a day. Concerns over water-borne illnesses have been raised, which has led to disputes over access to water and forced many people to rely on contaminated sources. Water rationing, the establishment of cooling facilities and the distribution of drinking water to communities badly impacted by the problem are just a few of the steps the administration has taken. However, because of the situation's seriousness, these actions have not seen much success. Long-term fixes are necessary to preempt disasters. This entails making investments in infrastructure for water conservation, such as effective irrigation systems and rainwater collection, as well as encouraging the groundwater resources to be used sustainably. To counter the urban heat island effect, green spaces and cooling strategies must be included in urban planning. Furthermore, raising people's knowledge of climate change and its effects helps promote a resilient culture. Millions of people are starkly reminded of their vulnerability in the face of climate change by the heat and water crises in north India. The people of this country continue to be its greatest strength as it fights this humanitarian and environmental crisis.

## PICTALK



A boy follows the cooling water mist released by an anti-smog gun, in New Delhi

# Time for BJP to set its house in order

The party must ponder Venkaiah Naidu's advice and start working towards repairing its ties with the RSS, besides looking for a proactive president

The swearing in of Narendra Modi 3.0 is over and it is now business as usual. But there is an eerie uncertainty pervading across India as the BJP Government is dependent on the life-support system provided by the TDP's Chandrababu Naidu and the JD(U)'s Nitish Kumar. The BJP had won 282 seats on its own in the 2014 elections (31 per cent) while the party had a dream run of scoring 303 seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls (37 per cent) despite Naidu's best efforts to defeat the party. This is the first time in his tenure that Modi is dependent on allies for Government survival. The old slogan "Minimum Government and Maximum Governance" has been dusted out of the cupboard. The BJP's mission to enact the Uniform Civil Code, 'One Nation, One Poll' and its dream Agniveer project too would come a cropper without the support of Naidu and Nitish. The speech delivered by M Venkaiah Naidu, former Vice-President, at the Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) should be noted seriously. "There is a message in the election. I hope people understand the message. The ruling BJP failed to reach the majority mark in the Lok Sabha on its own though it emerged as the single largest party while the Opposition put up an impressive performance," Naidu said. A discernible feature of this election was the absence of RSS volunteers from the campaign. What upset the RSS was the declaration made by party president JP Nadda that the BJP has no relation with the Bhagwa Dhwaj, the saffron flag that is emblematic of Sanatana Dharma. "Our flag was apparently created by lord Indra himself. The flag carries the saffron color of the lord. We chose the flag for our kingdom. The flag represents humanity and we need to ensure that we live up to its representation," Shivaji, the great Maratha emperor, told his ministers and commanders. It is time for Nadda to move out of party presidentship. He has neither inspired nor enlightened



people through his words or actions. Nadda should read and learn about two gentlemen from south India, K Kamaraj and S Nijalingappa, both former presidents of the Congress who were rated as titans of Indian politics. Public memory is not that short as they remember the efforts undertaken by Naidu to topple Modi in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. The nation saw Naidu holding hands with Sonia Gandhi, Mamata Banerjee, MK Stalin and, above all, the two most intelligent persons in the world; viz, Sitaram Yechury and D Raja as a prelude to oust Modi and Amit Shah. No political parties have absolute majority of their own to form the Government though the National Democratic Alliance (also termed as Non-Dependable Allies) has nearly 300 MPs, 27 more than the half way mark. Though the Congress, the main player in the Opposition, could not touch the three-digit mark, together with its allies, the party has emerged as a striking force. This year presents an entirely different scenario. The charismatic, uncompromising and powerful Modi is at the mercy of two satraps



THE BJP'S MISSION TO ENACT THE UNIFORM CIVIL CODE, 'ONE NATION, ONE POLL' AND ITS DREAM AGNIVEER PROJECT WOULD COME A CROPPER WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF CHANDRABABU NAIDU AND NITISH KUMAR

with national ambitions. Even before the NDA held its first meeting, Kumar and Naidu have put forward a set of demands, including conducting the caste census and scrapping of Agniveer scheme. It was Jagan Mohan Reddy, leader of YSR Congress and the outgoing Chief Minister, who forced Naidu to take refuge in the BJP camp. Reddy had launched a thorough probe into the charges of corruption against Naidu, for which he was arrested and imprisoned. When it was time for the 2024 Assembly elections, Naidu felt the need to cast his lot with BJP and Modi. Having got more than what he aspired for, Naidu is eyeing bigger rewards. We cannot expect anything better from a person who backstabbed his father-in-law NT Rama Rao, the founder of the TDP, and usurped the party proprietorship. Nitish is no different from Naidu. He is a living example of the Aaya Ram, Gaya Raam politics. Naidu and Nitish are two deceiving crutches and can lead Modi to "no-man's land". The current political imbroglio is BJP's own making. How many of us remem-

ber the five-day long crisis in Maharashtra when Devendra Fadnavis, the then leader of the Opposition, was sworn in as Chief Minister in 2019 with Ajit Pawar (NCP) as his deputy, only to make an ignominious exit after two days. Fadnavis and the other senior BJP leaders had termed Ajit as the embodiment of corruption but they found no qualms in forming a coalition Government with him. Despite Ajit returning to the Pawar Parivar within two days of swearing in, Fadnavis solicited him again and the former is now back in the Hindutva fold. How come BJP, which claims from rooftops that it is always against dynasty politics, forge an alliance with a purely family-run enterprise? Fadnavis' hurry forced him to commit the political harakiri. His case reminds us of the kamikaze by Chaudhary Charan Singh in 1979, ostensibly to teach the then Prime Minister Morarji Desai a lesson. Chaudhary Saheb went down with the Janata ship and could not stage a comeback even at a later stage. (The writer is a special correspondent with The Pioneer; views are personal)

# AI's influence on India's e-commerce industry

AI reshapes Indian e-commerce with personalisation, efficiency, security and stronger customer bonds, revolutionising shopping

In the bustling landscape of Indian e-commerce, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a transformative force, reshaping the industry in profound ways. From personalised shopping experiences to efficient logistics, AI has emerged as a cornerstone of success for online retailers in India. AI has a multifaceted impact on e-commerce and has implications for businesses, consumers, and the overall economy. One of the most noticeable effects of AI in Indian e-commerce is the enhancement of the shopping experience for consumers. Through advanced algorithms and data analytics, online retailers can now offer personalised product recommendations tailored to individual preferences and purchase histories. This level of customisation not only increases customer satisfaction but also drives sales and fosters brand loyalty. Moreover, AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants provide round-the-clock customer support, addressing queries and concerns in real time, thereby improving overall customer



engagement and retention. AI has also revolutionised the way products are discovered and marketed in the Indian e-commerce landscape. Sophisticated search algorithms powered by Natural Language Processing (NLP) enable users to find products more efficiently, even with vague or misspelt search queries. Additionally, image recognition technology allows consumers to search for products using images, streamlining the search process and enhancing the user experience. Furthermore, AI-driven targeted advertising helps businesses reach their target audience more effectively, maximising the return on investment for marketing campaigns. In the realm of supply chain management, AI has emerged as a game-changer

for Indian e-commerce businesses. By analysing vast amounts of data, including sales trends, inventory levels, and external factors like weather and transportation conditions, AI algorithms optimise inventory management, forecasting, and logistics operations. This results in reduced costs, minimised stockouts, and faster order fulfilment, ultimately leading to improved operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. Moreover, AI plays a pivotal role in enhancing security and mitigating fraud risks in Indian e-commerce transactions. Advanced fraud detection systems leverage machine learning algorithms to identify and prevent fraudulent activities in real time, safeguarding both businesses and consumers from financial losses. Additionally, biometric authentication technologies, such as facial recognition and fingerprint scanning, provide enhanced security for online payments, bolstering consumer trust and confidence in the e-commerce ecosystem. Despite its numerous benefits, the widespread adoption

of AI in Indian e-commerce also presents certain challenges and concerns. Data privacy and security remain paramount, with the need for robust regulatory frameworks to protect consumer information from unauthorised access and misuse. Moreover, the increasing reliance on AI-powered systems raises questions about algorithmic bias and fairness, highlighting the importance of transparency and accountability in algorithm development and deployment. In conclusion, the impact of Artificial Intelligence on Indian e-commerce is undeniable, revolutionising the way businesses operate and consumers shop in the digital age. As AI continues to evolve and permeate every aspect of the industry, it is essential for businesses to embrace innovation, adapt to technological advancements, and prioritise ethical considerations to harness the full potential of AI while ensuring inclusivity, fairness, and security in the e-commerce ecosystem. (The author is BU head at Snapdeal; views expressed are personal)



AISHANI VIJ

## INADEQUATE PENALTIES FOR CRUELTY

Madam — Apropos the news story "Animal laws need more teeth say activists," published on June 12, this is my response. Reading about the brutal beating of a dog in Pune, resulting in a mere ₹50 fine, is both disheartening and infuriating. This case, alongside similar instances in Mumbai and Delhi, highlights the urgent need for stricter laws against animal cruelty in India. The proposed Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Amendment) Bill, 2022, seeks to address these issues by introducing harsher penalties, including fines up to ₹75,000 and imprisonment for severe offences. This amendment is crucial, as the current laws are woefully outdated and ineffective. Strengthening these laws is not just about protecting animals; it's about fostering a compassionate society where brutality is not tolerated. It's high time for the government to act, ensuring that offenders face appropriate consequences and that we cultivate a culture of empathy and respect. Our future generations deserve to grow up in a world where cruelty to animals is met with swift and severe justice.

Devansh Khatri | Jaipur

## SURGE IN GREEN ENERGY

Madam — Apropos the news story "India's green energy rise, including 'Green Coal'," published on June 12, this is my response. Reading about the Reserve Bank of India's latest report brings a sense of optimism about India's economic future, particularly in the energy sector. With green energy projects worth Rs 700 billion set to start this year and projected investments reaching Rs 765.2 billion by 2025-26, it's clear that sustainable energy policies are paying off. India's achievement of full electrification, with significant hours of power for rural and urban areas, coupled with its position as the third-largest renewable energy producer, is commendable. The innovation of green coal, which reduces CO2 emissions significantly, exemplifies India's commitment to sustainability. NTPC's ini-

## Lansdowne's rich military legacy



Apropos the news story "The Garhwal Regiment's glorious military heritage," published on June 12, this is my response. The still air of Lansdowne's Bhawani Dutt Joshi Parade Ground reverberates with the historic war cry 'Jai Badri Vishal Ki Jai' from the Agniveers of the Garhwal Regiment. Established in 1887, the regiment boasts a legacy of val-

our, earning numerous military honours, including Victoria Crosses and Ashoka Chakras. Lansdowne, named after a British Viceroy, remains a testament to colonial heritage with its scenic ridge-top cantonments and hill stations.

Colonel Mainwaring's bungalow, now MES property, and the Darwan Singh War Museum reflect the regiment's storied past. The Garhwal Officers Mess, with its Victorian charm and unique artefacts like the Sun Dial and the billiards table, epitomises the regiment's historical opulence. Despite attempts to rename Lansdowne, locals cherish its colonial past and its connection to military excellence. The Garhwal Regiment's symbols—Lord Badrinath, the Unknown Soldier, and the Royal Rassi—continue to inspire courage and pride among its soldiers.

Aadhya Chawla | Chandigarh

tiatives, especially the Varanasi Harit Koyla Pariyojna, showcase impressive advancements. The green coal project, part of the "Make in India" initiative, symbolises a major stride towards the "Atmanirbhar Bharat" mission. MBL's success in converting municipal waste into eco-friendly coal is not just a technological breakthrough but also an effective solution to waste management, marking an important milestone in India's green energy journey.

Arya Sundaram | Chennai

## DREAMS OF A BETTER WORLD

Madam — Apropos the news story "Blueprint for a Better Society," published on June 12, this is my response. We all envision a world filled with peace, happiness, and harmony. Nobody desires environmental degradation, the loss of lives through violence, or the erosion of the human spirit due to crime, corruption, and poverty. Instead, we seek a life defined by health, wealth, and happiness. To achieve this, we must identify the values necessary to create a socio-politico-

economic system that fosters such a society. Most would agree that reducing wars, violence, poverty, unemployment, pollution, corruption, crime, and social injustices is crucial. Additionally, fostering freedom, reducing hunger, and promoting love and cooperation are essential. A survey would likely reveal that people expect scientists to embrace spirituality, religious leaders to adopt a scientific approach, and doctors to treat both body and soul. Education should include moral and spiritual development and societal attitudes towards women and children need to improve. Achieving these goals requires each societal segment to fulfil expectations and contribute time and talent. Global cooperation is essential, possibly through a new kind of bank where individuals and institutions can contribute towards building a better world.

Rohit Kapoor | Kolkata

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY UNDER MODI 3.0

Modi's G7 debut amidst global turmoil underscores diplomatic finesse



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

In less than a week of assuming office as the Prime Minister for the largest democracy in the world, Mr Modi is back where he excels. He was in Italy this week, meeting the leaders from the powerful group of nations also known as the G7. On the sidelines were several bilateral meetings with leaders of African, and Arab nations, besides several clear messages to the primarily American and European groups leaders.

This was PM Modi's first trip abroad, after assuming office for a third time (a remarkable feat in itself), where nearly 670 million voters patiently waited in queues under an extremely harsh summer sun over a period of nearly two months to choose the leader of the largest democracy. PM Modi and his party, despite setting ambitious expectations, could not manage a majority by themselves and are now dependent on a bunch of pre-poll alliance political parties to lead the National Democratic Alliance government. This assumes significance at a time when several parts of Europe, not to mention the US are going their own set of democratic churns. The US goes to poll end of the year, and voices on either side of the aisle, are getting harsher and louder. Similarly, the elections to the European Parliament have thrown a resurgence of far-right parties, which is likely to have an impact on the geopolitical dynamics for a long time. What Mr Modi may be comforted by is the fact that he may not need to look around for carefully worded diplomatic statements while explaining the state of Indian democracy to the Western nations.




In the past few years, several questions have been raised across the Western nations and in the US regarding the health of the Indian democracy, its report card on minority rights, religious freedom, the existence of the press etc. The near majority verdict, by the Indian electorate, with ample scope of checks and balances to keep the party with the highest seats under leash, a robust opposition presence in the parliament would be a clear talking point for the PM and his set of diplomats to set out a gold standard for democracy when engaging with several nations. Mr Modi, with his nearly three decades of experience as head of the state and nation, is not new to diplomacy and in several interviews, leading up to the general elections, has articulated his target of enhancing India's global image. The grand spectacle around G20 (not to forget backroom diplomatic negotiations to arrive at a joint statement), several high-level state visits, a bunch of rescue operations carried out for citizens and neighbours from war-torn areas, supply of emergency medicines during COVID are all pointers towards the focus the Prime Minister's Office attaches to global reputational management. PM's third-term visit to G7 assures continuity and explores fresh engagement strategies with current and potential allies, emphasizing continuity and innovation.

Mr Modi's visit to Italy comes at a time when the Ukraine war is unrelenting, and despite severe reluctance, there seems to be chinks in the united European approach towards the aggressor Russia. Many of them, would have, similar concerns regarding Israel's war on terror, which has refused to die down in months. It may be recalled that both Israel and Russia are close allies of India, and India has so far walked a tightrope when commenting on both of these volatile situations. The dynamics of the past relationship, while building deeper relations with recent allies such as the US are likely to be a sensitive diplomatic trope. It is no wonder, that PM Modi has picked up S Jaishankar, a seasoned diplomat as the External Affairs minister for a second term, to retain the continuity and foreign policy focus achieved during his last term. The evolving geopolitical landscape and India's role in global affairs would continue to be tested and chiselled in days to come.

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

# Govt must reboot its 'Neighbourhood First' policy

## Modi's top priorities should include strengthening of bilateral ties with neighbours and herald a new era of dialogue to counter China's influence



KS TOMAR

The Narendra Modi Government must give priority to wean away neighbours who have drifted towards China. The presence of leaders from the neighbourhood and the Indian Ocean region at the inauguration of Narendra Modi's third term as Prime Minister highlights the significance New Delhi accords to these countries. Notable attendees included Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe. The swearing-in ceremony also witnessed the participation of Bhutan Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay, Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Seychelles Vice

President Ahmed Afif and Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu. The inclusion of President Muizzu is being interpreted as a good diplomatic move, especially when both nations currently have strained ties. It may be recalled that Modi invited leaders from the eight member States of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to his swearing-in ceremony in 2014. For his 2019 inauguration, the guests included leaders from the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIM-STEAC), along with Mauritius and Kyrgyzstan. The Modi-led Government will have its plate full of national and international issues, which will warrant



immediate attention and formulation of strategy and action plan. Experts feel that India must resolve the US threat to impose sanctions if the Chabahar Port deal with Iran was not scrapped. Interestingly, the US did not raise any objection when India took up the construction of the port because it suited the US owing to its occupation of Afghanistan. But now that the US has moved out, it has no interest in the port. Former Prime Minister Pt Jawaharlal Nehru's Indian National Congress achieved a remarkable victory, securing 44.7 per cent of the vote and winning 361 out of 494 seats in 1962. In contrast, the BJP, under Narendra Modi, won 238 seats out of 543, with the

NDA collectively securing 294 seats. Unlike the BJP, which relies on coalition partners like the TDP and others, the Congress under Nehru stood strong on its own. This scenario isn't unique to India. In Britain, leaders like Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair also managed to secure three terms. However, managing a coalition Government with a thin majority presents its own challenges. The reduced strength can increase the bargaining power of smaller coalition partners. The Modi Government's foreign policy has alienated neighbours like the Maldives, Nepal etc. Hence it needs a 'relook' as they have drifted towards China, which is using them to expand its influence. Regarding Pakistan,

India should respond to its initiative to have trade ties by keeping the political issues aside. The Sharif brothers may not be averse to it. China's expanding ties in the region are evident, and India needs to tread cautiously to counter its influence, as seen in the case of Nepal. The recent political shift in Nepal towards a communist Government ideologically aligned with China is concerning, especially considering China's 'Debt Trap' strategy. Pakistan serves as a stark example, with China extending a massive debt of \$23 billion, a substantial portion of which is tied to the Belt and Road Initiative. Pakistan's mounting debt to China, totalling \$67.2 billion from

2000 to 2021, underscores the risks associated with this debt dependency. Regarding neighbours, India needs to be worried as Maldives has already moved in the lap of China, and Nepal has also shown red flag as the communist Government led by Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' has moved closer to China. Modi will govern India for the next five years with a relatively weakened position but he has shown resolve to carry on economic reforms to make India a world power. In this backdrop, the Opposition is expected to play a constructive role in the interest of people of the country.

*(The writer is a political analyst and senior journalist based in Shimla; views are personal.)*

# Populism cripples revival of discoms



UTTAM GUPTA

The twin problems of AT&C losses and under-recoveries on sale to certain households or farmers in some States have existed for close to a quarter century

The Centre is planning to launch 'another' scheme to enable public sector power distribution utilities (discoms) to cut technical losses via "transition financing" of the required capital expenditure. The discoms stand at the core of the power supply and distribution network in the country. Mostly owned and controlled by State Governments, they buy electricity from the generating companies (call them gencos) in the public sector such as National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) etc and gencos in the private sector commonly referred to as independent power producers (IPPs) and supply to the consumers. Technical losses to be more precise, the aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses are a sophisticated nomenclature for leakage from the system or power theft. According to Union Power Minister RK Singh, AT&C's losses used to be high at 27 per cent. When, out of say 100 units of electricity that leaves the generating stations/power dispatch centre, 27 units are stolen and hence not paid for, this is bound to have a debilitating effect on the discoms' operations. The discoms could charge more on sale of the balance 73 units to compensate for the 'nil' revenue on the 27 stolen units. But this is theoretical. So, the discoms would end up making a loss to the extent of revenue lost on stolen units. There is another potent factor that exacerbates their losses.



The Electricity Act (2003) and the Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Power require the discoms to fix the tariff on electricity supplied to consumers in a manner such that the average revenue realisation (ARR) from its sale is equal to the average cost of purchase, transmission and distribution (ACS). Yet under dictat from the State Government, either they don't bill certain households (HHs) at all (on consumption up to 200/300 units a month in Delhi/Punjab) or a flat subsidy of ₹800 on consumption (between 201 and 400 units a month in Delhi), besides free supply to farmers as in Punjab. The discoms seek to make up for the resulting under-recoveries by charging more from industries and businesses for which the tariff can go up to a high of ₹16 per unit (this indeed is a major reason for making Indian products and services uncompetitive in both the domestic and international markets). While the States also promise to compensate for a good portion of the under-recoveries, most of them make only partial reimbursement and that too after considerable delay. This further adds to discom losses. The twin problems of AT&C losses and under-recoveries on sale to HHs/farmers have existed for close to a quarter century. Since the beginning of 2000, the Centre has come up with four financial restructuring packages (FRPs) to help discoms. While, the first two (2002, 2012) merely sought to condone their losses, the third namely Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY) launched in November 2015 required discoms to set their house in order and achieve certain milestones in exchange for financial assistance. Under UDAY, discoms' staggering debt of about ₹400,000 crore was condoned. Of this, while 75 per cent was taken over by the States, for the balance, they were allowed to issue bonds at a concessional rate of interest. In lieu of the FRP, discoms



WHILE STATES ALSO PROMISE TO COMPENSATE FOR A GOOD PORTION OF THE UNDER-RECOVERIES, MOST OF THEM MAKE ONLY PARTIAL REIMBURSEMENT AND THAT TOO AFTER CONSIDERABLE DELAY

were required to reduce AT&C losses from 20.7 per cent during 2015-16 to 15 per cent by 2018-19. Further, they were to reduce the ACS-ARR gap from ₹0.59 per unit of electricity during 2015-16 to 'zero' by 2018-19. But, the discoms failed to deliver. During 2019-20, their AT&C losses were 18.9 per cent against the 15 per cent target for 2018-19. The ACS-ARR gap during 2019-20 stood at ₹0.42 per unit against target of 'zero' for 2018-19. During 2020-21, even these limited improvements were reversed as ATC losses zoomed to 22.3 per cent and ACS-ARR gap ₹0.69 paise per unit. As a consequence, discoms losses which had decreased from ₹52,000 crore during 2015-16 to ₹17,000 crore during 2017-18 (courtesy, FRP) increased to about ₹30,000 crore during 2019-20 and further to ₹58,000 crore during 2020-21. Correspondingly, this has led to their ballooning debt which at the end of FY 2021-22, stood at ₹620,000 crore. This prompted the Centre to come out with a fourth package called 'Reforms-Linked, Result-Based Scheme for Distribution' (RLRBS-SD). The scheme was unveiled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech for FY 2021-22. Involving an outlay of ₹300,000 crore, it was aimed at trimming discoms AT&C losses to 12-15 per cent and gradually narrow the ACS-ARR gap to 'zero' by March 2025. This was to be achieved by upgrading the distribution infrastructure and capac-

ity building, thereby improving the reliability and quality of the power supply. It had a provision for compulsory pre-paid and smart metering component to be implemented across the power supply chain, including in about 220 million households. Apart from gross budgetary support (GBS) of close to ₹100,000 crore by the Centre, implementation of the Scheme involves funding by State-run sector-specific lenders; viz, Power Finance Corporation (PFC) and Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) under irrevocable State Government guarantee. The funds release is subject to discoms meeting the pre-qualifying criteria and achieving the basic minimum benchmark in reforms. The RLRBS-SD launched in FY 2021-22 talks of achieving the targets, which should have been achieved by 2018-19, by March 2025. This by itself is laughable. What about the progress? According to the Power Ministry, the Government has so far identified 57 discoms from 32 States and Union Territories under the scheme and has prepared detailed project reports (DPRs) for these. Further, in reply to a question in Parliament given by then Power Minister RK Singh in December 2023: "Till today, DPRs having total outlay of ₹120,000 crore has been approved for loss reduction works and ₹130,000 crore for smart metering works."

Beyond this paperwork, as of January 2024, the total loan disbursed by PFC-REC under the scheme was ₹112,000 crore for 16 States, while sanctioned amount was ₹133,000 crore. As for the gross budgetary support, the release of funds by the Centre during FY 2023-24 was a mere ₹6,000 crore against budget allocation of ₹12,000 crore. That things are moving at a snail's pace may be seen from the fact that 'against the sanctioned smart meters of around 220 million, only about 0.8 million have been installed so far'. One wonders whether the money is being used by discoms to merely pay back the loans taken earlier to fund their recurring losses --- as happened under UDAY. Now that the tenure of this scheme (launched in 2021-22) will end in just about 10 months on March 31, 2025, the Government is keen to launch its second version call it RLRBS- II with similar aggregate outlay of ₹300,000 crore. Who knows, even the funds garnered under this scheme could end up being used to clear the continuous pile up of discoms' debt. The vicious cycle continues. The problem is entirely political. In a bid to win elections (these are held round the clock), almost every political party promises sops which include, among others, power supply to farmers and poor households at throwaway price or even free; they even ignore theft happening in slums/jhuggis that promise votes en masse. They use discoms as 'guinea pigs' for achieving these populist goals.

*(The writer is a policy analyst, views are personal)*



MONEY MATTERS

## Kerala to host international Gen AI conclave in partnership with IBM

The Kerala Government is set to hold a two-day international Gen AI conclave in Kochi, Industries Minister P Rajeev said on Thursday, describing it as a flagship event that will demonstrate the state's commitment to fostering innovation and embracing transformative technologies. The minister launched the official website of the July 11-12 event, which is being organised in collaboration with IBM. Officials said the event will bring together industry leaders, policymakers and innovators to explore the transformative potential of AI and its impact on society and the economy. This event will be a significant milestone in the advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Kerala and the country, Rajeev said. "The International Gen AI Conclave stands as a testament to Kerala's commitment to fostering innovation and embracing transformative technologies. With IBM as the partner, this groundbreaking initiative aims to position Kerala as a hub for Generative AI innovation, catalysing economic growth and driving forward the state's vision for Industry 4.0 readiness," the minister said.



## HPL signs 10-yr naphtha supply agreement with QatarEnergy

City-based Petrochemical major Haldia Petrochemicals Limited (HPL) has entered into a strategic agreement with QatarEnergy, ensuring a steady supply of naphtha for the coming decade, an official said on Thursday. The contract stipulates that QatarEnergy will provide up to two million tons of naphtha to HPL for 10 years through its Singapore-based subsidiary, HPL Global Pte Limited, commencing from the second quarter of 2024. This long-term agreement, signed by HPL Global Pte Ltd and QatarEnergy on behalf of Qatar Petroleum for the Sale of Petroleum Products Company Ltd. (QPSP), marks the most substantial commitment between the two entities to date, a company statement said without divulging the value of the deal. Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi, the Minister of State for Energy Affairs and the President and CEO of QatarEnergy, expressing satisfaction over the deal said, "It reinforces Qatar's dedication to contributing to India's economic expansion."



## Gold slips Rs 50; silver tumbles Rs 550

Gold prices slipped Rs 50 to Rs 72,150 per 10 grams in the local market on Thursday in line with weak trends globally, according to HDFC Securities. The precious metal had closed at Rs 72,200 per 10 grams on Wednesday. Silver also tumbled Rs 550 to Rs 90,950 per kg. It had settled at Rs 91,500 per kg in the previous session. "In Delhi markets, spot gold prices (24 carats) are trading at Rs 72,150 per 10 grams, down by Rs 50 from the previous close," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In the global markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at US\$ 2,313 per ounce, down US\$ 2 from the previous close. The yellow metal gave up its gains and is trading lower after the US Federal Reserve said that inflation has fallen further toward its target level in recent months. The US Fed officials also signalled to cut their interest rate just once this year, Gandhi said.



# Need to boost farm productivity through research: Agri Minister

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Stressing the need to boost agricultural productivity through research, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Thursday directed officials to assess the performance of the country's 113 research institutes and identify gaps in achieving their objectives.

Chairing a meeting with senior officials from the agriculture ministry and research bodies, Chouhan said, "We should assess whether our network of research institutes has been able to give the expected results, is it working properly or not...If there are gaps, a detailed report



"We should assess whether our network of research institutes has been able to give the expected results, is it working properly or not...If there are gaps, a detailed report should be submitted".

The minister emphasised setting clear targets for increasing farm productivity and incomes by 2047, which marks 100 years of

India's independence. He called for annual reviews to track progress against these targets. Chouhan highlighted the lower productivity in irrigated

and non-irrigated areas of Jharkhand compared to other parts of the country. He suggested launching a campaign to bridge this productivity gap.

## Adani group firm Ambuja Cements acquires Panna Cement

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ambuja Cements, an Adani group firm, announced the acquisition of Panna Cement Industries Ltd (PCIL) at an enterprise value of Rs 10,422 cr. A binding agreement for the acquisition has been signed, which will add 14 MTPA capacity to Adani group, taking the total tally to 89 MTPA (million tonnes per annum). Ambuja will acquire 100 per cent shares of PCIL from its existing promoter group P Pratap Reddy and family. PCIL has 14 MTPA capacity

in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Rajasthan (under-construction). Besides, it has surplus clinker at Jodhpur plant which will support additional 3 MTPA cement grinding capacity, said a statement. It will also strengthen Adani group's sea transportation logistics with five bulk cement terminals at Kolkata, Gopalpur, Karaikal, Kochi and Colombo to serve peninsular India, the statement said. The acquisition will improve Adani group's share in the cement market pan-India by 2 per cent and 8 per cent in south India, it added.

# Freshers hiring witnesses 5% growth over last 6 months

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The demand for freshers has gone up 5 per cent over the past six months, aided by gradual improvement in the IT sector, according to a report released on Thursday. The highest share of job postings for freshers was witnessed by the IT and staffing industry with over 32 per cent and 12 per cent share of jobs, respectively, dedicated to entry-level professionals, foundit (formerly Monster APAC & ME) report on fresher hiring trends. Additionally, it revealed that the demand for freshers has

increased 5 per cent over the last six months. The report is based on an analysis of data on foundit platform from May 2023 to May 2024. It further stated that IT companies -- particularly in the hardware and software sectors -- are showing intent to hire freshers, signalling a shift in hiring strategies in India. This trend is largely driven by ongoing restructuring efforts within the industry, focusing on adopting new technologies, optimising costs, enhancing innovation, and ensuring scalability, the report



added. Startups in the IT services and internet industry led in

fresher hiring, with 23 per cent and 22 per cent of jobs directed to new graduates, respec-

tively, it stated. While jobs in the IT industry did decline in the last quarter, engineering graduates are in demand for 28 per cent of jobs in startups alone, the report said. Additionally, other roles being hired across startups are consultants (10 per cent), sales/exec manager (4 per cent), and operations exec/manager (4 per cent), it added. "We're seeing a clear trend where startups and other companies are increasingly valuing skills over just academic credentials. This shift means that young profession-

als need to focus on acquiring relevant skills to stand out in the competitive job market," foundit (previously Monster APAC & ME) CEO Sekhar Garisa said. The report added that Delhi-NCR (21 per cent) hosts the highest share of job postings for freshers, followed by Bengaluru (14 per cent). Notably, fresher hiring was the highest in metropolitan cities in India, Mumbai (8 per cent), Chennai (8 per cent), Pune (8 per cent), and Hyderabad (8 per cent) were recorded as the next top locations for hiring freshers, it added.

# No reduction in consumer market frauds despite regulatory changes

## KPMG in India survey

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The majority of the respondents feel that there has been no reduction in frauds despite multiple regulatory changes in India, a KPMG survey said on Thursday. KPMG in India conducted a survey with more than 75 experts from the finance/compliance domain in various organisations in the consumer markets sector (FMCG, consumer durables, agriculture, retail and e-commerce), covering questions about frauds and leakages faced by them. As many as 79 per cent of the survey respondents said there has been no reduction in frauds despite regulatory changes, and only 21 per cent



responded by saying that frauds have been reduced due to the changes. As per the survey, procurement, sales and distribution and e-commerce were voted as the major areas prone to fraud. About 72 per cent of the respondents cited reputational damage as the most severe impact of fraud, whereas 16 per cent believed that financial losses would also impact

organisations. Around 61 per cent of the respondents believed that implementing a tech-based early warning signal mechanism is the most effective measure for detecting and mitigating fraud, as per the survey. KPMG in India, Partner - Forensic Services, Mustafa Surka said the consumer markets sector is rapidly transforming and growing. Consequently, the frauds in the sector are also evolving, leading to substantial leakages for organisations. "It is imperative for organisations to be agile and mitigate these leakages in a timely manner by investing in technology and developing a strong monitoring mechanism," Surka noted



## L&T bags 'large' offshore order from ONGC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Engineering and construction conglomerate Larsen & Toubro (L&T) on Thursday said it has bagged a 'large order' from state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC). L&T has classified the order as 'large', which means the order value ranges between Rs 2,500 crore and Rs 5,000 crore. "The Hydrocarbon vertical (L&T Energy) of Larsen & Toubro (L&T) has secured an order from the ONGC for Daman Upside Development Project-Wellhead Platforms & Pipelines (DUDD-WP), off India's west coast," the company said in a filing to the BSE.

# Need to moderate rate, widen tax base to make India developed economy by 2047: Experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

There is a need for a shift in the taxation mindset from rates to revenue by moderating tax rates and widening base in order to achieve the goal of 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047, experts said. They underscored the need on transition from rates to revenue focused on lowering tax rates, enlarging the tax-paying base and thereby creating the means for financing of India's investment and development needs. "Conventional higher tax rates haven't resulted in significant tax buoyancy. Recognising this fact, governments in India since 1991 onwards have clearly battled for moderate tax rates leading to greater levels of transparency and compliance," EY India senior partner Sudhir Kapadia said. Time has come to bite the bullet for reforms in direct

taxes, he said, adding, there could be one simplified rate structure for businesses and for individuals, there could be one simple three-rate structure with low or moderate rates, no surcharges and cesses and no significant deductions. On GST, he said, a lot has been spoken about the rates and clearly it is time to have a far lower number of rates in GST structure. "It is also time to ensure we do not have constraints related to availing of input tax credits. There has been a steady increase in income tax revenues but we need to have continued focus on taxpayer experience with tax administration, and ensure the filing process

remains seamless and hassle-free," he added. India's tax to GDP ratio suffers from the presence of a thriving informal sector, which still accounts for 30 per cent to 35 per cent of the economy, Kaushik Dutta, Director, Thought Arbitrage Research Institute, said at a seminar organised by Think Change Forum here. "A simplified GST regime will enable them to join the formal economy, take input tax credits, and become competitive. Tax evasion continues to be a big challenge along with classification issues. The inverted duty structure is also an impediment. Another area that GST has not been able



to crack is e-commerce. So, there are challenges and they need to be addressed," Dutta said. According to Pulin B Nayak of Centre for Development Economics, "India is still in the group of developing economies. Income tax payers are less because of low per capita income. Putting tax rates at too high rates is also a bad idea as it will lead to tax evasion and people will wish to reduce their work effort at the margin." Increasing tax to GDP ratio should very much be a priority because this will enable the government to spend on public goods, infrastructure, and the social sector, Nayak said. "We need to widen the tax base, with the minimum of deductions and exemptions, and we need to maintain moderate rates.

# CII wants Modi 3.0 govt to push land, labour, agri reforms to boost growth

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Industry body CII on Thursday made a case for pushing reforms in sectors like land, labour, and agriculture by the Modi 3.0 government to accelerate economic growth, which is estimated to be around 8 per cent in the current financial year. CII President Sanjiv Puri said a lot of policy interventions in the past have put the economy on "a much stronger wicket". "The growth rate is poised to touch 8 per cent during the current year, marking the fourth consecutive year of above 7 per cent + growth. "The growth estimate hinges

critically on addressing the unfinished reform agenda on priority, in addition to improvement in world trade prospects aiding our exports, twin engines of investment and consumption doing well and expectations of a normal monsoon among other factors," he added. Expressing optimism regarding the economy's performance, he said, "Very clearly, we are expecting all three sectors of the economy -- agriculture, services and industry -- to fire and do well next year." He added that the industry body expects inflation to be in the region of 4-4.5 per cent in

the current fiscal. Addressing his first press conference after becoming CII President, Puri, the Chairman & Managing Director of ITC Ltd, said private sector investment, which has been an area of concern, was robust and broad-based across sectors. "Private sector investment has been an area of concern



sometime back, but the good news today is that it is in the right trajectory... it is robust. It had dropped to 20.7 per cent of GDP and it is now at 23.8 per cent, which is more than the pre-Covid levels," Puri said. About the outlook for rural consumption, Puri said, "We certainly see green shoots of pick up in rural (demand)... the expectation for a good monsoon and better crop yields leading to improved realisations that augurs well for the rural economy." The industry body has also suggested rationalisation of rates with three slabs and inclu-

sion of sectors like petroleum and real estate that are presently out of its ambit, besides infrastructure status for the hospitality sector. "As far as GST is concerned, what we are saying there can be three slabs and there are areas like petroleum real estate that are outside the ambit... be included in the GST," Puri said. On reforms related to land, he said CII suggests a moderation in stamp duty to lower the cost of acquisition for economic activity and improvement in efficiency with measures like setting up of a state-level land authority and digitisation of the procedures.

# Mcap of BSE-listed firms hits fresh record of Rs 431.67 L cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The combined market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms hit a fresh record of Rs 431.67 lakh crore on Thursday when the benchmark Sensex also reached its new lifetime high level. Rising for the second day in a row, the 30-share BSE benchmark jumped 538.89 points or 0.70 to hit its lifetime peak of 77,145.46. It later ended at a fresh record high at 76,810.90, up 204.33 points or 0.27 per cent. Tracking the rally in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies jumped to an all-time high of Rs 4,31,67,541.81 crore (US\$



5.17 trillion). In two days, investors' wealth has risen by Rs 4.72 lakh crore. "The domestic equity benchmark traded with a modest gain, with domestic CPI data indicating that inflation is on a slow track of decline," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. Retail inflation continued its downward slide to reach a

one-year low of 4.75 per cent in May due to a marginal decline of prices in the food basket and remained within the Reserve Bank's comfort zone of below 6 per cent, according to government data released on Wednesday. Among the 30 Sensex companies, Mahindra & Mahindra, Titan, Larsen & Toubro, IndusInd Bank, Tech Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, Wipro, Tata Consultancy Services, Bajaj Finance and Nestle were the biggest gainers. On the other hand, Hindustan Unilever, Power Grid, Axis Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank and ITC were among the laggards.



## Surbhi Jyoti tell all on BTS from sets of *Gunaah*

With a gripping tale of betrayal and the complexities of love, Disney+ Hotstar presents yet another riveting drama series, *Gunaah*.

Leading the cast are none other than actors, including Gashmeer Mahajani, Zayn Ibad Khan, and Surbhi Jyoti. Their portrayal promises to keep viewers on the edge of their seats as they navigate the intricacies of their characters with depth and authenticity.

Directed by Anil Senior and with Anirudh Pathak as the showrunner, *Gunaah* follows Abhimanyu, who is out there to blur the lines between right and wrong, friends and enemies, mercy and retribution.

Speaking of the funny and memorable incidents from the set, Surbhi Jyoti shared, "Vignesh Joshi plays the role of my father. So, *bohot banter hote the*, he would just start humming a song in Konkani, and Gashmeer and Shashank, who plays Michael, *wo Marathi me baat karna shuru kar dete hai*

and I just cannot understand Marathi that well. *Usme baatein hojati thi*."

She further added, "Vignesh Joshi owns a business of mangoes; he deals with mangoes. We used to tell him, 'You're my favourite character; oh my god, I love working with you,' and everybody would say the same thing to him so that we would get free mangoes and *aamras*. Whenever I just think about how I enjoyed my days shooting with everybody, it just leaves a smile on my face. *Humne bohot mehnat se ye show banaya hai, aur bohot pyaar se ye show banaya hai. Isiliye confidence bhi hai ki logon ko pasand aayega*."

Produced under the banner of Bodhi Tree Multimedia Ltd. with producers Suresh Dev Motwani, Mautik Tolia, and Persis Siganporia, the series brings together a talented cast comprising Gashmeer Mahajani and Surbhi Jyoti.



## Karan files case against makers of *Shaadi Ke Director Karan Aur Johar*

In context to writer-director Bablu Singh, producer India Pride Advisory, and Sanjay Singh of the forthcoming film *Shaadi Ke Director Karan Aur Johar*, which is scheduled for release on June 14, Bollywood filmmaker and producer Karan Johar filed a complaint in the Bombay High Court on Wednesday.



Johar made a request for an urgent injunction against the release. In addition, the producer of the movie *Kill* has submitted a temporary application to halt the movie's distribution while the legal dispute is still pending. Before Justice RI Chagla's lone bench, the plea is made.

The director of *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahani* claims that he is not associated with the movie and that the producers are using his name without permission. The film makes use of Karan Johar's name, brand, reputation, and image by making reference

to him directly in the title. The request asserts that the release of public promotional materials that prominently feature Johar's name, such as the trailer and movie posters, has seriously harmed his reputation and goodwill.

He claimed that it had violated his rights to publicity, privacy, and personality. Given the producer's prominence in the media, it is implied who is being referred to in the movie title *Shaadi Ke Director Karan Aur Johar*, even if the name Karan Johar is not mentioned together.



## Sai Tamhankar onboard for *Matka King*

National award-winning filmmaker Nagraj Manjule has roped in Sai Tamhankar for his next big project, *Matka King*. This exciting news follows the grand announcement of her association with Excel Entertainment for two interesting projects, *Ground Zero* and *Agni*, where she will star opposite Emraan Hashmi and Pratik Gandhi, respectively.

The news of Sai being roped in for *Matka King* has piqued huge curiosity and anticipation among audiences and her fans. Being directed by Manjule marks a first for Sai, adding an extra layer of excitement to the project.

Expressing her enthusiasm for working with Nagraj Manjule, Sai shared, "Of course, Nagraj Manjule has been on my wish list, and I've been quite vocal about it in interviews and

on social media. I am very excited and nervous to work with him."

"This is a web series for Amazon Prime, of which Vijay (Varma) is a part, and I will get an opportunity to work with a great actor like him. Now, I cannot reveal much about my part here, but all in all, it's a sudden breeze of excitement and thrill in my life right now."

In addition to *Ground Zero*, *Agni*, and *Matka King*, audiences can also look forward to Sai's performance in *Dabba Cartel*, which is slated for release on Netflix later this year.

This film marks Sai's third collaboration with Excel Entertainment and boasts a stellar ensemble cast featuring luminaries such as Shabana Azmi, Jyotika, Shalini Pandey, Nimisha Sajayan, Anjali Anand, Gajraj Rao, and Jisshu Sengupta, among others.



## 'Guddu Pandit has taken a lot out of me, but I cherish it'

Ali Fazal has acknowledged the immense challenges of portraying the complex and intense character of 'Guddu Pandit' in the highly anticipated *Mirzapur 3*. The upcoming season, directed by Gurmeet Singh and Anand Iyer and produced by Excel Entertainment, is set to stream on Amazon Prime Video soon. The series will see the return of beloved characters played by Pankaj Tripathi, Shweta Tripathi Sharma, Rasika Dugal, Vijay Varma, Harshita Gaur, Anjum Sharma, Priyanshu Painyuli, Isha Talwar, among others.

"I suppose by default, the format has become an integral part of my life and performances," shares Ali Fazal. "It's the place where people can track the entire storyline across seasons. We've had seasons 1 and 2, and while I don't know what season 3 holds, I believe I've done justice to the character's journey. This boy maintains his innocence despite the corruption

around him. He's a young, impressionable boy who gets turned into different things because of societal circumstances, and he becomes what he becomes. It's taken a lot out of me, but I cherish it. It's a world and a character I don't belong to, but I've tried to understand it with my analytical approach—how they write, think, and interact in that setting. Stories can be told from any perspective, and this one is from Guddu's."

The rest, he says, is icing on the cake: the body-builder, the madness—these are effects of his (Guddu) core traumas. "I aimed to portray compassion and show the audience the depth of what someone in his situation could go through. My biggest challenge was to detach myself and observe without judgment. I hope it brings some heart to the screen, wherever it is watched."

*Mirzapur 3* is set to bring another riveting season of power, revenge, and the dark underbelly of crime. Fans can look forward to an electrifying performance by Ali Fazal and a storyline that promises to keep them on the edge of their seats.

## Antony Starr discusses *Homelander's* redemption in *The Boys*

Redemption for *Homelander*, the psychopathic superhero from *The Boys*, is somewhat like the shark in *Jaws* becoming vegan and how many people would be interested in that, asks actor Antony Starr about the "narcissistic character" that has made him famous.

Starr said he worked closely with maker Eric Kripke to develop the character in the superhero satire, now in its fourth season.

"We have a great working relationship and I think we've parented this character into something that's three-dimensional and more multifaceted than your average moustache twitty villain. That's why people relate to it," Starr told PTI in a virtual interview.

In *The Boys*, adapted from the comic

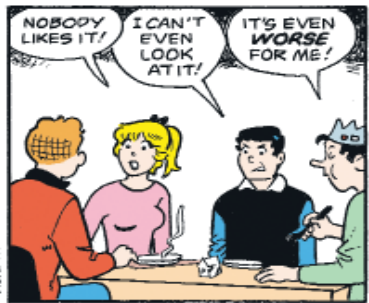
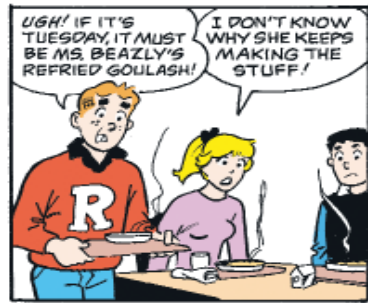
book series of the same name by Garth Ennis and Darick Robertson, *Homelander* is the leader of The Seven, a group of superheroes managed by the powerful corporation Vought International.

"I mean, it's kind of like the shark in *Jaws* becoming vegan. Like, who wants to see that?" He was referring to the killer shark from Steven Spielberg's 1974 cult classic film. "But never say never," he added.

"Personally, I'm an optimist. So I'd love to say yes, but in truth, I'm not sure. As Eric said... 'one of the strong themes in the show is that if someone does the wrong thing, they get punished. In *Homelander's* case, he's racked up enough on the wrong things to make him pretty irredeemable, but I don't know."



### ARCHIE



### GARFIELD



### NANCY



### GINGER MEGGS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



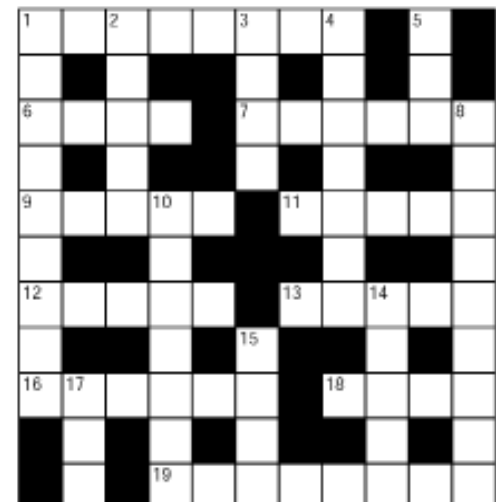
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### SUDOKU

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

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

- These cover birds
- Small animals that followed the Pied Piper
- Ride on these animals
- Opposite of best
- Not as many
- Circular in shape
- Below
- A story in episodes
- A planet
- Gave jobs to

### DOWN

- Entertaining explosives watched at night
- Change
- Sound coming back again





# THRILL OF RIDING SHIKARA IN DAL LAKE FASCINATED ZAREEN

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Actress Zareen Khan considered Kashmir, which is tucked away in the Himalayas, to be a cultural treasure trove in addition to a stunning geographical wonder.

She was encouraged to discover mosaics weaved with a variety of customs, heartfelt music, and delicious cuisine on her most recent journey to Kashmir.

She made it to our travelogue because every detail, from the colourful celebrations to the exquisite handicrafts, captured the timeless essence of *Veer* fame and made her treasure its rich legacy amid the beautiful beauty of its landscapes.

"Kashmir is not only breathtakingly gorgeous, but it's also deeply spiritual. I had a very soulful experience there. I visited a variety of locations in Kashmir, and every single one of them left me in awe of its amazing beauty. To me, every second seemed like a dream! I was genuinely awakening to an act of divine painting," recalls Zareen.

She could see how the people of Kashmir, despite their race, religion, and language, contributed to the unique character of *Kashmiri* society. "Their culture is still very much alive," she continues, promoting the same conversation. "It shows in their clothing, food, and dwellings. I noticed a lot of homes with only wooden floors! Not only do they have handwoven carpets and wooden frameworks, but every *Kashmiri*, regardless of wealth, has a garden with blossoming apple and cherry trees! What more could I want for?"

Regarding the cuisine, she remembers, "Meat dominated my plate a lot. Even though Muslims make up the majority of the population, I observed that everyone there also enjoyed their vegetarianism. Especially lotus stem-based meals! There, *saag* is highly popular, and stalls selling *makki ki roti* and *sarson ka saag* are all over the place. The other specialty was *Kashmiri wazwan*, which I had there as a sumptuous feast."

She observed, too, how *Kashmiris* embodied a cultural identity firmly anchored in the magnificence of their past.

The people of Kashmir still preserve their rituals, carry on ancient traditions, and exhibit an amazing sense of oneness. She participated in customary events, took part in group feasts, and observed her own observances. Zareen Khan was content amid the picturesque valleys! "Not only did the people of Kashmir welcome me into their homes, but their hearts as well. I felt so bonded to

In this exclusive travelogue segment, actress Zareen Khan shares her travelogues from the seductive calm of Kashmir with *The Pioneer*. Zareen Khan was there in the magnificent valleys of Kashmir!



them in such a short amount of time. They truly went above and beyond to ensure my comfort," she explains now.

Zareen was blessed by a special kind of hospitality, where every effort was made to make sure she was comfortable and well cared for. The lavish feasts of *Wazwan*, which were served to Zareen with the utmost love and care, mirrored this tradition as observed by her and fostered a sense of delight among the community.

Another quote from *Housefull 2* fame was, "The rivers and streams are the major part of Kashmir. Everyone is aware of Dal Lake! Like everyone else, I was enthralled by the experience of riding a *shikara* in the same lake. It was a picturesque sight to see how the rivers flowed from the snow-covered mountains that encircle the lake. Everything about it felt surreal, even while you are travelling over these mountains, particularly at Pahalgam. I found it impossible to resist dipping my feet into the freezing water. Videos and images also fall short of capturing the reality of what I went through in real time!"

"You should book your stay well in advance because Kashmir is always buzzing with tourism," the *Jatt James Bond* fame added. "Since this is Kashmir, most of the hotels have breathtaking views. In regards to myself, I had reserved a rental villa. My goal when travelling is to experience the destination rather than the hotel; I don't always choose to stay at five-star establishments. It seems incomprehensible to me to spend money on upscale hotels when travelling."

"Travelling is very therapeutic to me," she continues. "If I have a lot of free time, I love to go to the northern parts of the country to release my stress. If not, I can take my pals on a road trip to Goa! My preference is either Pawan Lake or Lonavala; I just want to feel wonderful." Conversely, "I was feeling a little down about my personal life when I took this trip on my birthday, so it was actually quite liberating for me. On my birthday, I just wanted to leave Mumbai and not feel depressed! Kashmir proved to be beneficial as the breathtaking scenery made my troubles seem insignificant. Still, I missed my buddies in Kashmir!"

"Houseboats were the special attractions for me," she couldn't help but say. "Without a doubt, I would return to Kashmir. I adore Sara Ali Khan's travel videos; therefore, if I had to choose one fraternity member to travel with, it would be her. She strikes me as an adventurer who isn't too picky when she travels! I adore that she doesn't restrict her travels to staying at opulent properties."

## Travelogue



# 'Lads in hick towns will identify with my persona in *Gullak*'



SHRADDHA NEWARE

*Gullak* season 4 has won the audience over once more after garnering a fan base after the first three seasons. Harsh Mayar, who plays Aman Mishra in this lighthearted comedy blended with family drama, has won a lot of praise for his portrayal of the likable character.

In an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*, the actor reflects on how his character has changed over the years and his approach to playing him. He says, "I look at the set, the scene, how the director is guiding me, and what he wants from me. Over the seasons, Aman Mishra's persona has developed; we have witnessed him being both humorous and occasionally sentimental. He has several levels, and the writers deserve all the credit for that. I'm not sure what my real strategy is yet because I think acting is a lifetime skill."

The series effectively conveys its audience's feelings through a blend of humour and profound emotional resonance. An actor's method for switching between these scenarios is different from everyone else's. The *I Am Kalam* fame then says, "I sometimes listen to good music to set the tone of emotional stuff while I'm switching between these moments. Additionally, I try to make use of the set's surroundings when I'm in a humorous scenario."

"I have been doing this for a long time now, and I'd like to think that my humour is a little better in real life too," the former child actor continues. "I find inspiration in the roles played by Kader Khan, Govinda, and Priyadarshan."

Since the start of the web series, its popularity has grown, and viewers are undoubtedly thrilled with the latest season. The National Award-winning actor says of the reception he has received from the public, "The feedback I'm receiving even now is crazy. People always look forward to seeing what's new and applaud each new season as it arrives. Some people compliment your acting, while others commend the work you accomplish."

However, when fans establish a personal connection with you, that's a different story. You show up on the set, follow instructions, or wing it, but you never realise how many lives these actions have impacted. While many TV shows

and movies come and go, I think it's significant when something like this sticks with people and they find it relatable."

When discussing how viewers connect to the show, the comic actor recalls that his upbringing was not as similar to his character as one might assume. "I was a mischievous child. But not too much, as my parents were kind and laid back with me. I therefore did not have to deal with the same difficulties that Aman Mishra confronts. They are much more independent and occasionally less likely to listen to authority than Gen-Z kids. I believe that young boys from small-town places in India will relate to this character," the former child actor continues.

The show has a great ensemble cast, and it's educational to work alongside seasoned actors. Especially, an actor like Jameel Khan! Among those portrayed are Gitanjali Kulkarni and Vaibhav, who each contribute something distinctive to the screen. "*Gullak* is a difficult role, and you must be very special to get it. And my favourite moments are always when Vaibhav plays 'Anu Bhai.' The set is a happy place to be, with a talented ensemble providing cameo roles and participating in jam sessions and inside jokes. Eight minutes without a break were spent filming a scene on a bus platform. It's one of the most memorable scenes for me, and it received accolades for its emotional component," the versatile actor said.

In season one, he played a young adult who was inspired by his younger sibling. He drew inspiration for the second season from those in his immediate vicinity and the way they went about their daily lives. "Aman Mishra is unpredictable because he is a combination of several people that I looked up to in my everyday life. I get to keep things interesting and changing as he goes through his arc because his age changes with the seasons," the musically famous *Paigham* remarked. The energetic actor also declares, "I want to explore many roles in my upcoming endeavours. I used to do serious roles before switching to comedy a few years ago, but right now I want to try something new. Taking on personas such as *Spider-Man*, something in Marvel would be fascinating for me."

After experimenting with musicals and pushing limits, Harsh made his singing debut with the song *Feeling Naya Hai*, which has music by Anurag Saikia and lyrics by JUNO. With this song debut, he is entering a new genre!

## The lifeline of humanity

Blood donation stands as a beacon of hope and humanity in our modern society, encapsulating the spirit of giving and the unspoken bond between strangers. Every day, countless lives are saved and transformed by the simple yet profound act of donating blood. This article delves into the myriad ways blood donation has saved lives and underscores the critical importance of this noble practice.

### Life-saving impact of blood donation

Blood donation is crucial for various medical treatments and emergencies. Here are some key ways it saves lives:

#### 1. Emergency trauma care

Accidents and natural disasters often result in severe injuries that necessitate immediate blood transfusions. For instance, a single-car accident victim can require multiple pints of blood. Quick access to donated blood can be the difference between life and death, stabilising patients until further medical treatment can be administered.

#### 2. Surgical procedures

Complex surgeries, such as organ transplants, heart surgeries, and cancer treatments, often require significant amounts of blood. Surgeons rely on a steady supply of blood to ensure patient safety during these critical operations. The availability of blood can greatly enhance surgical outcomes and reduce mortality rates.

#### 3. Chronic conditions and diseases

Individuals suffering from conditions like anemia, sickle cell disease, and certain cancers (such as leukemia) frequently need blood transfusions. Regular blood donations ensure these patients can maintain their health and manage their conditions effectively. For example, a leukemia patient might need up to eight units of blood a week during chemotherapy.

#### 4. Maternal health

Childbirth can sometimes lead to severe blood loss, making blood transfusions essential for saving the lives of mothers

experiencing postpartum hemorrhage. The availability of blood can prevent maternal deaths and ensure healthier post-delivery recoveries.

### Stories of Lives Saved

#### Miracle of the Marathon Bombing Victims

In the aftermath of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, the rapid response from local blood banks and the flood of donations played a crucial role in saving the lives of many victims. Hospitals were able to perform numerous surgeries and provide emergency care thanks to the

#### 2. Disaster Preparedness

Natural disasters and large-scale emergencies can deplete blood supplies rapidly. Pre-existing reserves of donated blood enable healthcare providers to respond swiftly and effectively. Donating blood regularly helps build these reserves, ensuring readiness for unforeseen events.

#### 3. Community Health

Blood donation fosters a sense of community and solidarity. It's a selfless act that connects donors with recipients in a profound way. Many donors find

ciated with blood donation is minimal. The process is safe, and professional medical staff ensure donors' comfort and safety throughout.

**Myth:** Donors Can't Give Blood Frequently

Healthy individuals can donate whole blood every 56 days and platelets every 7 days, up to 24 times a year. Regular donation does not weaken the immune system or deplete personal health resources.

**Myth:** Blood Types Are Universally Needed Equally

While all blood types are important, certain types, like O-negative, are in higher demand



available blood supply.

#### Hope for hemophilia patients

Hemophilia, a rare genetic disorder, prevents blood from clotting properly, leading to severe bleeding from even minor injuries. Blood products, especially clotting factors derived from plasma, are indispensable for treating hemophilia. Regular donations help ensure that hemophilia patients live healthier, longer lives.

#### Importance of donating blood

Despite the immense need, many regions face chronic shortages of blood. This underscores the critical importance of regular donations:

##### 1. Sustaining blood banks

Blood has a limited shelf life. Red blood cells last for about 42 days, while platelets last only five days. This necessitates continuous donations to maintain a reliable supply. Blood banks and hospitals rely on the generosity of regular donors to meet ongoing needs.

that giving blood not only benefits recipients but also enriches their own lives, providing a sense of fulfilment and civic duty.

#### 4. Encouraging health awareness

The process of donating blood includes a mini-physical examination, which can sometimes alert donors to underlying health issues such as high blood pressure or infectious diseases. This promotes health awareness and encourages donors to maintain healthy lifestyles.

#### Overcoming barriers to donation

Despite the clear benefits, various misconceptions and fears prevent people from donating. Addressing these barriers is crucial to encouraging more donations:

**Myth:** Blood donation is painful

In reality, the discomfort asso-

because they are universal donors. Knowing your blood type and understanding its specific importance can motivate more targeted donations.

### Conclusion

Blood donation is a vital lifeline that sustains the health and well-being of countless individuals worldwide. It is a simple act with a profound impact, embodying the essence of compassion and human solidarity. As communities, we must continue to promote and support blood donation initiatives, ensuring that this precious resource is always available to those in need. By donating blood, we don't just give a part of ourselves; we give the gift of life, hope, and a brighter tomorrow.

(The author, Dr. Ajith Kumar B.R., is a Chief Intensivist and Head of Emergency at Prashanth Hospitals.)



# All round Afghans eye win over PNG, Super 8 entry

PTI ■ TAROUBA (TRINIDAD)

Afghanistan will eye another all-round effort to crush an inexperienced Papua New Guinea here and enter the Super Eights of the T20 World Cup, and the result will have another underlying effect -- knock out New Zealand.

The win will carry Rashid Khan's side to Super Eight from Group 'C' alongside the West Indies, who have qualified on Thursday with a win over New Zealand.

It will also mean curtains for the 2021 finalists New Zealand who have lost two out of two.

That Rahamanullah Gurbaz (156 runs) and Fazalhaq Farooqi (9 wickets) are currently leading the chart of run-makers and wicket-takers respectively is a just reflection of their fine run in this ICC showpiece.

Apart from Gurbaz, the experienced Ibrahim Zadran too has contributed well to Afghanistan's totals, making 114 runs with a highest of 70.

In bowling, pacer Farooqi has made a fine combination with Rashid, who has so far taken six

wickets from two matches. It has ensured that Afghanistan's opponents do not have any let-up either upfront or in the middle passage.

The PNG might be a spirited side, but it looks way beyond their abilities to overcome a formidable Afghanistan.

## TEAMS (FROM)

**Afghanistan:** Rashid Khan (c), Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Ibrahim Zadran, Azmatullah Omarzai, Najibullah Zadran, Mohammad Ishaq, Mohammad Nabi, Gulbadin Naib, Karim Janat, Nangyal Kharoti, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Noor Ahmad, Naveen-ul-Haq, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Fareed Ahmad Malik.

**Papua New Guinea:** Assadollah Vala (c), Alei Nao, Chad Soper, CJ Amini, Hila Vare, Hiri Hiri, Jack Gardner, John Kariko, Kabua Vagi Morea, Kipling Doriga, Lega Siaka, Norman Vanua, Sema Kamea, Sese Bau, Tony Ura.

**Match starts at 6AM IST (Friday).**

**PAK WORRY OVER USA-IRELAND CLASH:** In a strange scenario, a non-playing Pakistan will be more keen on the result of USA and Ireland Group A match at



Lauderhill, Florida on Friday.

A win for USA, currently second in this group with four points, will put an end to the World Cup campaign of Pakistan, who have two points from three matches.

Of course, it will also take the co-hosts into the Super Eight from this group along with India.

Ireland are a competitive side with experienced players in their ranks, but they look woefully out of sync

here and the task might be heavier against the US, who are playing some very good T20 cricket at the moment.

They will be keeping an eye on the fitness of skipper Monank Patel,

who missed the match against India on Wednesday with a left-shoulder injury.

Aaron Jones did the duty of skipper against Rohit Sharma's men in New York.

There is also a strong rain threat to the match as per weather predictions, and even a washout can end the campaign of Pakistan. It will take the USA to five points and beyond the reach of Pakistan, who can now log a maximum of four points.

## TEAMS (FROM)

**Ireland:** Paul Stirling (c), Mark Adair, Ross Adair, Andrew Balbirnie, Curtis Campher, Gareth Delany, George Dockrell, Graham Hume, Josh Little, Barry McCarthy, Neil Rock, Harry Tector, Lorcan Tucker, Ben White, Craig Young.

**USA:** Monank Patel (c), Aaron Jones, Andries Gous, Corey Anderson, Ali Khan, Harmeet Singh, Jessy Singh, Milind Kumar, Nisarg Patel, Nitish Kumar, Noshtush Kenjige, Saurabh Nathralvakar, Shadley Van Schalkwyk, Steven Taylor, Shayan Jahangir. Reserve Players: Gajanan Singh, Juanoy Drysdale,

Yasir Mohammad.

**Match starts at 8 PM IST (Friday).**

**ENGLAND FACE OMAN:** England will look to resuscitate their fast-sinking title defence with a win over inexperienced but capable Oman in their T20 World Cup Group B match.

The situation is so grim that England need to win both their remaining matches by a good margin to equal Scotland on five points, and also hope that the latter lose badly against the Antipodeans.

## TEAMS (FROM)

**England:** Jos Buttler (c), Moeen Ali, Jofra Archer, Jonathan Bairstow, Harry Brook, Sam Curran, Ben Duckett, Tom Hartley, Will Jacks, Chris Jordan, Liam Livingstone, Adil Rashid, Phil Salt, Reece Topley, Mark Wood.

**Oman:** Aqib Ilyas (c), Zeeshan Maqsood, Kashyap Prajapati, Pratik Athavale, Ayaan Khan, Shoab Khan, Mohammad Nadeem, Naseem Khushi, Mehran Khan, Bilal Khan, Rafiullah, Kaleemullah, Fayyaz Butt, Shakeel Ahmad, Khalid Kail. Reserves: Jatinder Singh, Samay Shrivastava, Sufyan Mehmood, Jay Odedra.

## Rampaging Rutherford powers West Indies into T20 World Cup Super 8

PTI ■ TAROUBA (TRINIDAD)

Sherfane Rutherford smashed a career-best unbeaten half-century before pacer Alzarri Joseph and left-arm spinner Gudakesh Motie ripped through the New Zealand line-up to steer West Indies into the T20 World Cup's Super Eight stage with a 13-run win here.

Rutherford came up with the innings of his life, smashing half a dozen sides and two fours for his 39-ball 68 to lift West Indies to 149 for 9 from 76 for 7 in 12.3 overs after New Zealand opted to bowl in a virtual knock-out Group C fixture.

In reply, West Indies restricted the Kiwis to 136 for 9 with Rutherford's fellow Guyanese Motie returning with splendid figures of 3/25. Joseph turned up the heat lower down the order to become the wrecker-in-chief with his 4/19.

With three wins in a row, the tournament co-hosts qualified for the Super Eight stage, while New Zealand's hopes were all

but over following back to back losses.

They had earlier lost to Afghanistan by 84 runs after being shot out for 75. The 2021 runners-up, among the most consistent sides in World Cups, have been found wanting this time.

They made the semi-final in the 2015, 2019 and 2023 editions of the ODI World Cup, and in 2016, 2021 and 2022, the Black Caps ensured a last-four appearance in the T20 World Cups.

It was half past midnight in Trinidad but the locals erupted in joy to celebrate their team's Super Eight qualification, erasing the disappointment of successive setbacks in the big event.

The two-time former champions were eliminated in the Super-12 stage of the competition in UAE in 2021, while in 2022 in Australia, they failed to make the tournament proper and exited in the group stage.

"It was fantastic. I was sitting there with Nicholas (Pooran)



and it was such a beautiful night for someone to stand up and be counted," skipper Rovman Powell said. "That (Rutherford) innings gave us confidence and belief. We watched what they did well and tried to replicate it." "It is one tick in the box, but it is only the start of something big to come. Hopefully we can continue the momentum," said Rutherford on making Super Eight. Willilamson rung in three

changes to the lineup beaten convincingly by Afghanistan and the intent was clear when Trent Boult dismissed Johnson Charles (0) in the first over, forcing the opener to chop on to his stumps. The Kiwi left-arm pacer ended up with splendid figures of 4-1-16-3. Nicholas Pooran rode some luck for three quick boundaries, becoming the West Indies' highest T20I run-getter, moving past Chris

Gayle.

But New Zealand took ascendancy, forcing Pooran (17) and then Roston Chase (0) to both top edge straight to catchers in successive overs. The wicket of captain Rovman Powell capped off a dominant powerplay for the Kiwis -- 23/4 at the six-over mark -- with pacer Tim Southee (2/21) picking up two of the scalps. There was more misery in store as opener Brandon King was dismissed by James Neesham (1/27) and half of the West Indies side was back in the dugout by the seventh over.

But Rutherford had other ideas and played one of the best innings of his career. The 25-year-old Guyanese all-rounder hung around before turning up the heat in the final five overs, blasting five fours and two sixes.

Rutherford brought up his 50 off the final ball of the 19th over and pounded 18 runs of it in all, leaving Mitchell Santner perplexed.

Rutherford scored all 37 runs

in the closing partnership with Motie which became a new 10th wicket record in the ICC T20 World Cup history.

In reply, New Zealand got off to a poor start and lost both their openers -- Devon Conway (5) and Finn Allen (26) -- in the powerplay.

Thereafter left-arm spinner Motie foxed the Kiwi batters finishing with a match-turning spell of 4-0-25-3 before Joseph turned on the heat with his four-wicket haul. Motie dismissed Rachin Ravindra after he ended up flaking straight to Russell at deep mid-wicket.

He bowled shorter and induced a faint edge from Williamson, who looked to cut it away. The ball went straight into the hands of Pooran.

Glenn Phillips kept the Kiwi hopes alive with his 33-ball 40 before being dismissed by Joseph.

New Zealand needed 33 runs from the last over and Mitchell Santner smashed three sixes off the first four balls but eventually fell short.



## It was special: Netravalkar on catching up with Surya, Rohit after more than 10 years

PTI ■ NEW YORK

He tormented them as long as the match was on but once the game was done and dusted, India-born American medium pacer Saurabh Netravalkar had a happy reunion with his former Mumbai teammates Rohit Sharma and Suryakumar Yadav.

The software engineer has been nothing short of sensational in the ongoing T20 World Cup and was in his elements on Wednesday too, dismissing both Rohit and Virat Kohli in the group stage match of the T20 World Cup here. But India won by seven wickets in a chase of 111 riding on Suryakumar's unbeaten half century to enter the Super Eight stage.

Netravalkar has been close to Suryakumar as the two played together for Mumbai. He was seen having a long chat with the swashbuckler and India captain Rohit after the match.

"I met them after more than a decade. It was special. We were remembering old times because we played since childhood in U-15, U-17. It felt like we carried on from where we left off. Jokes from those times, casual conversations, and dressing room banter," Netravalkar, who returned with brilliant figures of 2/18 on Wednesday night, revealed in a media interaction after the game.

"I did talk to Rohit Sharma, who was my senior in Mumbai. I've played with him there. I haven't played much with Virat, but he acknowledged our efforts after the game. It's good that they see potential in this team," he said.

The 32-year-old Oracle employee, who also happens to be a competent Ukelele player and a decent singer, represented India in the 2010 Under-19 World Cup before moving to the US on a scholarship to pursue higher studies in the prestigious Cornell University. His cricketing journey restarted once here and he is now a key player for the US team, which is an amalgamation of talent primarily from India, Pakistan and the West Indies. At the ongoing World Cup,

Netravalkar is quite literally living a dream.

From scripting an incredible Super Over win over Pakistan to dismissing Virat Kohli for a golden duck, the late bloomer said he is still trying to process everything.

"I'm still digesting what is happening right now. The last two games have been very high-profile. I'm glad we have done well as a unit. Always happy being myself, irrespective of the situation," said the soft-spoken player, whose family is based in Mumbai.

"It was about being clear with our plans and executing our processes rather than thinking about who we are facing and what the result would be. I'm glad that first spell worked for me," he added about his effort last night.

There was also assistance from the two-paced drop-in pitch and Netravalkar said it all boiled down to hitting the right areas.

"The pitch plays a crucial role. Bowlers didn't have to do much, just hit the top of the stumps and let the pitch create the variation rather than us doing it. Credit to the coaching staff for giving us this clarity," he said.

Asked how he effected Kohli's dismissal, Netravalkar said: "That's my stock ball. I don't want to give too much away. The first ball, I tried to hit the top of off-stump, as simple as that. I didn't try to do anything special or get a wicket. It was a good ball and seemed nicely." He loves cricket but at the same time, he also enjoys his job and would never give up on it.

"I love my job at Oracle, and I enjoy entering the field and bowling every ball. I'm blessed that I get to do what I love the most. That's how it works." Asked about his journey, he said it's hard to describe it in a few sentences.

"It's been a journey of almost a decade with ups and downs. I had to take a practical call when I wasn't making it big in India due to the strong competition there," he recalled. "I got a good offer from one of the top universities, so I thought it was practical to pursue my other love and came here. I'm glad that God has given me another chance to pursue cricket again."



## Nassau Stadium, home to tense T20 World Cup matches, set for demolition

PTI ■ NEW YORK

The makeshift Nassau County cricket ground, which was built specifically for the T20 World Cup, is all set to be demolished after the New York leg of the event came to an end with India's seven-wicket victory over co-hosts USA here.

Built in just over 100 days, the stadium became notorious for its challenging drop-in pitches, which were sourced from Adelaide. The massive structure sat on the edge of the 930-acre Eisenhower Park in Long Island here.

The stadium had 10 drop-in pitches, four for the main ground and six for the adjacent training facility in Cantiague Park.

"After the last match is held at East Meadow on June 12, the stadium will be dismantled, the parts shipped back to Las Vegas and another golf event, and Eisenhower Park will return to normal, but with a world-class cricket pitch left behind," a New York Times

report had stated a few days ago.

The stadium that "almost popped up overnight" will be dismantled over a period of six weeks. It had a capacity of 34,000 and hosted a housefull crowd during India's marquee clash against Pakistan on June 9 with some tickets sold at an astronomical price of USD 2500 to USD 10,000.

India played four matches at the venue, including a warm-up game against Bangladesh after the ground was thrown open on June 1.

The drop-in pitches hosted eight matches and produced unpredictable and occasionally dangerous bounce, resulting in particularly low scores in the first two matches where no team crossed 100 runs.

In India's match against Ireland, who were bowled out for 96, Rishabh Pant and Rohit Sharma also copped body blows.

It led to widespread criticism and prompted the International Cricket Council to issue a statement

acknowledging that the "pitches have not played consistently".

The highest successful chase at the venue was only 111 runs by India in their win over USA on Wednesday.

Canada's 137/7 against Ireland was the highest total recorded, while India successfully defended a low total of 119 against Pakistan.

In a nail-biting match, South Africa barely chased down 103 runs against the Netherlands losing six wickets in the process, and later defended 113 runs against Bangladesh, winning by a narrow margin of four runs.

The venue was finalised by the ICC in 2023 and was built in just 106 days.

"The playing field, with the rectangular pitch in the middle, was fashioned from special grass grown in Florida. "The grandstands are borrowed materials most recently used at Las Vegas's Formula 1 race and professional golf events," the NYT report added.

## Kuldeep Yadav will be India's preferred spinner in Super 8 stage: Piyush Chawla

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Former cricketer Piyush Chawla feels that wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav will be India's preferred specialist spinners when the Indian team competes in the Super Eight stage of the T20 World Cup in the Caribbean.

India won all three matches in tough batting conditions at the Nassau County Stadium in New York against Ireland, Pakistan and USA and will now take on Canada in their last Group stage match at Lauderhill, Florida before the Super Eight stage.

Chawla said while the conditions in New York did not support spin bowling, the Indian spinners will now come into play in the tournament. India have four spin bowling options in Kuldeep, Yuzvendra Chahal, Axar Patel and Ravindra Jadeja.

"The pitch in New York was very dicy and the way India performed on that pitch and won three out of three games, so there are very good chances going forward," Chawla told media on the sidelines of IISM



Convocation Ceremony here on Thursday.

"The spinners were not needed as much in New York but once you enter the second leg for the Super Eight, the spinners have had a big role in the West Indies. Our spinners will come into play now," he added.

Chawla picked Kuldeep as his first choice even though Chahal finished the Indian Premier League (IPL) as one of the most successful bowlers.

"To be very honest only one will play, and I think Kuldeep will be the first preference because of what he has done in the last one and a half years.

## Kumble wants Arshdeep in side if India opt for two seamers in Caribbean

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Spin legend Anil Kumble feels going by current form, Mohammed Siraj should make way for left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh if India decides to play just two specialist fast bowlers in the West Indies-leg of the ongoing T20 World Cup.

Arshdeep was lethal in India's seven-wicket win over USA, snaring four wickets for just nine runs in New York on Wednesday. Jasprit Bumrah is India's preferred choice and Kumble has no doubt that

Arshdeep should combine with him along side all-rounder Hardik Pandya. It will help India field an extra spinner on the slow Caribbean pitches.

"I think the way he (Arshdeep) bowled that last over against Pakistan, and also the way he can bowl in different areas in the T20 game, I think certainly puts him ahead of Mohamed Siraj," the former India coach told ESPNCricinfo.

"If at all India takes that option of going with just the two seamers and Hardik Pandya. So yes, in that

sense, plus he also gives you an extra variety with his left-arm pace. So overall, he must be happy."

Arshdeep has done well for India in the three T20 World Cup matches so far, picking up seven wickets at an economy of 6.225 and strike rate of 10.28. In comparison, Siraj has managed just one wicket from three games at a strike rate of 66.

India will play Canada in their final Group A match at Lauderhill, Florida on Saturday before departing for the Caribbean.



# ‘Music Shop Murthy is anchored by familial bonds’

K. RAMYA SREE

Director Siva Paladugu's latest venture, *Music Shop Murthy*, promises to be a cinematic delight, a tale that transcends generations and resonates with audiences of all ages. As the film hit theaters today, the director took a moment to share insights and reflections on his journey and the making of this heartfelt project.

Hailing from the vibrant city of Vijayawada, Siva Paladugu's trajectory into the world of film-making was nothing short of serendipitous. "I worked in USA, where I had the fortune of meeting Harsha, who later became a good friend and collaborator," he reminisces, adding, "My passion for storytelling led me to pursue a diploma in direction, and soon after, the opportunity to helm my first film presented itself, thanks to the unwavering support of my friends-turned-producers."

Delving into the casting choices for *Music Shop Murthy*, Paladugu reveals his rationale behind selecting Ajay Ghosh for the titular role: "To infuse a sense of novelty into the narrative, I crafted the character of Murthy as a mature individual. Ajay Ghosh's prowess in emoting raw, heartfelt emotions made him the perfect fit for this role. Despite the project being conceptualised before his breakout performance in *Pushpa*, I had unwavering confidence in his ability to bring depth and authenticity to the character."

When questioned about the significance of Chandini Chowdary's role, Paladugu emphasises



AHEAD OF THE RELEASE OF HIS LATEST VENTURE, *MUSIC SHOP MUTHY*, DIRECTOR SIVA PALADUGU SHARED INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS ON HIS JOURNEY AND THE MAKING OF THIS MUCH-ANTICIPATED PROJECT.

es the pivotal role played by her character in shaping the trajectory of the film. "Chandini Chowdary's portrayal of Anjana exudes grace and charisma, making the stage for a transformative journey. Her character serves as the catalyst for

Murthy's evolution, infusing the narrative with a sense of vitality and purpose," he asserts. Addressing the simultaneous release of Chandini Chowdary's other film, *Yevam*, Paladugu emphasises the distinctiveness of

*Music Shop Murthy* and its appeal to family audiences. "While both films may share the same release date, their thematic and tonal differences cater to disparate audience demographics," he clarifies. "Our film is anchored by themes of familial bonds and personal resilience, offering an enriching viewing experience for audiences of all ages."

Transitioning to creative process behind the film's musical elements, Paladugu underscores the meticulous research and attention to detail that went into crafting the soundtrack. "We delved deep into the rich tapestry of musical traditions, from yesteryear classics to contemporary trends," he reveals. "Pawan's sublime compositions add depth and resonance to each scene, enhancing the immersive experience for the audience."

He also shared a glimpse into the underlying ethos of *Music Shop Murthy* and hints at future endeavours. "Beyond the confines of storytelling, this film serves as a testament to the indomitable spirit of human resilience. The journey of Murthy embodies themes of perseverance and self-discovery, resonating with audiences on a deeply emotional level," he shared.



## Shruti Haasan joins *Dacoit* shoot with Adivi Sesh

Shruti Haasan has joined the action-packed shoot of Adivi Sesh's ambitious pan-India action drama, *Dacoit*, currently underway in Hyderabad. Portraying the female lead, Haasan's inclusion in this pivotal phase of filming adds a new dimension to the project. The ongoing schedule is dedicated to capturing crucial scenes and adrenaline-pumping action sequences involving the lead cast. Sharing a candid selfie with Sesh, Haasan offered a glimpse into the camaraderie on set, hinting at the fun-filled atmosphere amidst the intense filming sessions.

*Dacoit* unfolds a gripping narrative centered around two former lovers compelled to join forces for a series of daring robberies, each with the hope of transforming their lives. Marking his directorial debut in feature films, Shaneil Deo, acclaimed for his work as director of photography in Telugu blockbusters like *Kshanam* and *Goodachari*, collaborates with Adivi Sesh to bring this compelling story to life. Notably, this venture serves as the first collaboration between Sesh and Haasan, promising audiences a fresh and dynamic on-screen pairing.

Backed by Supriya Yarlagaadda as producer, with co-production support from Suniel Narang and presented by Annapurma Studios, *Dacoit* unfolds its narrative simultaneously in Hindi and Telugu, catering to a diverse audience base. Additionally, Adivi Sesh and Shaneil Deo showcase their prowess as storytellers by also penning the film's captivating narrative.

For Adivi Sesh, *Dacoit* marks his second venture into Hindi cinema following the critical acclaim received by his 2022 release, *Major*. As filming progresses, audiences eagerly await further updates and insights into this ambitious cinematic venture, poised to captivate viewers with its high-octane action and gripping storyline.

## Vennela Kishore's *OMG* releasing on June 21



The horror-comedy flick, *OMG (O Manchi Ghost)*, gears up for its theatrical release on June 21. Starring the dynamic duo Vennela Kishore and Nandita Swetha in lead roles, the film is poised to tickle funny bones and send shivers down spines, catering to the ever-growing demand for entertainment in the genre.

Renowned for his impeccable comic timing, Vennela Kishore promises to deliver laughs galore, while Nandita Swetha brings her trademark intensity to the table, embodying atypical characters with finesse. Directed by Shankar Marthand and produced by Dr. Abinika Inabathuni under Mark Set Networks, *OMG (O Manchi Ghost)* boasts a stellar ensemble cast, including Shakalaka Shankar, Navami Gayak, Naveen Neni, Rajath Raghav, and the comedic genius Raghu Babu. Adding to the anticipation is the

musical genius of Anup Rubens, who lends his magic to the film with foot-tapping tunes and spine-chilling background scores. With glimpses, song lyrics, and teasers already garnering a positive response, *OMG (O Manchi Ghost)* promises to captivate audiences with its blend of humour and horror.

Anup Rubens' remarkable music serves as a cornerstone of the film, complementing the narrative and enhancing the overall viewing experience. As anticipation mounts for the film's release, audiences can expect a rollercoaster ride of entertainment, replete with laughter and spine-tingling moments.

With a winning combination of stellar performances, gripping storytelling, and infectious music, *OMG (O Manchi Ghost)* is poised to leave a lasting impression on audiences, reaffirming the enduring popularity of horror-comedy flicks.



## DEVARA PART 1 Release preponed to Sept 27

The visual spectacle *Devara Part 1*, starring the Man of Masses, NTR Jr, is set to hit theatres earlier than expected. Initially scheduled for release on October 10, the makers unveiled a new poster featuring NTR Jr on Thursday evening, announcing that the film will now premiere on September 27, 2024.

Talking further about the same, the producers added, "We are glad to announce that *Devara Part 1* directed by Koratala Siva will now release on September 27. We have planned this move keeping in mind how the film is coming together and we don't wish to keep the fans waiting any-

more."

*Devara* is already making waves in the market with its recently released *Fear* song, which debuted on the actor's birthday and was composed by none other than Anirudh Ravichander.

Directed by Koratala Siva, *Devara* will unfold in two parts. The magnum opus is produced by Yuvasudha Arts and NTR Arts, and presented by Nandamuri Kalyan Ram. Alongside NTR Jr, the film also stars Janhvi Kapoor and Saif Ali Khan in lead roles. The film's music is orchestrated by Anirudh Ravichander, and the cinematography is handled by R Rathnavelu.

## 'I believe *The GOAT*' will soar to unprecedented heights'

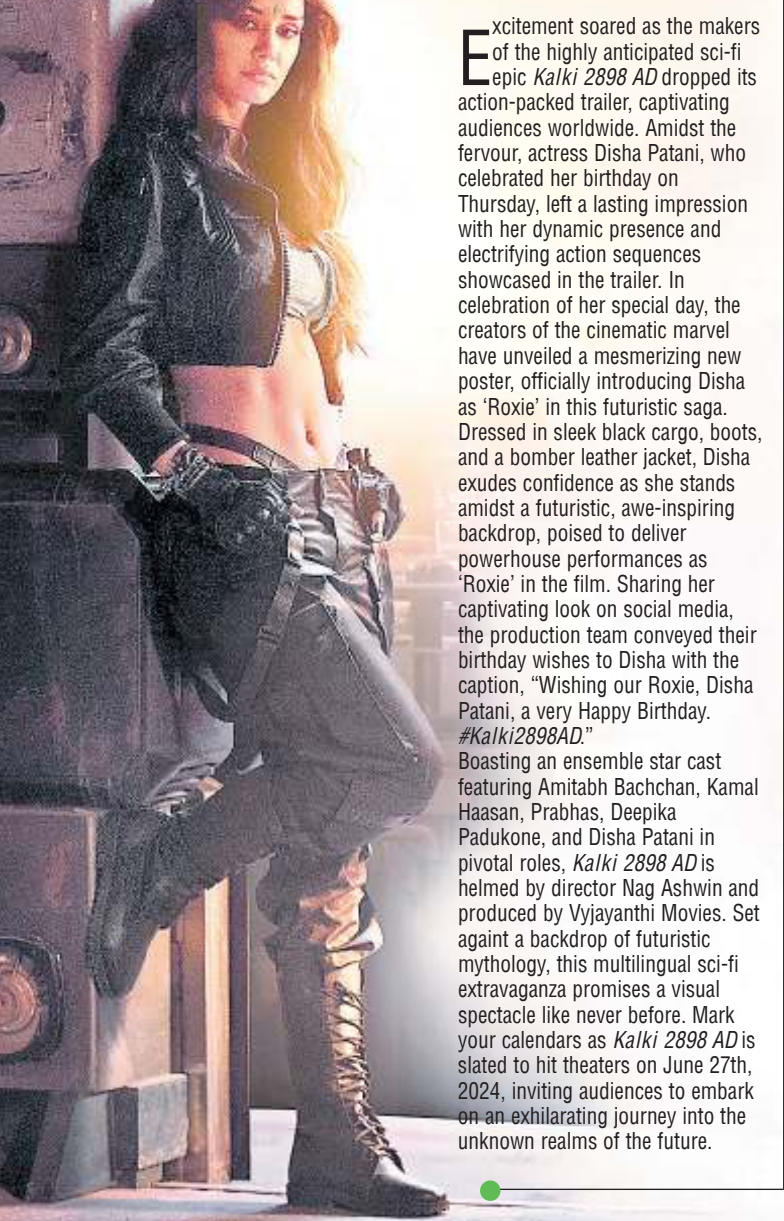
Actor Thalapathy Vijay's *The GOAT* is making a lot of noise across the south Indian film industry. Amidst the fervent anticipation surrounding the project, a new development sent waves of exhilaration through the industry recently as actress Sneha, was chosen to play opposite Thalapathy.

Speaking at an event in Chennai, Sneha expressed her excitement about being part of this project and shared, "It's truly delightful to collaborate with actor Vijay once more. His charm remains as captivating as ever."

Sneha disclosed that the majority of her scenes are alongside Vijay, with one more day of shooting left to wrap up her role. Offering a glimpse into the film's potential, she added, "I believe *The GOAT* will soar to unprecedented heights." As the production gears shifted into motion, meticulous planning and preparation became the order of the day. Every detail, from casting decisions to shooting schedules, was carefully orchestrated to ensure a seamless cinematic experience. With shooting schedules nearing completion, the filmmakers found themselves in need of an additional day to capture the essence of Sneha's character.



## New poster of Disha Patani from *Kalki 2898 AD* is here



Excitement soared as the makers of the highly anticipated sci-fi epic *Kalki 2898 AD* dropped its action-packed trailer, captivating audiences worldwide. Amidst the fervour, actress Disha Patani, who celebrated her birthday on Thursday, left a lasting impression with her dynamic presence and electrifying action sequences showcased in the trailer. In celebration of her special day, the creators of the cinematic marvel have unveiled a mesmerizing new poster, officially introducing Disha as 'Roxie' in this futuristic saga. Dressed in sleek black cargo, boots, and a bomber leather jacket, Disha exudes confidence as she stands amidst a futuristic, awe-inspiring backdrop, poised to deliver powerhouse performances as 'Roxie' in the film. Sharing her captivating look on social media, the production team conveyed their birthday wishes to Disha with the caption, "Wishing our Roxie, Disha Patani, a very Happy Birthday. #Kalki2898AD."

Boasting an ensemble star cast featuring Amitabh Bachchan, Kamal Haasan, Prabhas, Deepika Padukone, and Disha Patani in pivotal roles, *Kalki 2898 AD* is helmed by director Nag Ashwin and produced by Vyjayanthi Movies. Set against a backdrop of futuristic mythology, this multilingual sci-fi extravaganza promises a visual spectacle like never before. Mark your calendars as *Kalki 2898 AD* is slated to hit theaters on June 27th, 2024, inviting audiences to embark on an exhilarating journey into the unknown realms of the future.

## Mammootty, Samantha, GVM project to go on floors from June 20

In what promises to be an exciting venture for cinema aficionados, the much-awaited project starring Malayalam megastar Mammootty and acclaimed director Gautham Vasudev Menon is all set to kick off its shooting schedule. With cameras set to roll starting this Saturday, the anticipation surrounding the film is very high. Mammootty, the legendary actor renowned for his versatile performances, is slated to join the shoot on June 20, adding to the excitement surrounding the project.

Adding to the buzz is the revelation that leading actress Samantha is set to make her debut in Malayalam cinema as the female lead in this yet-to-be-titled film.

## NEE DHAAREY NEE KATHA REVIEW:

# Exploring emotional bond between father and son

STORY:

Arjun (played by Priyatam Manthini) leads a music band with his friends, aiming to establish a successful orchestra. Supported by his father (played by Suresh), Arjun confronts the challenges of pursuing his musical ambitions. When faced with a setback within his team, Shruti (played by Anjana Balaji) steps in to offer her support. Tragedy strikes as Arjun's father passes away, leaving behind unfulfilled dreams. The film delves into the complexities of the father-son relationship and whether Arjun can fulfill his father's aspirations.

PERFORMANCES:

Suresh delivers a poignant portrayal of a supportive father, anchoring the emotional core of the film. Priyatam impresses with his nuanced performance, while Vijay Vikrant adds depth with his character's blend of humor and emotion. Anjana Balaji effectively conveys the required emotions, complementing the



ensemble cast. Posani Krishna Murali and Ajay contribute significantly to their respective roles, enhancing the film's impact.

ANALYSIS:

Vamsi Jonnalagadda's storytelling resonates well with family audiences, providing a cohesive narrative experience. The technical team exhibits commendable teamwork, maintaining high production standards throughout the film. Notably, the music by the *Budapest Orchestra* elevates the viewing experience, enhancing emotional resonance. The seamless integration of background music adds to the film's immersive quality, keeping audiences engaged.

*Nee Dhaarey Nee Katha* shines with its remarkable highlights, notably the captivating performances of Suresh and Priyatam Manthini, who breathe life into their respective characters with depth and authenticity. The film's mesmerizing musical score, composed by Alberto Gurioli, and the stunning cinematography by

**Cast:** Suresh, Priyatam Manthini, Vijaya Vikrant, Anantha Padmashala, Anjana Balaji, Ved.  
**Director:** Vamsi Jonnalagadda  
**Producers:** Vamsi Jonnalagadda, Tejesh Veera, Shailaja Jonnalagadda  
**Writers:** Murali Kant, Vamsi Jonnalagadda  
**Music:** Alberto Gurioli  
**Cinematography:** Alex Kavu

Alex Kavu add layers of beauty and emotion to the narrative, enriching the viewing experience. Moreover, the exploration of the father-son relationship brings a poignant depth to the story, resonating with audiences on a profound level. However, despite its strengths, the film grapples with pacing issues in the first half, where certain scenes may feel drawn-out, and a somewhat predictable climax, which may dampen the impact of the otherwise compelling storyline.

CONCLUSION:

*Nee Dhaarey Nee Katha* offers a heartwarming portrayal of family dynamics, focusing on the bond between father and son. With its engaging narrative and memorable performances, the film delivers a poignant cinematic experience, making it a worthwhile watch for audiences seeking meaningful entertainment.

Rating: 2.75/5