**RAIPUR** 





**BHUBANESWAR** 

**BHOPAL** 

RNI No.APENG/2018/76468 \*LATE CITY VOL. 7 ISSUE 172 I \*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

PUBLISHED FROM: VIJAYWADA **DELHI** LUCKNOW PM: Will ensure job keep growing

Root cause of slowdown WIDESPREA real-income stagnation: Ramesh

**RANCHI** 

**CHANDIGARH DEHRADUN HYDERABAD** MM Srilekha, who didn't just films—She Scored History

QUOTE OF THE DAY The Pioneer

Former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao's family is not in any way less harmful than terrorists, and Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is more dangerous than the KCR family. KCR executed the Kaleshwaram Project, spending around Rs 1 lakh crore for the sake of the 2018 elections and tried to hike the project outlay. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, who had declared that he would probe the corruption in the Kaleshwaram Project and would send KCR to jail, should explain why he is silent now

— Dharmapuri Arvind. BJP MP

# 'Fishermen are the real heroes'

Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha has stated that fishermen are the 'real heroes' and assured that the NDA government stands firmly with the fishing communities. She made these remarks during the 'Matsyakaarulu Sevalo' programme held on the MPDO office premises in Nakkapalli on Saturday, organised by the District Fisheries Department. District Collector Vijaya Krishnan also attended the event. Speaking on the..

# 'Install CCTVs at sand stock points'

District Collector K VetriSelvi directed the officials to take steps to install CCTV cameras to monitor the process and erect fencing and round the sand stock point. On Saturday, Collector K Vetriselvi, along with Unguturu MLA Pathsamatla Dharmaraju, inspected the sand stock point located at Chebrolu in Unguturu mandal of Eluru district. She directed the officials to install CCTV cameras at the sand stock point, to secure the stock point by fencing it and to set up a gate for vehicular traffic. The local Tahsildar and revenue..

-PAGE: 4

# Police question Rana for 8 hours

A Mumbai crime branch team questioned Tahawwur Hussain Rana, a key accused in the 26/11 Mumhai terror attacks for over eight hours in New Delhi where he is in National officials said on Saturday. The crime branch team comprising four officers questioned Rana on Wednesday for his alleged role in the conspiracy of the terror attacks, an official said. During the questioning, Rana gave evasive answers and did not cooperate, the ..

# Govt to unveil fisheries projects

Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh will on Monday inaugurate and lay the foundation for key projects for seven coastal states and union territories with a total outlay of Rs 255.30 crore under Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY). The minister, at the coastal states meet to be held in Mumbai, will also launch a set of key initiatives aimed at strengthening marine fisheries and promoting sustainable practices including Marine Fisheries Census Operations, Turtle Excluder Device (TED) project and release of Standard Operating Procedure for Vessel Communication and Support System. Ministers of State for Fisheries and Animal Husbandry

-PAGE: 8

# Govt's aim is to uplift the poor

# SAYS CM, LAUNCHES 'MATSYAKARULA SEVALO' SCHEME

PNS ETCHERLA/SRIKAKULAM

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, on Saturday, gave a call to those who have become financially stable with the help of government policies to assist the poor in society and support them to grow strong.

The Chief Minister launched the 'Matsyakarula Sevalo' (in service of the fishermen) scheme at Budagatkapalem of Etcherla Assembly segment in Srikakulam district. Later, addressing the Praja Vedika programme on Zero Poverty-P4, Chandrababu Naidu said that poverty should be eliminated completely. "We have launched the programme for the uplift of the poor in every way by not only providing government schemes, but also by extending assistance through Margadarsi

(mentors)," he said.

Making it clear that regular reviews will be conducted on how the mentors are extending help to the families which they have adopted, the Chief Minister said that his sole aim is to see to it that the State gets rid of poverty completely by 2029. He felt that there will be no economic imbalances if those who have come up financially come to the rescue of the poor. Later, the Chief Minister felicitated the

**Continued on Page 2** 





# CM meets fisherfolk families in Budagatlapalem

PNS SRIKAKULAM

As part of the launch of 'Matsyakarula Sevalo' programme, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu visited Budagatlapalem village on the coast and interacted directly with several local fishing families to understand their lives and challenges.

enquired about their issues and struggles. He then spent time conversing with other villagers, including Kari Rambabu, Uppada Seethogya and

Chintapalli Erraiah, discussing

their day-to-day lives and fishing The Chief Minister first met with Maddi Polesu and activities. Ramalakshmi, a family dependent on traditional sea fishing, and

The CM also visited areas where fish are dried, and interacted with women engaged in the activity. He spoke with Maddi Lakshmamma, Kari Seethamma and Varadhi Paidamma to understand the fishdrying process and their methods. He asked about their daily earnings and how the process contributes to

their household income.
At the local community hall, the Chief Minister met with boat repair workers Maylapalli Pothuraju and Kari Rambabu, learning about the maintenance challenges they face. He also inspected ice boxes used for fish storage and fishing nets, taking note of the equipment and support needed to improve their opera-

# HOUSES RAZED. HUNDREDS DETAINED

# Massive crackdown on terrorists

PNS SRINAGAR

Authorities in Kashmir have launched a massive crackdown on terrorists and their sympathisers in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack, razing homes of the ultras, raiding their safe havens and detaining hundreds of overground workers for questioning, officials said on Saturday.

Houses of five terrorists or their associates have been demolished in the past 48 hours with officials saying similar action will be taken against others involved in terror activities. Raids were carried out at more than 60 places on Saturday in Srinagar "to dismantle the terrorist ecosystem", a J-K Police spokesman said.

In Anantnag district, search operations are being carried out roundthe-clock as security forces step up vigilance. Mobile vehicle checkpoints have been put up across the district to monitor any suspicious

Review of arrangements for PM Modi's visit

movement, the officials said. The security forces are going after

the known terrorist associates and their sympathisers across the length and breadth of the Valley to create deterrence against any Pahalgamlike attacks, the officials said.

Terrorists on Tuesday opened fire in Baisaran, a popular tourist spot in the upper reaches of Pahalgam in Anantnag district, killing 26 people, mostly holidayers from other states -- an incident that has spiked India-Pakistan tensions, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserting that the killers would be pursued "to the ends of the earth.'

Mysterious blasts blew up the houses of two active terrorists --Aadil Thoker in the Bijbehara area of Anantnag district and Asif Sheikh -- in the Tral area of Pulwama district after security forces raided the houses on Thursday night.



DGP Harish Kumar Gupta distributing laptops to the NTR District Police Commissionerate officials in Viiavawada on Saturday

# **DGP** distributes laptops to cops

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Director General of Police (DGP) Harish Kumar Gupta, along with Control S Data Centre Director and Retired DGP Rajiv Kumar Trivedi, distributed laptops to 50 officials and staff members of the NTR District Police Commissionerate during a ceremony held in the conference hall of the Commissionerate in Vijayawada on Saturday. The initiative was taken up at the request of Police Commissioner SV Rajasekhar Babu, with support from the Suraksha Committee, aiming to strengthen the technological capabilities of the police force.

Officials stated that the distribution of laptops is expected to assist officers in cracking crucial cases more effectively through the use of advanced technology and digital tools. Enhancing the department's access to modern equipment will significantly boost their efficiency in investigations and cybercrime prevention, they added.

Police Commissioner SV Rajasekhar Babu, Control S Data Centre representatives Gopal Agarwal and Manisha, Telangana Facility Management Council Chairman Satyanarayana, and NTR District Police Commissionerate DCPs KGV Saritha, Tirumaleswara Reddy, ABTS Udaya Rani, Krishna Murthy Naidu, SVD Prasad, along with ADCPs G Ramakrishna, AVL Prasanna Kumar, M Raja Rao, K Koteswara Rao, and others, were

# FIGHT AGAINST ILLICIT LIQUOR Special raids across border villages

Second ioint operation this month between AP and Odisha enforcement agencies

PNS VIZIANAGARAM/ SRIKAKULAM

As part of the government's Navodayam 2.0 programme to eradicate illicit liquor in Andhra Pradesh, the Prohibition & Excise Departments of Vizianagaram division and Srikakulam district conducted special inter-State raids along the Andhra-Odisha border. This marks the second joint operation this month between Andhra Pradesh and Odisha enforcement agencies. In Vizianagaram division, large-

scale raids were conducted in Rayagada district, Odisha. About 60 personnel from Prohibition&Excise and Police Departments of Parvathipuram Manyam and Vizianagaram, and Odisha's Excise Department participated in the raids. Raids targeted villages such as Sandubadi, Tambalabai and Pansatra. Drone surveillance under the supervision of Parvathipuram Manyam Superintendent of Police aided in detecting hidden illicit

liquor pockets. Similarly, in Srikakulam district, eight teams with 37 members conducted raids in villages like Singupuram, Nerediguda, Sirada, and Gurusingiguda. Around 40 personnel from Odisha's Excise and Police Departments, along with executive magistrates, participated in the coordinated operation.

The raids resulted in the detection



of eight cases and the arrest of two individuals, Authorities seized 1,480 litres of illicit distilled (ID) liquor wash, 18,300 litres of raw materials, 3,000 kg of Mahua flowers, 2,400 kg of black jaggery and 3,900 kg of ammonia.

The success of the operations is credited to the proactive leadership of Principal Secretary Mukesh Kumar Meena (Excise and GAD-Political), who provided continuous guidance and daily monitoring. Excise Commissioner Nishant Kumar and Enforcement Director Rahul Dev Sharma also played key roles in coordinating the enforcement efforts, ensuring the drive remained focused and result orient-



In preparation for Prime Minister venue being set up behind the State Secretariat. The PM will formally restart the long-awaited capital city ments are completed on time. construction works on May 2.

G Veerapandian, the nodal officer overseeing the Prime Minister's visit, held a coordination meeting with other nodal officers and offi-



Saturday at the public meeting arrangements. He instructed all task-assigned officers to expedite their work to ensure that all arrange-

According to the tentative schedule, Prime Minister Modi is expected to arrive at Gannavaram Airport by 3 PM on May 2. From there, he will fly by helicopter to the State Secretariat

and then proceed via a 1.4-km roadshow to the event venue located behind the Secretariat. At the event, the Prime Minister will lav the foundation stone for the re-initiation of the Amaravati capital city construction project, which is estimated to cost nearly ₹1 lakh crore. He will also inaugurate various other development



# NTR district police bust ganja racket

Two arrested, 9.5 kg ganja and three two-wheelers seized

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Task Force and Law & Order police of the NTR District Police Commissionerate successfully busted a ganja racket, arresting two individuals involved in the illegal sale of narcotics. In a joint operation, the police seized 9.5 kg of ganja valued at Rs.60,000 and recovered three stolen two-wheelers from the possession of the



# Putin doesn't want to end Ukraine war: Trump

Hints at further sanctions against Russia

PNS ■ ROME

President Donald Trump said Saturday that he doubts Russia's Vladimir Putin wants to end his war in Ukraine, expressing new scepticism that a peace deal can be reached soon.

Only a day earlier, Trump had said Ukraine and Russia were very close to a deal."

'There was no reason for Putin to be shooting missiles into civilian areas, cities and towns, over the last few days," Trump said in a social media post as he flew back to the United States after attending Pope Francis' funeral at the Vatican, where he met briefly Sanctions?" Too many p with Ukrainian President dying!!!" Trump wrote.



Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Trump also hinted at further sanctions against Russia.

"It makes me think that maybe he doesn't want to stop the war, he's just tapping me along, and has to be dealt with differently, through "Banking" or "Secondary Sanctions?" Too many people are

# Mighty and meek bid farewell to Pope Francis

PNS VATICAN CITY

World leaders and Catholic faithful bade farewell to Pope Francis in a funeral Saturday that highlighted his concern for people on the "most peripheral of the peripheries" and reflected his wishes as pastor.

Though presidents and princes attended the Mass in St Peter's Square, prisoners and migrants will welcome him at the basilica across town where he will be buried.

Some 2,50,000 people flocked to the funeral Mass and tens of thousands more lined the motorcade

route, clapping and cheering "Papa Francesco" as his simple wooden coffin travelled aboard one of his old popemobiles to its final resting place at St Mary Major Basilica on the other side of the city. It was then carried into the

church, escorted by Swiss Guards. Earlier, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, the 91-year-old dean of the College of Cardinals, eulogised Francis as a pope of the people, a pastor who knew how to communicate to the "least among us" with an informal, spontaneous style.

# Murmu attends funeral Mass of Pope Francis



VATICAN CITY: President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday attended the funeral Mass of Pope Francis at St Peter's Square here. Francis, who was the first non-European Pope in nearly 1,300 years, died on Monday. He was 88. Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Minority Affairs, Kiren Rijiju, Minister of State for Minority Affairs, George Kurian and Deputy Speaker of Goa Legislative Assembly,

Joshua De Souza, who are part of the official Indian delegation led by the President, also attended the ceremony. "President Droupadi Murmu attended the funeral Mass of His Holiness Pope Francis at Saint Peter's Square in Vatican City," her office said in a post on X. Murmu reached here on Friday on a two-day visit to offer condolences on behalf of the government and people of India



# April 21 - Telangana's Lucky Escape Day

pril 21 turned out to be one of those days when Telangana's political circles held their breath without even realizing it. Five ministers - yes, five -narrowly escaped what could have been two very different tragedies on the same day. In faraway Pahalgam, Ponnam Prabhakar was in celebration mode, marking his anniversary. Thankfully, he wasn't at Baisaran where, just a day later, terrorists struck, sending chills across the country. But fate wasn't done playing games. Back in Telangana, a chopper carrying Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao, Tourism Minister Jupally Krishna Rao, Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy, and TPCC Chief Mahesh Kumar Goud ended up landing at the wrong helipad during the Nizamabad Rythu Mahotsav. What could have been brushed off as "VIP luxury" took a serious turn - a minister later confessed that there were vehicles nearby, and even a slight wrong move, it could have been a disaster.

"Maybe we would have seen four plus one by-elections," he half-joked, masking the chill behind humor. That day, both in

the valleys of Kashmir and the fields of Nizamabad, Telangana's political faces unknowingly brushed past danger and lived to tell the tale.

#### KTR senses competition for his own chair too

The BRS election season is not just about who becomes the party president - it's also stirring silent storms under the surface. While Congress is busy saying to make BC as a chief on the outside, inside BRS, the real chatter is about the Working President post. KTR, always sharp with his words, admitted with a smile that anyone can contest. Of course, he played the loyalist card, saying he's a fan of KCR and wants him to continue as president. But in a moment that didn't go unnoticed, he subtly dropped a bomb - that even his own post of BRS working president has some competition brewing. When pushed a little on who's giving him sleepless a little on who's giving him sleepless nights, he cheekily brushed it off with a laugh, saying "Revanth Reddy." A typical KTR deflection, but behind the laughter, it was clear - the undercurrent is real. He knows the race is not as one-sided as it once was, and it's time for him to tighten his grip before someone else gets too close for comfort.

#### Harish Rao's silence was louder than words

For someone who built his entire brand on being the restless crisis manager of BRS, T Harish Rao's sudden disappearance from the scene had tongues wagging louder than ever. After leading a flashy 100-car rally to Warangal a few weeks ago to inspect arrangements, the buzz inside BRS was that it ruffled the wrong feathers with the top boss. What followed wasn't just silence - it was the kind of strategic vanishing act that sent bigger signals than a press conference. In BRS circles, it almost felt like Kavitha had quietly slid into the space, not liked by many in the party. Meanwhile, Harish who could usually be counted on to raise his voice on every storm from NDSA reports to Banakacharla project- went dead silent. Not a peep even when Rythu Bharosa turned into an apology fest. The media smelled it. The cadre

whispered it. And just when it looked like

Harish Rao was about to be written off

the frame, he reappeared two days before the big event - like a player who knows the match isn't over until the last

ball is bowled. One thing about Harish

- he knows timing better than anyone else. Every family-led party in India has

faced internal power struggles, be it

between sons, daughters, or cousins. In

politics, bloodlines blur faster than party

lines - and Harish clearly knows how to

stay in the game, even when the rules

**Bharat Summit-2025** 

dims under the shadow

of Pahalgam tragedy

The Telangana government's big show - Bharat Summit-2025 - was supposed to be a full-blown political statement and

a glittering international event. But fate

had other plans. The tragic terror attack

at Pahalgam, sent shockwaves not just

across the country but right into the heart of the Hyderabad summit.

Overnight, the mood shifted. Organizers

had to cancel flashy cultural perfor-

mances, scramble schedules, and deal

with a political guest list that started

keep changing.

government even toyed with the idea of postponing the whole event which was supposed to target the BJP led Central government and the right wing. But with international delegates already sipping tea in India, there was no real choice but to carry on - just with a lot less pomp. Rahul Gandhi, who was expected to make a big splash on Day One, gave it a skip and turned up only on Saturday. Mallikarjun Kharge and Priyanka Gandhi, who were supposed to be the heavyweight draws, didn't even make it, citing the Pahalgam tragedy. Bharat Summit quickly morphed from a political blitzkrieg into a more somber affair. Candlelight marches replaced cultural galas. Delegates lined up to condemn the attack, and in a late move, the Pahalgam tragedy even found its way into the summit's official resolutions - a sharp pivot from delivering "global justice" to denouncing terrorism. In the end, the

Telangana government's carefully choreographed show had to bow down to reality - reminding everyone that in politics, even the best-laid plans can be turned upside down by forces far

Birvani was off record, but

# beyond the script.

buttermilk Is all on paper In Telangana politics, big meetings always came with a familiar taunt - "public were given biryani packets, Rs. 200, and alcohol." Opposition leaders never missed a chance to poke fun at parties hosting massive meetings. But this time, for the BRS Warangal Silver Jubilee meeting, the menu officially looks a lot tamer. Ten lakh buttermilk packets have been lined up neatly counted, neatly audited, and proud-ly flaunted on the BRS party's books. BRS flaunted more about Buttermilk packets than the real agenda of the meeting. But let's be real - recession hasn't hit the political kitchens yet. Biryani and beer are still very much part of the party platter. Workers and leaders will get their biryani packets, just like old times. Only thing is, the biryani won't come with a receipt. It never did, it never will. Audit or no audit, full meals are guaranteed. Telangana knows the drill - buttermilk for the records, biryani for the stomachs.

> (Naveena Ghanate and Dr Kolishetty Venkateshwarlu)

# Fishermen are the real heroes, says Min Anitha

# Govt has fulfilled promises made to fisherfolk during elections

PNS NAKKAPALLI

Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha has stated that fishermen are the 'real heroes' and assured that the NDA government stands firmly with the fishing communities. She made these remarks during the 'Matsyakaarulu Sevalo' programme held on the MPDO office premises in Nakkanalli office premises in Nakkapalli on Saturday, organised by the District Fisheries Department. District Collector Vijaya Krishnan also attended the

Speaking on the occasion, Anitha reaffirmed that the government has fulfilled its promises made to the fisherfolk during the elections. She highlighted the government's continuous support for the community, recalling that in 2004, only 30 kg of rice was provided as fishing ban compensation. In contrast, the TDP government in 2014 had increased this compensation to ?4,000. Now, under the leadership of CM Chandrababu



Naidu, it has been further raised from ?10,000 to ?20,000, she said.

She stressed the various welfare schemes introduced for fishermen under the current administration, including pensions at the age of 50, cycloneresistant housing, community halls, fish drying platforms, subsidised fuel, fishing nets and boats. She also criticised the previous government, accusing it of neglecting the needs of the fishing communi-

Addressing the concerns of fisherwomen, Minister Anitha announced that a new shed would be constructed for them at Addaroad. She also revealed plans to establish a BC Residential Institute for the children of fishermen in the

A cheque for ?25.288 crore, as part of the fishing ban compensation scheme, was distributed to beneficiaries by the Home Minister and the Collector on the occasion. In the wake of the recent fire

district headquarters soon.

accident in Nakkapalli of Anakapalli district, Anitha and Vijaya Krishnan visited the local weekly market and interacted with the public to understand their issues and reviewed the situation on the ground. The Minister directed officials to plan the construction of permanent sheds like those in Rythu Bazaars and to ensure improved infrastructure. She also instructed authorities to implement necessary safety measures to prevent such incidents in the future.

# Farmers complain against former IPS officer at public grievances programme

# Sunil Kumar accused of obstructing farmers from cultivating in their fishponds

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Farmers from Vinnakota village in Krishna district lodged complaints against former IPS officer Sunil Kumar, during the Telugu Desam Party's public grievances programme held at the party's central office in Mangalagiri on

Uppalapati Venkata Krishnarao and other farmers from Gudlavalleru submitted petitions to Minister Vasamshetti Subhash, alleging that former IPS Officer Sunil Kumar was obstructing nearly 30 farmers from cultivating in their fishponds. They accused him of using a benami, Nagendra, to prevent them from carrying out their livelihood activities. The farmers lamented that government offifavour of Sunil Kumar and ignoring their plight. They urged immediate inter-

vention to resolve their issue. Dasari Vijay Kumar from Vidavaluru, Nellore district, filed a grievance alleging that YSRCP leader N Mallikarjuna, backed by then-MLA Nallapareddy Prasanna Kumar Reddy, had forcibly encroached the Teegalacheruvu tank bund. "Despite complaints, officials failed to act," he said, demanding urgent corrective measures.

Koteshwara Rao from Musapur village, Pedakurapadu mandal, Palnadu district, submitted a petition stating that government-allotted "B-Form" land was under threat of forcible occupa-

tion by land grabbers. Urutur village resident Kothapu Pedda Gangireddy complained that his pension was stopped after he spoke in favour of the TDP. He alleged that YSRCP leader and YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's uncle, Ravindranath Reddy, was responsible and appealed for restoration of his pension.

M Sanyasiraju from G Madugula, ASR district, reported that although he paid fees and applied for a land survey, officials merely took photographs without

Commissionerate has reiterat-

ed its commitment to combat-

ing drug-related activities

On Saturday, Task Force ACP K Latha Kumari, along

with Inspectors Sridhar Kumar

and Ravi Kumar, presented

the two accused before the

throughout the district.

NTR district police bust ganja...

conducting the survey and closed the issue without resolving.
In another grievance, Sunkara

Veerabhadra Prasad from Atmakur village, Unguturu mandal, Krishna district, requested immediate repair of breaches to From Kadapa district's a local pond caused by heavy grievance, Jakkam Reddy Bhaskar Reddy from Kovur, Nellore district, alleged that his ancestral land was illegally occupied by YSRCP leader and former AMC chairman Radhakrishna Reddy with the support of officials. He sought justice and action against those responsible.

Minister Vasamshetti Subhash accepted the petitions and assured them that efforts would be made to resolve their grievances

were identified as: Anaparthi

Manoj Pardhu, a resident of

Gulabi Thota, Vijayawada, and

Shaik Alibaba alias Ali, a resi-

dent of Vanukuru, Penamaluru

Latha Kumari explained that

the two were stealing two-

Addressing the media, ACP

mandal.

# Hotel Association thanks Govt for bar licence fee reduction

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Hotel Association has extended gratitude to Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Excise Minister Kollu Ravindra, Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh, and Excise Department Chief Secretary Mukesh Kumar Meena for the issuance of GO 131, which reduces bar licence fees for three-star and higher-category hotels across the State.

The government's move, aimed at boosting the hospitality and tourism sectors, reduces the bar licence and non-refundable registration charges from ?66 lakh to ?25 lakh. As per the new guidelines, the annual licence fee is now fixed at ?5 lakh and the non-refundable registration fee at ?20 lakh.

Swamy praised the decision, noting that Andhra Pradesh previously had the highest bar licence fees in the country. They had submitted multiple appeals and even personally met with the Chief Minister to request a revision. Their efforts were successful, with the State government aligning the fee structure with those of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Delhi, West Bengal and Karnataka.

They used the proceeds to

illegally purchase ganja, which they brought into the city to sell

to targeted youth. She added

that acting on the directions of

Police Commissioner SV

Rajasekhar Babu, the Task

Force and Law & Order teams

are actively working to prevent

# **Review held on...**

Continued from Page 1

After the event, the Prime Minister is scheduled to depart from the venue by helicopter at 5 PM, return to Gannavaram Airport and head back to New Delhi. Officials revealed that eight different routes are being prepared for the arrival of people and dignitaries from various regions, while nine designated parking areas facilities like drinking water, food and restrooms

Veerapandian stressed the importance of completing all arrangements swiftly and issued specific directives to the nodal officers. A rehearsal is scheduled for April 30, followed by SPG rehearsals. He also stated that food would be provided to all attendees of the Prime Minister's meeting and enough counters should be set up at each parking zone to ensure smooth distribution. Additional DGP Madhusudhan Reddy, who attended the meeting, said that over 100 VIPs, around 15 MIPs and nearly 5,000 VVIPs are expected to attend the event. He recommended organising continuous microphone announcements at the parking zones to assist visitors. Guntur District Collector Nagalakshmi requested that all departments submit duty pass lists immediately to facilitate coordination.

TUDAY

#### **ALMANAC** Month & Paksham Krishna Paksha Amavasya Apr 27 04:50 AM to Apr 28 01:01 AM Sukla Paksha Pratipada: Apr 28 01:01 AM to Apr 28 09:11 PM Nakshatram Apr 27 03:38 AM Bharani Apr 28 12:38 AM to Apr 28 09:37 PM 4:57 PM to 6:31 PM Rahukalam 12:13 PM to 1:48 PM Yamagandam: 09:02 AM to 10:26 AM Varjyam: 3:22 PM to 4:57 PM Gulika: 06:20 PM to 07:44 PM Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:48 AM to 12:38 PM VIJAYAWADA WEATHER Forecast: Partly Cloudy **Temp:** 38° **Humidity:** 65% Sunrise: 5:45 AM Sunset: 6:26 PM Updated: April 26, 2025 5:00 PM

# Nagarjuna slams TDP over 'fabricated' liquor scam allegations

# 'Scripted political drama orchestrated by Chandrababu Naidu'

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Former minister and senior (YSRCP) leader Merugu Nagarjuna has lashed out at the Telugu Desam Party-led coalition government, accusing it of fabricating liquor scam allegations against YSRCP leaders to divert attention from its own mis-

In a press statement, Nagarjuna described the alleged liquor scam during the YSRCP's 2019–24 tenure as a "scripted political drama" orchestrated by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu. He said the Special Investigation Team (SIT) report was based on coerced Andhra Pradesh State out evidence. Beverages Corporation Limited (APSBCL) officials and lower-level employees, extracted through harassment and intimidation. He cited the case of Vasudeva pressure to confess under CrPC Section 164 after mul-

tiple attempts to secure while anticipatory bail.

financial trail, forensic proof or credible documentary evidence to back its claims. He also pointed out that Raj Kasireddy, portrayed as a key figure in the scam, was not involved in liquor policies or APSBCL operations and refused to sign any confession despite pressure.

Refuting the kickbacks charge, Nagarjuna said that the YSRCP's liquor policy reforms had reduced liquor sales and distillery profits, making bribery illogical. He criticised the SIT for initially alleging a loss to the exchequer and later shifting media campaigns to cover its statements from former the narrative to bribery with-

Turning the spotlight on the TDP's own liquor scams from 2014–19, Nagarjuna accused Chandrababu Naidu's government of systemic corruption. He alleged Reddy, who allegedly faced that 53.21 per cent of liquor ing the real liquor scam that four favoured distilleries, rule.

two Government Orders -- GO Nagarjuna stressed that 218 and GO 468 -- waived mandatory fees ca revenue loss of Rs 5,000 crore over five years. Further, liquor was reportedly sold at 20 per cent above MRP, leading to an estimated Rs 20,000-crore scam, which had drawn objections from the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).

Nagarjuna also alleged that the current TDP-led coalition is reviving the corrupt practices the YSRCP had dismantled, including the reemergence of belt shops and illegal liquor outlets. He criticised the government for using SITs and failures and demanded the reopening of the CID case against Chandrababu Naidu, suggesting a CBI probe for

an impartial investigation. He further said that the people of Andhra Pradesh deserve transparency regardpurchases were sourced from occurred during the TDP's

# Govt's aim is to uplift...

Continued from Page 1

Alupu Latchamma, who is selected for Bangaru Kutumbam, said that her husband went to Gujarat in search of livelihood. She is staying at home here to look after their children. Another person, Surada Appanna said that his parents died long ago, and his sister got married 15 years ago. But her husband deserted her within two years of her marriage as she had some mental disorder. His sister and her children are now staying with him and a total eight persons, including his wife and brother are staying under a common roof, he said and made an appeal to sanction pension to his sister. Reacting to this, the Chief Minister promised to not only sanction pensions to his sister but also build a house.

Guripudi Sriram Murthy, who is a Margadarsi, said that he superannuated as a teacher and established a college with degree, post-graduate, diploma, agriculture and veterinary courses. He promised to adopt 25 families and set up a computer at the house of Appanna to train his wife as an operator. After training, she will be provided a job in the agricultural college, besides providing free education to their children in their institutions. Another Margadarsi, PVS Ram Mohan, said that he came from a middle-class farmer family and set up a company abroad when Chandrababu had taken up the IT skill development programme between 1995 and 2004. A healthcare industry, too, was established at Pydibheemavaram in 2018 which supplied oxygen during Covid.

He promised to extend financial assistance

to Atchemma's family and adopt 20 families. Toolkits and boats will be supplied to fishermen, and their children will be extended all kinds of help in education, he said.

# Mighty and meek bid...

identify other members media at the Commissionerate involved in the network. The in Vijayawada. The accused

Continued from Page 1

Continued from Page 1

Authorities have reported

that a gang has been actively

selling ganja in the city using

stolen vehicles to facilitate their

illegal operations. An ongoing

investigation aims to trace the

source of the marijuana and

"He was a pope among the people, with an open heart towards everyone," Re said in a spirited and highly personal sermon. He drew applause from the crowd when he recounted Francis' constant concern for migrants, including when he celebrated Mass at the US-Mexico border and travelled to a refugee camp in Lesbos, Greece, and brought 12 migrants home with him.

"The guiding thread of his mission was also the conviction that the church is a home for all, a home with its doors always open," Re said. Re said

with his travels, including his last major trip to Asia last year, Francis reached "the most peripheral of the peripheries

of the world."

The Argentine pontiff choreographed the funeral himself when he revised and simplified the Vatican's rites and rituals last year. His aim was to emphasise the pope's role as a mere pastor and not "a powerful man of this world."

It was a reflection of Francis' 12-year project to radically reform the papacy, to stress priests as servants and to construct "a poor church for the poor."

# Massive crackdown...

wheelers and selling them on the spread of illegal narcotics

the Andhra-Odisha border. within the city.

Continued from Page 1

While Thoker has been named as one of the three terrorists involved in the gruesome killing of tourists in Pahalgam, Sheikh's involvement in the attack has also not been ruled out, officials said. Officials on Saturday said that houses of the alleged terrorists were demolished in Pulwama, Shopian and Kulgam districts of south Kashmir on Friday night.

The houses belonged to Ahsan ul Haq (Pulwama) who was "trained in Pakistan" in 2018 and had recently "infiltrated" into the Valley; top Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) commander Shahid Ahmad Kuttay (Shopian) who was active for the past three to four years and been involved in many anti-national activities; and Zakir Ahmad Ganie (Kulgam), who has been active since 2023 and was under surveillance for his alleged involvement in multiple terror-related activities, the officials said.

The security forces have also rounded up hundreds of overground workers (OWGs) and their supporters -- mostly in four south Kashmir districts -- in their bid to track down the terrorists who carried out the attack on Tuesday.

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#### Plea to increase **DSC** candidates' age limit to 47 years

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Former MLC KS Lakshman Rao, Democratic Youth Federation of India State president Y Ramu and secretary G Ramanna have welcomed the State government's announcement of the Mega DSC notification, which has issued 16,347 posts for unemployed individuals after a wait of seven long years. However, they expressed concerns over several flaws in the mega DSC notification and demanded that the coalition government address these issues immediately to ensure

justice for the candidates.
In a press meeting held at Vijayawada on Saturday, the leaders called for an extension of 90 days for exam preparation, citing that the current syllabus consists of over 50 books, making the allotted time insufficient for revision. Furthermore, they urged the government to consider rescheduling the DSC exams, as other competitive exams, like the APPSC and Police Constable prelims, coincide with the DSC timeline, causing additional stress for candidates.

The DYFI leaders demanded an increase in the age limit for applicants to 47 years, given the absence of DSC notifications for the past seven years. Expressing their dissatisfaction, the leaders criticised the government and officials for their thoughtless policies, stating that candidates have been forced to protest on the streets due to the ongoing unemployment crisis in the State. They also pointed out technical issues in the government-provided websites for applying to the DSC, stating that many candidates faced difficulties with unavailability of editing options and subject selections, urging the government to rectify these problems immediately.

# **Collector seeks DPR to develop Kuchipudi as a heritage asset**

DPR should align with both cultural preservation and sustainable development goals

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Krishna District Collector DK Balaji has directed officials to prepare and submit a Detailed Project Report (DPR) aimed at transforming Kuchipudi village into a prominent heritage asset of Andhra Pradesh.

Chairing a review meeting at his chamber in the Machilipatnam Collectorate on Saturday, the Collector emphasised the significance of preserving and promoting Kuchipudi village, famously known as the birthplace of the classical dance form Kuchipudi.

Officials from various departments attended the meeting and shared their preliminary ideas. The Collector stressed that the DPR should align with both cultural preservation and sustainable development goals and mentioned that a concrete action plan would be finalised once the DPR is ready.

Following the directives of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, the Collector asserted the need to enhance Kuchipudi village in every aspect and showcase it as



a cultural treasure of the State. He called for projects that improve infrastructure, protect heritage structures, and promote the village as a cultural tourism destination.

Further, he suggested mobilising financial support from members of the film industry, business leaders, and other stakeholders. He instructed officials to prepare a documentary film to be sent to UNESCO to seek additional funding by showcasing Kuchipudi as an "intangible cultural heritage".

Addressing infrastructure

lish a strong administrative officials to ensure smooth system and the creation of a vehicular movement by closcorpus fund to support ongoing initiatives. ing potholes and improving roads leading to the village. He The meeting was attended also proposed organising an

by Tourism Department annual week-long Kuchipudi Celebrations, enhancing the Regional Director Prasanna Lakshmi, DRO K Chandrasekhar, Vuyyuru RDO Hela Shoron, Krishna ZP To oversee these develop-CEO K Kannama Naidu, DPO ment efforts, the Collector called for the formation of a Aruna, Tourism Officer Ram dedicated society responsible Lakshman, MPDO Vima for managing Kuchipudi Kumari, Deputy Tahsildar development programmes and organising annual celebra-Raghuram, R&B AE Suresh, noted Kuchipudi artist tions. He also recommended a Venkata Chalapathi Rao, and comprehensive study to estab-

# 78 students get placement

PNS VIJAYAWADA

A total of 78 students were selected during the campus recruitment drive conducted by MSN Laboratories, Hyderabad, at Krishna University in Machilipatnam on Saturday.

The recruitment programme, held at the Rabindranath Tagore Seminar

Hall, saw the participation of 106 students from the Pharmacy and Chemistry departments. Of the selected candidates, 27 students were from the Pharmacy department and 51 students from Chemistry department. Additionally, seven students from Noble College secured

placements. The campus selection drive



village's cultural vibrancy.

was formally inaugurated by

Acharya N Usha, who high-lighted that Vice-Chancellor Pof K Ramji is taking special initiatives to promote campus placement opportunities for

Engineering Dean Prof YK Sundara Krishna, Placement Department Coordinator Dr Kishore, and representatives from MSN Labs were also

Ambati Rambabu accuses

CM of encouraging toxic

social media culture

# TDP always neglected fishermen community: YSRCP

PNS SRIKAKULAM

Highlighting the neglect of fishermen community by the coalition government, the YSRCP has said that the Matsvakara Bharosa for the TDP, in its 44 years of existence, has never taken steps for fishermen's welfare nor did it think of building a port or a harbour.

Speaking to media here on Saturday, former minister Seedirri Appalanaidu said it was YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and his father YS Rajasekhar Reddy who had developed ports and harbours. The TDP has never bothered for fishermen welfare and to

The fishing community is very much disappointed as the Chief Minister failed to give any promise on development of the region or steps to be taken for his Etcherla meeting. He has released Rs 20,000 Matsaykara Sevalo for the year 2025-26 while the previous year amount remains unpaid. The amount is compensation to be paid by the government for imposing a ban on fishing from mid-April to

The lack of sincerity was exposed when a woman from the fishing community told the Chief

make use of the long coastline. Minister that her husband goes to work as a labourer in Gujarat. harbour per district and has completed four projects and

# **Fishermen's fortunes changing under coalition Govt: CM**

PNS ETCHERLA/ SRIKAKULAM

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu launched the Matsyakara Sevalo programme at Budagatlapalem village in Etcherla Constituency, Srikakulam district on Saturday, affirming that fishermen's lives have begun to improve under the new NDA coalition government in Andhra Pradesh, Highlighting the government's commitment to fulfilling election promises, Chandrababu announced that financial assistance during the fishing ban period has been doubled from ?10,000 to ?20,000,

benefitting 1,29,178 fishermen families across the state. A total of ?259 crore has been disbursed under this initiative. "I could have just pressed a button like past rulers, but I chose to come here and meet you personally to understand vour challenges." Chandrababu. taking a swipe at the previous administration. He personally handed over the assistance to families, including those of Turada Annanna and Alupalli Tavitayya. Pointing out the hardships faced by fishermen, Naidu acknowledged the risks they take at sea and the exploitation by boat owners, pledging continued government

support. He praised the fishermen community's loyalty and said the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) remains dedicated to the welfare of backward classes. Naidu further pointed out that it was the TDP government in 2014 that introduced compensation during the fishing ban, spending ?788 crore on fishermen's welfare between 2014 and 2019. Initiatives included providing boats, nets. iceboxes, and establishing six residential schools for fishermen's children. Monthly pensions are now being given to 68,396 fishermen. and an ex-gratia payment of ?10 lakh is offered in cases of accidental deaths during fishing operations.

#### While RS 4,000 had been given as compensation to 35,000 fishermen during the previous term of coalition, YS Jagan Mohan ddy increased it to Rs 10 000 and paid to over 1.20 lakh fishermen. The amount due for April 2024 to June 2025 should be borne by the coalition which it had evaded, and we demand to clear the due as it is a compensation, he said. It was Jagan who brought the port-based economy into play and has planned one

Senior YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leader and former Minister Ambati Rambabu Minister him of promoting a toxic social media environment while fail-

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Chandrababu Naidu, accusing ing to fulfil a single electoral

Addressing the media, Rambabu criticised the CM for initially threatening to crack down on social media misuse by invoking the PD Act and promising to "cut the tails" of online abusers. However, once in power, Chandrababu has allegedly encouraged individuals posting offensive, vulgar content targeting YSRCP leaders, particularly former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and his family.

Rambabu highlighted the case of Chebrolu Kiran, a notorious figure known for abusive

He noted that Kiran was arrested on April 11 but was swiftly released by April 23 under political pressure, without police seeking custody. "Even the judiciary questioned the haste shown in releasing him," Rambabu revealed.

Exposing what he called a "deeper TDP conspiracy," Rambabu said that thousands

of online workers are nurtured under the TDP banner. He presented evidence of 71 fake IDs operated by TDP supporters and showcased abu-Yash Bodduluri, Gharshana Media, and Swati Chowdary.

"When YSRCP voices legitimate concerns, instead of responding politically, Chandrababu Naidu and Nara Lokesh resort to hiding behind social media abusers like Seema Raja and Kirrak RP," Rambabu said. He condemned Chandrababu's dependence on what he termed "social media psychopaths" as a sign of the government's moral decline.

Issuing a strong warning, Rambabu stated that once YSRCP returns to power, strict legal action would be taken against those involved in malicious online activities. "No one will be spared," he emphasised.

He also criticised Home Minister Anitha, alleging that while she holds the title, it is Lokesh who effectively controls the Home Department. Rambabu asserted that if police fail to act, the YSRCP would seek legal remedies. "We will not remain silent. We will fight back both legally and politically against the vile activities propagated online," he con-

# Brand Image' contest evoking good response

# Deadline for submitting entries extended to May 10, says Collector

PNS VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr G Lakshmisha has expressed happiness over the overwhelming public response to the ongoing competition for 'Brand Image of Vijayawada'.

Encouraging further participation, especially from the youth, he announced that the last date for submissions has been extended to May 10. He urged citizens to continue sharing their visions for Vijayawada's future identity.

In a press release issued on Saturday, Dr Lakshmisha revealed that the district administration has received nearly 200 entries so far,



reflecting the growing enthusiasm among citizens to contribute towards shaping the city's unique identity.

The Collector noted that most of the submissions beautifully portrayed Vijayawada as Gateway City of

Amaravati', highlighting its strategic importance as a vital link to the historic capital region. Appreciating the creativity and civic pride shown by the participants, Dr Lakshmisha emphasised that the competition aims to strengthen Vijayawada's brand image at both State and national levels.

Further, he asked the participants to send their entries to Brandvjacomp.collectorntrdist@gmail.com, along with their address, mobile number, and other contact details. Outstanding idea will be recognised and awarded by the district administration, he

#### Sharmila demands re-survey of **Polavaram Project**

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) President YS Sharmila has demanded a re-survey of the Polavaram project, stating that the original survey conducted during former CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's tenure was flawed. She stressed that a proper Re-Survey should be carried out and a fair Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R&R) package should be provided to the displaced families.

On Saturday, several Polavaram evacuees met Sharmila and explained their hardships. Later addressing the media, Sharmila said, "The survey conducted during YS Jagan's rule was not done properly.

A re-survey is essential. In the past, non-viable submerged lands were allocated. The newly relocated areas lack basic facilities. Many people are complaining that the R&R packages have been granted under others' names.'

She assured the displaced families that she would stand by them and fight for

# **VMC** corporators study Madurai's 24/7 water supply

# Inspect various infrastructure projects

PNS VIJAYAWADA

As part of their study tour to observe developmental initiatives across southern States, Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) corporators, led by Deputy Mayor Avuthu Sri Sailaja, YSRCP Floor Leader Venkata Satyanarayana, and TDP Floor Leader Ummadi Venkateswara Rao, visited the Madurai Municipal Corporation (MMC) in Tamil Nadu on Saturday.

During their visit, the VMC team inspected the Madurai Municipal Corporation Council Hall, modelled after the Tamil Nadu Assembly Hall, and studied key civic projects, especially the implementation of the AMRUT Project for uninterrupted drinking water supply.

Madurai Municipal Corporation Mayor Indrani Ponvasant and Municipal Commissioner Chitra Vijayan welcomed the delegation at the Municipal Corporation Conference Hall in Annamalai. After a warm introduction session, Venkata Satvanaravana briefed the hosts about the prominence and development needs of

Mayor Indrani Ponvasant explained that under the AMRUT scheme, Madurai has achieved a 24/7 drinking water supply, a significant improvement from the earlier limited supply of two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening. She noted that the project was completed with an investment of Rs.2,000 crore, covering the city's 100 wards across five zones, making Madurai the second-largest municipal corporation in Tamil Nadu.

Municipal Commissioner Chitra Vijayan further briefed the VMC team about Madurai's progress under the Smart City initiative, highlighting the construction of the five-storey Periyar Bus Stand with an investment of Rs.174.56 crore. She explained how two

basement floors and three above-ground levels were designed with an advanced stormwater management system, including strong drainage networks and sumps with a capacity of four lakh cusecs. She said that this system ensures quick collection and reuse of rainwater for fire safety purposes, efficiently preventing water stagnation

# Complete Vidyadharapuram Indoor stadium soon: VMC Commissioner

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) Comm issioner HM Dhyanachandra has directed that the construcwork of Vidyadharapuram Indoor Stadium be completed swiftly and made available to the public at the earliest.

As part of his inspection tour on Saturday, the Commissioner visited several key locations, including the Vidyadharapuram Stadium, Naizam Gate Outfall Drain, RTC Workshop Road, Labour Colony Outfall Drain, Vidyadharapuram Anna Canteen, and Panja Centre areas. Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner emphasised that the indoor stadium project must be expedited to benefit local sports



enthusiasts and the community. He asked the officials about the progress of the indoor stadium. He also stressed the importance of regularly monitoring the newly constructed outfall drain at Nizam Gate and RTC Workshop Road, ensuring that desilting operations are completed promptly. He instructed engineering and public health staff to remove

floating garbage and silt periodically to maintain uninterrupted drain flow.

During his visit to the Anna Canteen in Vidyadharapuram, the Commissioner inspected amenities and instructed officials to ensure that drinking water facilities are continuously available without any disruptions. He encouraged people visiting the canteen to share their feedback about the facilities via a QR code system. He also ordered that any necessary repairs or upgrades to Anna Canteens across the city should be addressed immediately.

In-charge Chief Medical lealth Officer Dr topalakrishna Nayak, Health Gopalakrishna Nayak, Annapurna, Executive Engineer Surekha, and other engineering and public health staff participated in the field

# MBU earns 3.5-star rating in national IIC rankings

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Mohan Babu University (MBU) has been awarded an impressive 3.5-star rating by the Institution Innovation Council (IIC), Ministry of Education Government of India. This recognition places MBU among an elite group of just 39 universities out of 481 participants nationwide that have demonstrated exceptional excellence in fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and startup culture on campus. Notably, no university achieved the maximum 4.5-star level, underscoring the significance of

MBU's 3.5-star distinction. The Institution Innovation Council (IIC) is a flagship initiative under the Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell (MIC), established to nurture innovation-driven ecosystems within higher education institutions across India. The IIC rating is a nationally recognised benchmark for evaluating universities on parameters such as innovation activities, industry collaborations, startup support, participation in national hackathons, and the establishment of incubation facilities.

With its dedicated Institution Innovation Council (established in 2018), MBU's 3.5-star rating reflects its unwavering commitment to building a thriving culture of creativity, research, and entrepreneurship.

# Vijayawada Diocese bids tearful farewell to Pope Francis PNS VIJAYAWADA and empowering women to

A Requiem Holy Mass was offered at St Paul's Cathedral near Benz Circle on Saturday morning by the Vijayawada Catholic Diocese in honour of the late Pope Francis, remembering his legacy as a messenger of world peace and a visionary leader of the Catholic Church.

Bishop Most Rev Dr Thelagathoti Joseph Raja Rao, presiding over the ceremony, praised the life and mission of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, who he said ushered in numerous reforms during his 12-year papacy. "Pope Francis brought significant changes to the Church, especially in recognizing the role of lay Christians contribute meaningfully to the Church's mission," Bishop Raja Rao noted in his address.

The ceremony began with floral tributes to a portrait of Pope Francis, offered by Bishop Raja Rao, Monsignor Rev Father Muvvala Prasad, Vicar General Rev Father M Gabriel, Loyola College Rector Father P Rayappajan and other

Bishop Raja Rao highlighted that Pope Francis chose to live simply, even setting aside personal security to live among the people. He was deeply moved by the sufferings caused by wars across the world and often withdrew into solitary prayers for global peace. The Pope's tireless efforts to sup-



port migrants and refugees by engaging with leaders across six continents were also

remembered. 'Pope Francis often expressed sorrow over the lack peace in the Holy Land where Jesus was born," said the Bishop. He added that the late

Pope considered leaders working toward global peace as true sons of God and often emphasized the Eucharist as a spiritual remedy for sinners.

It was noted that Pope Francis had appeared before the faithful in St Peter's Square at the Vatican more than 500



times during his papacy, reflecting his deep connection with the people.

Among the clergy who participated in the tribute were Diocese Procurator Father B Anand Babu, Gunadala Shrine Rector Father Yeleti William Jayaraju, Education Desk

Director Father Kolakani Marianna, SSC Director Father Thota Sunil Raju, Father Merugumala Chinnappa, Father Pasala Thomas, Father K Kumarraja and Father Vinod, along with a large gathering of nuns, lay Christians and the faithful

# Minister Nimmala lays stone for various development works

PNS BHIMAVARAM

Minister for Water Resources Development Nimmala Ramanaidu laid the foundation stone for various development works at three places on Saturday. The development works will be carried out at a cost of Rs 1 crore in Palakollu mandal.

Minister Ramanaidu laid the stone for the construction of a road on the Digamarru channel at Kothapet village at a cost of Rs 37 lakh, laid the foundation stone for the construction of a road at Drain Bridge at a cost of Rs 17.69

He also laid the foundation stone for the construction of gravel road at Pedamamidipalli village at a cost of 11 lakh and also laid the foundation stone at Rayalakodu road works to be taken up at a cost of Rs 16 lakh.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Ramanaidu highlighted that during the 9 months of the coalition government, many works had been undertaken in the irrigation department in Palakollu constituency at a cost of Rs 42 crore.

"Despite the financial constraints, the government has



headed previous government did not care about the farmers during the five-year rule.

revealed that he is working to make Palakollu constituency an ideal constituency in the State so that he could repay the debt to the people of Palakollu constituency. He noted that with the combination of Chandrababu, Pawan Kalyan and Modi has implemented many programmes during the ten months, especially the disbursement of pensions to lakhs of beneficiaries.

He acknowledged that a programme would be launched

to provide immediate pension to the wife, in case of the death of her husband. Ramanaidu said that the financial assistance given to fishermen during the fishing ban was increased from Rs 10,000 to Rs 20,000, adding that the coalition government in the State will function as a humane government. Ex-MLC Angara Rammohan, Kodi Vijay Bhaskar, and a large number of TDP, BJP and JSP leaders and officials were present.

# Uppada Fish Harbor will be completed by 5 months: Min

PNS KAKINADA

Minister for Infrastructure Development and R&B BC Janardhan Reddy has made it clear that the construction of Uppada Fishing Harbor will be constructed in five months.

The Minister, accompanied by officials and former MLA SVSN Varma, inspected the fishing harbor construction works at Uppada village of U Kothapalli mandal on Saturday. The officials explained to the Minister about the progress of the fishing har-bor. He directed them to take steps to expedite the works and complete them by five months.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister vowed to complete the fishing harbor works by five months and hand it over to the fishermen. He reiterated the Government's commitment to extend the fishermen community the need for help and prioritize their welfare.

The Minister recalled that the Government had enhanced the allowance, being given to the fishermen during the banning of fishing in the sea, from Rs 10,000 to Rs 20,000.

"The then TDP government in 2018 had sanctioned the



Uppada fishing harbor to be constructed at a cost of Rs 361 crore. The works will be expedited and the harbor will be dedicated to the people by five months," he

Taking a dig at the YSRCP regime for the delay of fishing harbor works, the Minister alleged that the fishing harbor works were carried out in a tardy manner for various reasons during the erstwhile government. The present contractor Kavya Krishna Reddy is determined to complete the fishing harbor

works by five months, he revealed. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister K Pawan Kalyan are pursuing the works, he noted.

When inspecting the fishing harbor, it was found that the problem arises when boats hit the backwater coming from one side because of a flaw in its design. This problem arises when the backwater returns as a force due to problems in the environment," the Minister explained.

Minister Janardhan Reddy said that the construction of this fishing harbor will only provide employment opportunities to the people of the surrounding areas, but it also provides park ing facilities for fishing boards and facilities for the repair of state-of-the-art boats," he main-

Kavali MLA Dagumati Venkata Krishna Reddy, Maritime Board Chairman Damacherla Satya, former ZP Chairman Jyothula Naveen, Maritime Board CEO Praveen Aditya were among those who accompanied the Minister.

# Collector directs officials to install CCTVs at sand stock points

previous TDP government and

today the roads are being laid

again," he asserted and alleged

that the Jagan Mohan Reddy

PNS ELURU

District Collector K VetriSelvi directed the officials to take steps to install CCTV cameras to monitor the process and erect fencing and round the sand stock point.

On Saturday, Collector K Vetriselvi, along with Unguturu MLA Pathsamatla Dharmaraju, inspected the sand stock point located at Chebrolu in Ûnguturu mandal of Eluru district. She directed the officials to install CCTV cameras at the sand stock point, to secure the stock point by fencing it and to set up a gate for vehicular traffic.

The local Tahsildar and revenue staff should supervise the sand stock point, she directed them. The Collector revealed that a sand stock point is being set up in every constituency in the district, adding from Tadipudi to the Chebrolu



"In this regard applications have been invited to appoint an agency through lottery for transporting the sand from the sand reach to the sand storage centers in Eluru district, storing it and loading it into transport vehicles from the storage center," the Collector asserted.

Later, the Collector reviewed the steps to be taken to improve sanitation in Chebrolu village with the vilsarpanch Lakshmi Sunitha.

VetriSelvi suggested that steps be taken to control plastic, separate wet and dry waste and take necessary steps for recycling, stating that neces-sary cooperation will be pro-vided for this.

Setting up a sand stock yard in Chebrolu, steps should be taken for the development of the road at the nearby tiles industry, she told the officials. accompanied by Tahsildar P Raghu Kumar and others.

# Arrangements for PM's programme inspected

Minister for Civil Supplies Nadendla Manohar inspected the arrangements, being made for the programme of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Capital region on Saturday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in some programmes and address a massive public meeting on

Minister Nadendla Manohar reviewed the arrangements for the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's programme along with the officials this evening.

The Minister stated that four to six lakh people are expected to attend the meeting from six districts and arrangements are being made accordingly. He said that after the SPB personnel arrive and inspect the area, they would reassess whether any further arrangements are needed.

"We are looking to fully utilize the Seed Access Road as much as possible and also use the Western Bypass Road, if necesbe a lot of transport, CRDA officials and other officials who are



supervising the arrangements for the assembly have given various instructions to ensure that all facilities are provided without any inconvenience to the people on that day," he revealed.

Three of the capital region farmers will be invited to the dais and honored by the Prime Minister. Similarly, a short film based on the sacrifices made by screen. There will also be a programme to honor the farmers

who were given land by the capital by the Prime Minister," the Civil Supplies Minister acknowledged. Minister Manohar inspected

the roads required to reach the venue where Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate. He also inspected the area for about two hours, accompanied by the Collector and police offi-

As many as 8 routes are being prepared for people to reach the

venue where Prime Minister Modi will participate. Arrangements are being made at a rapid pace to start the reconstruction work of the capital Amaravati. The government is making all arrangements to relaunch Amaravati through the hands of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Collector Nagarani, IG Sarvasresta Tripathi

G Veerapandvan were

among those who accompanied

the Minister.

# Teppotsavam in Devuni Kadapa will be held from May 10

PNS TIRUMALA

The annual Teppotsavam in Devuni Kadapa of Kadapa district will be held from May 10 to 12 in Sri Lakshmi Venkateswara Swamy Temple.

As a part of this, on May 10, Sri Krishna along with Godadevi will take three rounds, on May 11 Sridevi Bhudevi along with Sri Venkateswara Swamy will take five rounds, and on May 12 Sridevi Bhudevi sameta Sri Venkateswara Swami will take a pleasure ride on seven rounds in the sacred waters on the finely decked float.

Snapana Tirumanjanam will be held from 10 am to 11 am and Thiruveedhi Utsavam from 5.30 pm to 6 pm followed by Teppotsavam during these three days. On this occasion, devotional and cultural programs will be conducted under the auspices of the Hindu Dharmapra Parishad and the Dasa Sahitya

# 7 passengers injured as private bus overturns

PNS NARASARAOPET

As many as 7 passengers were injured when a private bus in which they were travelling overturned at Santhi Nagar on the outskirts here on Saturday in Palnadu dis-

SP Srinivasa Rao, who visited the place, told the media that a private bus was going to Chirala from Hyderabad. The bus overturned on the road in which 7 passengers suffered various degrees of injuries. As many as 25 passengers were travelling in the bus when the accident took place.

DSP Nageswara Rao and MLA Chadalava Aravinda Babu rushed to the place and extricated the trapped bus passengers from the ill-fated bus. One of the passengers struck the bus and it took two hours for the police to retrieve her from the overturned bus.

The injured were admitted to the GGH. The private bus driver drove the bus at high speed in a reckless manner which led to the accident,

# 10 workers of a private firm injured as bus plunges into canal

PNS TIRUPATI

As many as 10 employees of a private firm were injured when the bus in which they were going to the factory plunged into a canal at Vembakam village in Nagalapuram mandal on

SI Sunil said that 30 workers of a private firm were going to the factory located at Sri City in the

company bus.
The bus veered off the road and plunged into a dried up irrigation canal.

As many as 10 factory workers were injured in the accident and they were shifted to the PHC at Nagalapuram in an ambulance. The bus was going at high speed when the accident took place, the injured workers said. The police registered a case.



# PNS BAPATLA

5000 liters of jaggery wash destroyed, 72 vehicles seized

The police conducted a cordon and search operation in Repalle and Chirala police sub-divisions and destroyed 5000 liters of jaggery wash meant to distil illicit liquor.

On the directions of SP Tushar Dudy, the police teams conducted cordon and search operations at Ramnagar, New colony in Chirala 2 town PS limits Vellatur and SC colony in Bhattiprolu PS limits on Saturday.

DSP Moin told the media

that over 150 police personnel took part in the codon and search operation. The police teams found 5000 litres of jaggery wash meant to brew



country-made liquor and destroyed them. The police also seized 65 bikes and 7 auto

rickshaws as the owners failed to produce the records. The DSP warned of taking stringent action against those who distil country-made liquor and

# 30 huts reduced to ashes in major fire at Kantlur

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

A major fire broke out in Ravi Narayan Reddy Nagar of Kuntlur under Hayathnagar limits, causing extensive damage to the area. The fire, which reportedly started from a hut, quickly spread aided by strong winds and engulfed nearly 30 huts within minutes.

The settlement, which houses around 300 huts, was thrown into chaos as residents scrambled for safety.

Upon receiving information from the locals, police personnel and fire brigade teams rushed to the scene with four fire engines. The blaze was brought under control after several hours. The situation became even more dangerous as multiple gas cylinders inside the huts exploded, prompting immediate evacuation measures

# KCR's family is not in any way less than terrorists: Arvind

PNS HYDERABAD

The BJP's Nizamabad MP, Dharmapuri Arvind, said that former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao's family is not in any way less dangerous than terrorists, and that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is more dangerous than the KCR fami-

Addressing the media at the state BJP office here on Saturday, Arvind said that KCR executed the Kaleshwaram Project with around Rs 1 lakh crore for the sake of the 2018 elections and tried to hike project expenditure.

He said that BRS Working President KTR tried to



throw mud, accusing the Centre of not giving funds and not recognising the project as a national project.

Arvind said that KCR executed the Kaleshwaram

Project as per his ideas before the project's DPR was approved by the Centre. He asked Revanth, who had assured people that he would launch a probe into the Kaleshwaram corrup-tion and would send KCR to jail, to explain why he is mum on this issue.

KTR should answer that with what face they are conducting a public meeting on Sunday, he said.

He said KCR fears his family, and so he has been staying in a farmhouse, fearing that his family may kill him if they stay in one place. Arvind said that even KCR's family has to apply for appointments if they want to

# Four people drowned in irrigation tank

In a tragic incident, four people, including three children, were drowned in an irrigation tank at Patha Mulakala Cheruvu village of Mulakala Cheruvu mandal of Annamayya district on Saturday.

Police said that a woman, Eeshwaramma, went to the irrigation tank to wash clothes. Her daughter Lavanya and son Nanda Kishore went to the tank with her. Sometime later, their neighbor Nandita also



Nandita (11) and Nanda went to the tank. Three children Lavanya (12), Kishore entered the tank for a

out from the tank. Eeshwaramma, who lost her husband, son and daughter, was seen grieving inconsolably. A pall of gloom descended on Patha Mulakala Cheruvu village with the death of four people. The police registered a case and shifted the bodies to the GGH

bath. They slipped and started drowning. The husband of

Easwaramma, Mallesh (36)

went to their rescue but he was

The four bodies were fished

also drowned.

for postmortem.

# ACROSS THE STATES



# **Delhi Literature Festival** to open on May 2

he 13th edition of the Delhi Literature Festival (DLF) will begin on May 2 at Bikaner House bringing together a gathering of political leaders, renowned authors, and cultural figures. The three-day festival, themed "Delhi Writes: Voices, Visions and Verses, will run until May 4, DLF said in a statement. Union Minister for Culture and Tourism Gajendra S Shekhawat will inaugurate the festival. Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, Speaker of the Delhi Assembly Vijender Gupta, Cabinet Minister for Culture and Tourism Kapil Mishra, NDMC Chairman Keshav Chandra, and Tim Curtis, Director and Representative of UNESCO India are slated to attend the opening day. This year's edition will feature a strong political and intellectual presence, with sessions such as "Demography, Dialogue and Development" led by Member of Parliament Bansuri Swaraj, and a special conversation, "Flowing Through Time: Healing The Yamuna," featuring Delhi Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh. Political commentator and author Anand Ranganathan will engage audiences with a discussion titled "Unscripted, Unapologetic, Unfiltered."



# **Mob attacks police** station in Bihar

ive policemen were injured after a mob attacked Dandkhora police station in Bihar's Katihar district, officials said on Saturday. Katihar SP Vaibhav Sharma said, "The incident took place when a group of people attacked Dandkhora police station in the intervening night of Friday and Saturday with an aim to free a person arrested in connection with violation of the prohibition laws. The mob entered the campus of the police station and started pelting stones on policemen who were on duty. Five policemen were injured in the incident." He added that policemen fired in self-defence to disperse the mob. "The mob could not free the arrested person from police lockup," he added. Five people have been arrested in connection with the attack, the SP said. The injured policemen were taken to the nearest government hospital where their condition is reported to be out of danger. Police have registered a case and are investigating the matter.



# **Punjab, Haryana sizzle** under intense heat

ntense heat prevailed in Punjab and Haryana on Saturday with Bathinda in Punjab recording the highest maximum temperature in the region at 43.9 degrees Celsius, Met department data showed. Among the other places in Punjab. Patiala recorded a high of 42.8 degrees Celsius, followed by Ludhiana (41.3 degrees), Pathankot (40.5 degrees), Amritsar (40.2 degrees), while Mohali recorded a maximum temperature of 39.6 degrees Celsius. Rohtak was the hottest place in Haryana at 43.6 degrees Celsius, while Hisar recorded a high of 41.5 degrees Celsius. Sirsa and Bhiwani registered respective highs of 42 degrees and 41.7 degrees, Narnaul 39.2 degrees, Gurugram 40.3 degrees, Ambala 41.4 degrees while Karnal recorded a maximum temperature of 41.5 degrees Celsius. Chandigarh, the common capital of the two states, recorded a high of 41.1 degrees Celsius.

# PM: Will ensure job chances keep growing

PNS NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Saturday that his government is taking several measures to ensure that the opportunities for employment and self-employ-

ment keep growing.
Addressing the 15th edition of Rozgar Mela after distributing more than 51,000 appointment letters to recruits in different departments of the central government, he said it is a time for unprecedented oppor-

tunities for youngsters.

In the virtual event, he noted that the International Monetary Fund has said India will remain the fastest-growing major economy, asserting that employment opportunities will be rising in every sector.

The production and export in automobile and footwear industries have hit new records, generating employment in large numbers, Modi said. Citing the difference his government has made, the prime minister listed out that cargo being handled through inland water transparent has surged to 145 million tonnes from 18 million tonnes before 2014 while national waterways have increased from five to 110, and their length from 2,700 km to over 5,000 km.

The prime minister said a big highlight was that growth has been inclusive and noted that the participation of women has risen in every sec-



tor. Three of the five toppers in this year's UPSC exam are women, he said, adding over 90 lakh self-help groups have more than 10 crore women working for them.

India's women power is scaling new heights in fields ranging from bureaucracy to space and science, and the government is also focusing on empowering rural women, he said. In this decade, the youth has powered India's rise in technology, data, and innovation, Modi said while noting that the country leads in real-time digital transactions. When the youth actively contributes to nation-building, the country experiences accelerated development and earns recognition on the global stage, he said.

Modi said his government is ensuring at every step that employment and self-employment opportunities for the country's youth continue to

Mentioning initiatives like

Skill India, Startup India, and Digital India, the prime minister said they are creating new opportunities for the youth and providing an open platform to showcase their talents. India's youth are demonstrating to the world through their dedication and innovation the immense potential that the country possesses, he added.

rted that Visual and Summit Modi asserted that the World Entertainment (WAVES), to be held in Mumbai, will also be a big opportunity for youngsters to showcase their skills on a global platform.

They will also get to understand Artificial Intelligence and immersive media, and the event will infuse a new energy into the sphere of digital content, he said, adding that for innovators in the media, gaming, and entertainment, WAVES is an unprecedented opportunity to showcase



# Mamata announces financial aid for non-teaching staff

PNS KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday announced financial assistance for the protesting Group C and D non-teaching staff, whose appointments were canceled by the SC and assured that her government would file a review petition for them, along with one for the affected teachers.

The CM also said if the Supreme Court rejects the review plea, her government would explore alternative measures to support the affected people.

"We will go for a review petition for the teachers as well as for the Group C and D staff in the top court. We are seeking legal advice in this case," she said. Banerjee added that she was not in a position to comment on tainted and untainted teachers, as she was yet to receive any official list.

She added that Group C employees would receive Rs 25,000 and Group D employees Rs 30,000, pending the outcome of the review petition.



# Mumbai police question Rana for 8 hours

Say he gave evasive answers, didn't cooperate

PNS MUMBAI

A Mumbai crime branch team questioned Tahawwur Hussain Rana, a key accused in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, for over eight hours in New Delhi where he is in National Investigation Agency's custody, officials said on Saturday.

The crime branch team comprising four officers questioned Rana on Wednesday for his alleged role in the conspiracy of the terror attacks, an official said. During the questioning, Rana gave evasive answers and did not cooperate, the official said without giving any further information.

Rana, a 64-year-old Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman, was extradited from the USA for his alleged role in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks earlier this month. He is currently in the NIA's custody in the national capital. Rana's role in the Mumbai terror attacks conspiracy came to light during the interrogation of his childhood friend and co-accused David

Headley.
The Mumbai terror attacks on November 26, 2008 involved 10 Pakistani terrorists who carried out coordinated strikes at multiple locations -- including a railway station, two luxury hotels and a Jewish centre -- after arriving in Mumbai via the Arabian Sea. The assault lasted nearly 60

hours and claimed 166 lives. Rana is accused of conspiring with Headley alias Daood Gilani, and operatives of designated terrorist organisations Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Harkat-ul-Jihadi Islami (HUJI) along with other Pakistan-based co-conspirators, to carry out the the three-day terror siege of India's financial capital.

# Border villagers steel themselves for any potential escalation

PNS JAMMU

Living in the shadow of rising tensions between India and Pakistan, villagers residing near the International Border and Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu region are filled with a sense of urgency as they clear underground bunkers, harvest crops along the fence and steel themselves for any potential

Thousands of underground safe shelters have been built by the government over the years for the protection of residents from firing by Pakistani troops.

Though the frequency of

incidents of ceasefire violations has been low since 2021, when the two countries renewed the ceasefire agreement, the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attacks has sparked safety concerns among the border residents, officials

"Nobody knows what will

happen next. We have decided to prepare the underground bunkers so that we can save ourselves in case there is shelling or firing from across the border," Balbir Kour, former sarpanch of Treva village in R S Pura sector near here, said. India shares a 3,323-km-



long border with Pakistan of which 221 km of the IB and 744 km of the Line of Control fall in Jammu and Kashmir.

On February 25, 2021, India and Pakistan announced the implementation of a renewed ceasefire along the borders of

Jammu and Kashmir, which came as a major relief to the people living along the IB and

India and Pakistan had initially signed a ceasefire agreement in 2003, but Pakistan frequently violated the agreement with over 5,000 violations reported in 2020 - the highest in a single year.

To safeguard the border residents from Pakistani shelling, the Centre in December 2017 sanctioned the construction of 14,460 individual and community bunkers in five districts of Jammu, Kathua and Samba, covering the villages located

Rozgar Mela catalyst for youth, empowerment: Suresh Gopi

along the IB and Poonch and Rajouri villages on the LoC. Later, the government had sanctioned over 4,000 more bunkers for the vulnerable population.

Kour, who was supervising the bunker cleaning drive, said they are ready to face any situation and stand shoulder-toshoulder with the forces.

"We want our government to act decisively against the terrorists and their handlers sitting across the border. We want the elimination of all those who carried out the cold-blooded murder of unarmed and inno-

# Sonowal exhorts youth to commit to nation building

PNS GUWAHATI

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Saturday exhorted the youth to commit themselves to building a new and strong India, which strengthens its position as a global

Attending a Rozgar Mela here where newly appointed candidates received their appointment letters, Sonowal said, "As you join the esteemed workforce of India through your merit, talent and hard work, I extend heartfelt congratulations to you and your families. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji's visionary leadership, India has embarked on an era of rapid development, earning global recognition."

He urged the newly appointed youth to serve the nation with devotion and pride. "Together, let us safeguard our culture, uphold our dignity, and strengthen our nation to face any challenge fearlessly, with our heads held high," he added



role of the youth joining the workforce is crucial at this juncture as the country is poised to emerge as leader in the global forum.

'With discipline, dedication and a deep sense of service, let us work to transform India into a stronger, prouder nation that stands tall on the world stage," he added.

Sonowal handed over appointment letters to 207 successful candidates from different organisations of the Central government, including Central Board of Direct Tax, Central Reserve Police Force, Assam Rifles, Controller General of Defence Account, Employees Provident Fund Organisation, and Central Board of Indirect Taxes and

#### India, China decide to resume **Mansarovar Yatra**

PNS NEW DELHI

After a gap of nearly five years, India and China will resume the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra from June -- a move being seen as an attempt to normalise their relationship that was severely hit by the eastern Ladakh border standoff.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Saturday said the Yatra is set to take place from June to August via two routes -- Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand and Nathu La in Sikkim.

# PNS KOCHI

Union Minister Suresh Gopi on Saturday said that the Rozgar Mela is not just a recruitment drive, but a catalyst for youth empowerment and national development.

Addressing an event organised by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) as part of the nationwide Rozgar Mela here, Gopi said: "Rozgar Mela has empowered various government organisations to fill vacancies efficiently and create opportunities for India's youth.



The Union Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas and Tourism was the chief guest of the event.

inducted recruits at the event. Prime Minister Narendra

He handed over appointment letters to 165 newly

Rozgar mela event was also held in Thiruvananthapuram,

Modi, via video conferencing, addressed the occasion.

in which Union Minister of State for Rural Development Kamalesh Paswan attended. Addressing the mela, Paswan said that this is not merely employment, but a

profound responsibility. The Rozgar Mela is a step towards the fulfilment of the commitment of the prime minister to accord the highest priority to employment generation, according to an official

# Process of expelling Pak nationals has begun: Fadnavis

**PNS** ■ PUNE

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Saturday said the process of expelling Pakistani citizens from India in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack has begun and legal action will be taken against such individuals overstaying in the western He condemned the killing

of innocent tourists and said



give a befitting reply. families of two friends from

the Modi government will The chief minister met the

Pune- Kaustubh Ganbote and

"I met the family members of those killed in the terror attack. The description of

the incident narrated by Asawari Jagdale (daughter of one of the victims) is disturbing. I don't want to say anything to those speaking out of turn on the (Pahalgam) inci-

"Our resolution to fight

Santosh Jagdale- who were killed in the April 22 terror even stronger. Help will be even stronger. Help will be provided to the six families from Maharashtra," he told reporters on the sidelines of

> an event. Twenty-six persons, mostly tourists, were killed by terrorists at a popular meadow in Kashmir's Anantnag district. Ganbote and Jagdale were among six individuals from Maharashtra who fell prey to bullets.

# 'Band, baaja, baraat' but wedding in limbo

Indian groom stuck at Attari-Wagah border

PNS JAIPUR

Rajasthan's Shaitan Singh got engaged to Kesar Kanwar from Pakistan's Sindh province four years ago. As the groom's family struggled for years to get visas, the cross-border wedding was hit by another hurdle when the government closed

the Attari border on Thursday. With his wedding attire ready and all set to tie the knot in Pakistan's Amarkot city on April 30, Singh along with his family and 'baraat' set out from Barmer district for the Attari border on Tuesday.

But by the time they reached there, authorities refused to let

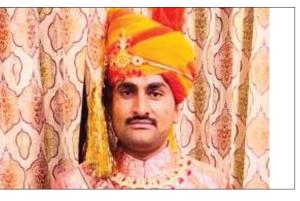
on Wednesday ordered an immediate shutdown of the Attari-Wagah border as part of a series of retaliatory steps following the tragic Pahalgam

terror attack. "We've waited a long time for this day," said Singh, adding that after years of efforts, he, his father, and his brother were granted visas only recently, on February 18.

The groom's cousin Surendra Singh said the situation has left both families disheartened.

"Our relatives from Pakistan

them cross the border as India had come here but they had to return. We are very disap-



pointed. Terror attacks cause a lot of damage. Relations get spoiled. Movement on the bor-

der stops," he said.
As the cross-border wedding remains disrupted. The visa of Singh, a resident of Indroi village in Barmer district, is valid until May 12, giving the families a glimmer of hope that the wedding might still happen if

the border reopens in time. "Whatever the terrorists did was wrong. The wedding has been interrupted. What to do? It is a matter of borders," the groom said.

The cross-border marriage was arranged through family ties, a common practice among the Sodha Rajput community, which has a significant population in the Sindh province of Pakistan.

Many of them prefer marrying within the community and often seek matches across the border to preserve their cultural traditions.

Singh, who works in the finance sector, is one of many in the region with relatives in Pakistan. For now, his family waits in the hope that the situation improves and the border reopens in time for the marriage to go ahead.

# India will give a befitting reply to people responsible for terror attack: Nadda

PNS PUNE

BJP president J P Nadda on Saturday said India will give a "befitting" reply to those responsible for the Pahalgam terror attack, in which 26 persons lost their lives ear-

lier this week. Speaking to reporters here after offering prayers to Shrimant Dagadusheth Ganapati, Nadda said the entire country hopes that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will give a strong response to the attack. At least 26 people were killed when terrorists opened fire on tourists in the popular Baisaran meadow in Pahalgam in one of the deadliest terrorist attacks in Kashmir in recent



The Union minister said, "I came here to seek blessings of Ganpati Bappa. The way a cowardly attack took place in Jammu & Kashmir, the entire country is angry, and they are hoping that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will give a strong reply to this attack." He said that he sought blessings that the country should face the situation strongly and give a "befitting" reply to those responsible for the attack.



# Passport to World's Street Food

# From Tokyo to Mexico, it's a flavourful food world tour at Cafe Delhi Heights, writes ABHI SINGHAL

Street food is an extra happy taste buds experience, a cultural adventure that brings together the flavours and traditions of distant lands. Imagine embarking on a food journey around the globe, all without leaving your seat. With the International Street Food Festival 2025 at Cafe Delhi Heights, you can do just that, as this exciting celebration of global cuisine unfolds across all their outlets from April 15 to May 1.

lets from April 15 to May 1.

Step into the warm and aesthetic atmosphere of Cafe Delhi Heights, where the scents of sizzling spices, grilling meats, and fresh ingredients fill the



air, setting the stage for a food adventure. The festival's specially formed menu promises to take you on a whirlwind tour across continents, offering a unique twist on iconic street food dishes from around the world.

You can start your journey in Asia with a steaming bowl of Japanese ramen, its rich, savoury broth paired perfectly with tender noodles and a medley of fresh toppings. If you're craving something with a bit of heat, the spicy, tangy kick of Mexican tacos will leave your taste buds dancing. For a touch of Middle Eastern warmth, savour the juicy, flavourful shawarmas, packed with a delicious mix of meats and spices that transport you straight to the bustling streets of Beirut or Cairo.

But the adventure doesn't stop there. Want to travel more? Now, CDH takes you to Spain with a bite of the crispy, sugar-dusted churros, or you can sink teeth into a tender Turkish kebab that captures the essence of Turkey's street food culture. For those who prefer something lighter, the Vietnamese spring rolls offer a refreshing crunch with a burst of herbs

and dipping sauce that's simply irresistible. And for the perfect comfort food, there are American sliders, mini burgers packed with bold flavours that are both familiar and exciting.

The festival adds an interactive twist to the experience with the *Dart World Board*— a fun, paid activity where you throw a dart at a world map that highlights the countries featured in the festival menu. Wherever the dart lands, that's the street food dish you must try. It's an adventur-

ous way to discover new flavours, bringing an element of surprise to your dining expe-

Taste the global street food and something new with the International Street Food Festival at Cafe Delhi Heights. Hours of spending time and savouring food will take you through culture, flavour, and the joy of sharing a meal.

# A Night of Artful Mixology

Bangkok's Rabbit Hole Brings Cocktail Magic to Gurugram at The Leela Ambience, writes GYANESHWAR DAYAL



he art of mixology extends far beyond simply combining drinks — it's a creative craft that merges flavour, balance, technique, and storytelling. A superb cocktail is a sensory journey, where each ingredient is selected with intention and precision to evoke a mood, a memory, or an emotion. From the clink of ice to the swirl of citrus oils, mixology is where culinary science meets artistic expression, turning a simple sip into a memorable experience.

In a dazzling display of global mixology, The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences hosted one of Asia's most iconic cocktail destinations for an unforgettable evening. On 23rd April, the celebrated Rubicon Bar & Cigar Lounge opened its doors to a special bar takeover by Rabbit Hole — Bangkok's legendary speakeasy known for its inventive cocktails and chic, understated charm.

Tucked away behind a nondescript wooden door in Thonglor's vibrant nightlife district, Rabbit Hole has earned a reputation for pushing the boundaries of mixology while maintaining a relaxed elegance. For one night only, this distinctive Bangkok spirit was brought to Gurugram, infusing the capital region's cocktail culture with an international flair.

At the heart of the takeover were Rabbit Hole's star talents — Depp, the Group Beverage Manager, and Bite, a master mixologist known for

# RABBIT HOLE'S SIGNATURE STYLE

Tucked away behind a nondescript wooden door in Thonglor's vibrant nightlife district, Rabbit Hole has earned a reputation for pushing the boundaries of mixology while maintaining a relaxed elegance. For one night only, this distinctive Bangkok spirit was brought to Gurugram, infusing the capital region's cocktail culture with an international flair.

his flair, finesse, and storytelling. The duo took over the bar with a menu of meticulously curated cocktails that highlighted their signature creativity, precision, and deep understanding of flavour. Each drink told a story, bridging cultures and delighting the senses of everyone in attendance

The Rubicon Bar & Cigar Lounge, with interiors designed by Japan's renowned Studio Spin, provided an opulent yet intimate backdrop for the evening. Featuring rich wood panelling, maroon leather seating, warm ambient lighting, and the refined atmosphere of a private cigar lounge, Rubicon served as the perfect stage for Rabbit Hole's artistic libations.

This collaboration marks yet another milestone for The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences in its mission to deliver world-class hospitality experiences. By partnering with global tastemakers such as Rabbit Hole, the hotel continues to elevate Gurugram's luxury scene, offer-



"TRAVEL FAR ENOUGH, YOU MEET YOURSELF'







The Kumaoni thali is a flavourful ode to the hills. It features aloo ke gutke, lahsuni palak and hearty gehat dal, paired with the region's signature lal bhaat. The tangy Kumaoni raita and spicy bhaang ki chutney add layers o taste. For meat lovers, there's tender chicken and a rich shikari mutton curry. The meal ends with a comforting bowl of rice kheer - soulful and satisfying

A peaceful getaway in the hills, perfect for relaxing, exploring nature, and enjoying quiet moments

ucked away in the lush folds of the Kumaon hills lies a lake of nine corners, Naukuchiyatal — an emerald secret that still shimmers in its serenity, away from the better-trodden paths of Nainital and

And now, it has a luxurious new address: Naukuchia House, a recently renovated 42 room property by the Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL), the custodians of the iconic Taj

Standing elegantly by the lake, Naukuchia House is not just a hotel — it's a sanctuary. Designed with understated charm and heritage echoes, the property offers panoramic lake views, with a private entry that takes you straight to the shimmering waters. Step out of your room, and you can hop directly onto a boat. I did. A slow ride in the morning mist, a fishing line tossed casually into the glassy lake surface — this isn't just vacationing; it's soul-deep unwinding.

For those chasing rejuvenation rather than adventure, I recommend their signature full-body spa therapy. My masseur was a magician with vears of training in her fingertips, and the steam bath that followed was the kind of cleansing city

But Naukuchia House doesn't stop there. On one of the afternoons, the hotel arranged a guided walk into the forest, leading to an enchanting village clearing where warm tea and quiet conversations replaced Wi-Fi signals and screens.

And then there's Kainchi Dham — just a scenic 30-minute drive away. This modest ashram has turned into a magnetic spiritual hub, drawing global figures like *Mark* Zuckerberg, Julia Roberts, and closer to Virat Kohli and Anushka

Whether you're a believer or a curious wanderer, the calm of Shri Neem Karoli Baba's temple will stay long after you leave. Back at the hotel, there's plenty to indulge in. The temperature — controlled pool makes a dip possible even when the air gets crisp.

#### The food?

Their Asian fare is well-balanced, and the Indian kebabs-succulent, smoky, and served with Himalayan charm-are memorable. A chef's nod to modern tastes without losing sight of tradition at Ija, their all day dining restaurant that means 'Mother' in Kumaoni, is worth a praise. Naukuchiyatal is just 5.5 hours by road from Delhi, making it ideal for a 2-3 night escape. Unlike its over-touristed cousins, it offers silence, stars, and stories. And with Naukuchia House now writing its own, there's never been a better time to visit.



**REJUVENATION** 

Naukuchiyatal Lake, with its nine serene corners, offers peaceful boating and fishing. Nearby, Kainchi Dham — home to Shri Neem Karoli Baba - draws seekers and celebrities alike for its calm, spiritual aura. Surrounded by pine forests and misty hills, the lake is a hidden gem for nature lovers. Birdwatchers often flock here to spot rare Himalayan species in the tranquil surroundings. Cosy homestays and lakeside cafés add charm to the quiet retreat

> Shakespeare's House on Henley Street house is where



# BY SEEMA ANAND CHOPRA

¶rying to take a step backwards into history, on a cool September autumn afternoon I stood looking at the birthplace of Shakespeare and wondered what it was that had drawn me here at this time of the year.

It is just another English house, but for its resident who made it extraordinary — this was home to one of the greatest English writers who hold a

universal appeal. His plays and poems continue, till times today, to entice readers and audiences, transcending borders of countries and languages. Undoubtedly, this celebrated author is remembered even after 450 years, for his literary works have proudly, since ages, been imbibed in most school and university syllabuses. So, I went visiting the English town of Stratfordupon-Avon where the historic and skilfully restored house of William Shakespeare is located.

#### **Shakespeare's Birthplace** Museum

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust was founded in 1847, almost three centuries after his birth, and has been able to preserve his legacy and the five Tudor houses associated with Shakespeare's lifetime. By the 19th century, the house had decayed and was falling apart, but the timely restoration attempts by the famous writer — Charles Dickens, helped to save it. He organised performances in towns of England to raise funds to renovate the memorial house! We gathered this infor-



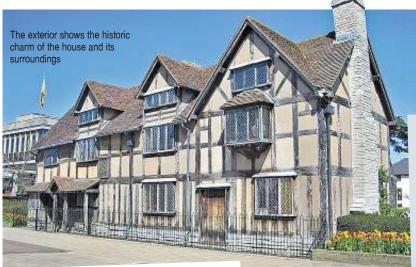
mation and a lot more at the vivid, engrossing Shakespeare Museum, through which is the entry to Shakespeare's birthplace!

# **Shakespeare's Birthplace**

Subsequently, we reached Shakespeare's birthplace, which is quite lively with radiant colours welcoming all who enter it, echoing the lifestyle of the 16th century. Shakespeare lived here with his parents and many more brothers and sisters. The par-

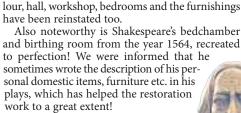
# Footsteps in the Halls of Genius

A literary journey in an English town unites two voices across continents and centuries



# **AU REVOIR**

It's amazing how such a humble space gave rise to one of the greatest writers ever. Quiet but meaningful. The setting adds to the magic — it's like the whole street tells a story. We drove back with memories of two great poets and writers - William Shakespeare and Rabindranath Tagore, born centuries and continents apart, yet brought together by little effort and fate at Shakespeare's Birthplace! No wonder that Rabindranath Tagore is referred to as the Shakespeare of India! Rabindranath Tagore's birth anniversary – 7th May is celebrated annually at Shakespeare's Birthplace by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.



**Discovery in the Gardens** In the 16th century, the garden of the house was used for various purposes by Shakespeare's father — like wool-dealing activities, glove-making, growing vegetables, herbs and medicinal plants, a barn for pigs, hens and more and also as a storage area. Wandering through one of the five gardens attached to Shakespeare's house, we made a discovery that added excitement to our visit and it was an icon of a true tribute to the 'Voice of India'.

#### **Tagore at Shakespeare's** Birthplace

On the occasion of the upcoming birth anniversary of Nobel Laureate Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore on 7th May, I recall my visit to Shakespeare's Birthplace House fondly. After the Shakespeare house tour, we stepped out through one of the back exit doors, wandered through its five gardens attached to the main house, and spotted the bust of Rabindranath Tagore — the great Indian poet and writer

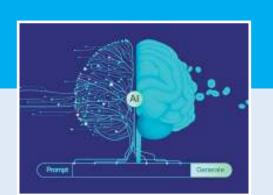
- it stood there majestically, as a true homage to him. We were at a quiet garden corner of the house and there it was — a fine sculpture on a stone plinth carved with Tagore's poem to Shakespeare, which he wrote on the tercentenary of Shakespeare's death — completion of 300 years in 1916 — titled 'In Honour of William



Shakespeare'. In the poem, he praises Shakespeare as an English poet as well as a world poet — an accolade to Shakespeare's work that inspired Tagore's literary work too! Little did he envision that less than 50 years later, the poem would be back in the limelight when the Calcutta Art Society presented an ivory tablet of the poem at the newly opened Shakespeare Centre in 1964!

- The author is a travel writer and researcher

# MONEY MATTERS



# Sarvam AI to build India's first Al platform

ightspeed venture capital-backed Sarvam Al will develop India's first AI platform in six months, the company's founder said on Saturday. Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced the selection of Sarvam AI to develop India's first GenAl platform. "We are confident that Sarvam's models will be competitive with global models," Vaishnaw said. The minister asked for a timeline for developing the platform from Sarvam founders who committed that it would be done in six months. "Building an Al ecosystem for India has always been core to Sarvam's mission, where our research, technology, and models empower builders to create solutions for the country. As part of the Sovereign LLM proposal, we are developing three model variants," Sarvam, Co-founder Pratyush Kumar said.



# MRPL net profit drops 68% on lower margins

angalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL) on

Saturday reported a 68 per cent drop in its March

Saturday reported a oo per cent drop in the quarter net profit on the back of a fall in refining margins. Net profit was Rs 363 crore in January-March - the fourth quarter of April 2024 to March 2025 fiscal year compared with Rs 1,137 crore earnings in the same period a year back, the company said in a statement. The firm, which is a subsidiary of state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), earned USD 6.23 on turning every barrel of crude oil into fuel in the fourth quarter as compared to a gross refining margin of USD 11.35 per barrel a year back. Revenue from operations dropped to Rs 27,601 crore from Rs 29,190 crore in January-March 2024 on lower oil prices. For the full 2024-25 fiscal, MRPL reported a net profit of Rs 51 crore, down from Rs 3,596 crore in 2023-24. (The firm had booked losses in the

previous quarter of FY25).



# **Mascot Infra to develop 385**acre industrial city Gujarat

eal estate and industrial park developer Mascot Infrastructure will develop an integrated industrial township over 385 acres at Vithalapur in Ahmedabad district, a statement said on Saturday. The township project, Mascot Industrial City, is located near the renowned auto cluster of Vithalapur and is also connected to major infrastructure developments including the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor, Dholera SIR, GIFT City and Sanand GIDC, Mascot Infra said in the statement. The township is poised to emerge as an industrial and logistics hub in one of the fastestgrowing manufacturing regions in the country, Mascot Infrastructure Managing Director Sanjay Patel said. The realty developer had signed an MoU with the Gujarat government for the project at the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2024. The township has been planned with industrial, residential, and commercial zones, offering industrial plots, plug & play factory sheds, and warehouses to residential apartments, and other infrastructure like hotels, school and food plaza, Patel said.

# **Robust raw material strategy** key to sustaining growth: Min

A robust raw material strategy is key to sustaining growth and the country must secure consistent availability of critical materials such as coking coal and iron ore, Union Minister G Kishan Reddy said on Saturday. Addressing the concluding

day of the 6th edition of the India Steel 2025 Exhibition and Conference, hosted jointly by the Ministry of Steel and Ficci here, the Union coal minister also said that steel is the backbone of India's economic growth and key driver of the country's collective vision of Viksit Bharat.

The three-day event saw the participation of over 1,000 delegates, over 200 exhibitors and featured nine sessions which included over 150 speakers from India and other countries, including the inaugural session, according to a

During this period, three Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were also signed highlighting the growing opportunities and collaborations within the steel sector, it said.



India's steel ambitions, he said, adding "the government India's economy, then coal and mines are the foundation. launched Mission Coking Coal A robust raw material strateto reduce coal import depengy is key to sustaining growth. dency, targeting 140 million We must secure consistent tons of domestic coking coal, availability of essential raw blending from 10-30 per cent materials like coking coal, in steel making by 2030. limestone, iron ore, and criti-The Minister also urged the cal elements such as magneindustry to set up new washsium, nickel, and chromium,"

eries and develop new tech-nologies to further strengthen India's efforts. Speaking at the event, Minister of State for Steel at the Centre, Bhupathiraju Srinivasa Varma reaffirmed the gov-ernment's resolve to enable a

resilient raw material ecosys-

tem through progressive policies and public-private collaboration. "We need to focus on 3 pil-

lars- first, Geopolitical part-nerships for diverse sourcing of raw material. This will ensure high quality supply for our producers. Second, Circular economy to maximize

scrap and buy products.
As steel is recyclable, such practices will help both from an environmental perspective and reduce our reliance on primary raw materials, and third, breakthrough in R&D to unlock domestic reserves," he

Sandeep Poundrik, Secretary, Ministry of Steel, in his address, said that while the country is aiming at creating 300-million tons capacity of steel by 2030, the current production capacity stands at 200million tons.

"To add further 100-million ton of capacity, our iron ore requirement will go to about 450 million tons, coal requirement will go to about 160-million tons. The Ministry of mines is already working on a proposal to incentivize bene-

# Set up design teams to avail incentive scheme

# Vaishnaw asks electronics component makers

PNS NEW DELHI

Electronics component makers will have to set up design teams and achieve Six Sigma level in their work to avail incentive scheme of the government, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Saturday.

The minister said that Ministry of Electronics and IT will not make it a formal criteria but will look at these factors before approving applica-Electronics

Components Scheme Manufacturing (ECMS).

The goal of Six Sigma -- a set of methodologies and tools -is to achieve a level of quality that is nearly perfect. This is done by reducing defects and errors, minimizing variation, and increasing quality and effi-

"I request each and every participant in this scheme to set up a design team. We have not included that as a formal criteria of approval but I am saying in front of you that it will be like informal criteria of approval," Vaishnaw said.

He was speaking while launching a portal on guidelines for ECMS. The minister pointed out that some companies have set up design teams of 5,000 engineers.

"If you don't have design team and even if you are fulfilling all your parameters, we will not approve you. Design teams have to be set up, Vaishnaw said.

He said some of the companies have started making dyes and tools that are used for manufacturing

finished products. Vaishnaw also asked the manufacturers to achieve high

quality in their products. "My last and final point is, please achieve Six Sigma quality in everything that you do. Nothing less than Six Sigma will be tolerated. We will be evalu-

ating your progress, not just on the manufacturing volume, but also on the quality that you produce," Vaishnaw said.

# Root cause of slowdown is widespread real income stagnation: Ramesh

PNS NEW DELHI

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Saturday said only the country's top 12 per cent households can afford a car and the root cause of this economic slowdown is widespread real-income stagnation for the majority of India. He cited the remarks of

Maruti Suzuki India's chairman, R C Bhargava, who has claimed that buying

cars is restricted to only 12 per cent households in In a post on X,

the Congress leader said, "The entire nation is still in a state of great anguish and shock. The brutal terror has cast a long shadow on our

"Even so, we cannot but take note of what the Chairman of Maruti Suzuki India has said today, which has a great bearing on the economy," he said, quoting Bhargava that buying cars in India is largely limited to the top 12 per cent households -- those with an annual income exceeding Rs 12 lakh. He pointed out that accord-

Reddy said, emphasizing the

crucial role of the coal and

mines sector in supporting

For the steel sector to grow,

the coal sector must grow

alongside and it is essential to

reduce imports and support

economic development.

ing to Bhargava, even small cars have become unaffordable for the remaining 88 per cent households, with their sales declining by about 9 per cent, and the overall passenger vehicles sales growth between 2023-2024 and 2024-25 was only 2 per cent.

The growth for the upcom-



ing year is also anticipated to be only 1-2 per cent, Bhargava has observed.

"The root cause of this slowdown is the widespread real income stagnation for the majority of India," Ramesh claimed in his post.

# **TN**, Taiwan chamber sign pact to set up industrial park

PNS CHENNAI

Aimed at promoting Taiwanese investments in Tamil Nadu, the state government's investment promotion agency, Guidance Tamil Nadu has signed a memorandum of understanding with Taiwan Chamber of Commerce here on Saturday.

The agreement seeks to establish an 'Indo-Taiwan Industrial Park' near the city with an investment potential of Rs 1,800 crore and creation of around 5,000 jobs, Minister for Industries TRB Rajaa said.

Taiwan Chamber of Commerce-India Vice General Simon Lee, Taiwan Chamber of Commerce, Chennai President Eric Chang, Industries department Secretary V Arun Roy, Guidance MD and CEO Darez Ahamed were present on the occasion

Recognising the need for a dedicated manufacturing space for Taiwanese companies, the government is developing exclusive 'Indo-Taiwan Industrial Parks' that would be built to international standards, Rajaa said in a social

# **INVEST KERALA SUMMIT**

# Works on projects worth Rs 4,410 cr to begin soon, says Minister

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Industries Minister P Rajeev on Saturday said works on 13 projects with a total investment of Rs 4,410 crore through the Invest Kerala Global Summit (IKGS 2025) will commence in May.

Noting that these projects were submitted through Expressions of Interest (EoIs) at the IKGS held in February, Rajeev, who also holds Law and Coir portfolios, added in April alone, four projects worth Rs 1670 crore have started.

Speaking after launching the web portals--- ikgseoi.kerala.gov.in

industrialland.kerala.gov.in-he said: "From February to April, 76 projects worth Rs 1,385 crore as part of the reining up of projects related to IKGS are underway.

The websites are launched for following up on the EoIs received during IKGS and creating a database of land parcels available in the state for industrial purposes, respectively.

IKGS 2025 had received EoIs worth Rs 1.96 lakh crore,according to an official



The Minister informed that a monthly progress report of the investment proposals that came up at IKGS will be pubthe web portal will also have real time status updates and other details relating to the follow-up of EoIs.

Land owners can upload on the website the details of the land which can be used for industrial purposes, Rajeev

The website of EoIs will have real time status updates and other details relating to the

follow-up of EoIs.

The web portal of the database of land parcels will act like a matchmaking website, wherein those willing to make land available for industrial purposes may list their property on the portal, the release added.

Investors can access the information through the portal and get in touch directly with the owners and seek acquisition of suitable land.

The portal will basically act as a facilitation platform, the

# IRM Energy signs tripartite pact with IAV Biogas, GAIL

PNS CHENNAI

IRM Energy Ltd has signed a tripartite agreement with IAV Biogas Pvt Ltd and GAIL (India) Ltd for the off-take of compressed bio-gas (CBG) facility in Namakkal and Tiruchirappalli districts in Tamil Nadu.

The agreement signed between the three entities on April 17, under the CBG-CGD (City Gas Distribution) Synchronisation scheme, marks a significant milestone in advancing India's clean energy initiative by integrating Compressed Bio-Gas into the



city gas distribution network. This agreement is a step forward towards integration of sustainable practices in energy distribution. We are proud to collaborate with GAIL and IAV Biogas Pvt Ltd in bringing cleaner solutions to the forefront," IRM Energy Ltd CEO M K Sharma said.

'This step not only aligns with our strategic vision but also contributes to India's mission of becoming a greener and

more self-reliant energy nation," he said in a company statement here. This collaboration reinforces

the Government of India's larger objective of enhancing energy security, promoting sustainable waste-to-energy solutions and contributing meaningfully to rural development. As per the agreement, IRM

Energy Ltd would offtake upto 3,000 SCMD (Standard Cubic Meters Per Day) of Compressed Bio-Gas from IAV Biogas Pvt Ltd for distribution through its city-gas distribution network in Namakkal and Tiruchirappalli districts.

# COASTAL STATES MEET TOMORROW

# Centre to unveil Rs 255 cr worth of fisheries projects

PNS NEW DELHI

Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh will on Monday inaugurate and lay the foundation for key projects for seven coastal states and union territories with a total outlay of Rs 255.30 crore under Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY).

The minister, at the coastal states meet to be held in Mumbai, will also launch a

set of key initiatives aimed at strengthening marine fisheries and promoting sustainable practices including Marine Fisheries Census

Operations, Turtle Excluder Device (TED) project and release of Standard Operating Procedure for Vessel Communication and Support System.

Ministers of State for Fisheries and Animal Husbandry S P Singh Baghel and George Kurian will be present at the event.

According to an official statement, certificates will also be distributed to outstanding cooperatives, fishery farmers producer organisations, fisheries startups, and climateresilient coastal fishing vil-

As part of Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PMMKSSY), beneficiaries will also receive Aqua

Insurance certificates and Kisan

Credit Cards. Notably, the government has introduced Aqua Insurance for the first time, offering dedicated financial protection to

aquafarmers. This

landmark initiative ensures targeted insurance coverage, digital accessibility. and focused support for marginalized communities in the fisheries sector.

Fisheries Minister from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh. Odisha and Puducherry will be present besides state gov-

ernment officials.

# India lifted 171 mn people from extreme poverty: World Bank

PNS NEW YORK

India has lifted 171 million people from extreme poverty in the decade between 2011-12 and 2022-23, the World Bank

"Over the past decade, India has significantly reduced poverty. Extreme poverty (living on less than USD 2.15 per day) fell from 16.2 per cent in people above this line," the World Bank said in its 'Poverty

& Equity Brief' on India.

It added that rural extreme poverty dropped from 18.4 per cent to 2.8 per cent, and urban from 10.7 per cent to 1.1

per cent, narrowing the rural-urban gap from 7.7 to 1.7 percentage points — a 16 per cent annual decline.

The brief said that India also transitioned into the lowermiddle-income category. Using the USD 3.65 per day LMIC poverty line, poverty fell from 61.8 per cent to 28.1 per cent, lifting 378 million people out of poverty.

2011-12 to 2.3 per cent in Rural poverty dropped from 2022-23, lifting 171 million 69 per cent to 32.5 per cent, and urban poverty from 43.5 per cent to 17.2 per cent, reducing the rural-urban gap from 25 to 15 percentage points with a 7 per cent annu-

India's five most populous



states - Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh—accounted for 65 per cent of the country's extreme poor in 2011-12 and contributed to two-thirds of the overall decline in extreme poverty by 2022-23, it said. "Nevertheless, these states

still accounted for 54 per cent of India's extremely poor (2022-23) and 51 per cent of the multidimensionally poor (2019-21)," the brief said adding that as measured by the

poverty declined from 53.8 per cent in 2005-06 to 16.4 per cent by 2019-21. The brief added that employment growth has out-

paced the working-age population since 2021-22. Employment rates, especially among women, are rising, and urban unemployment fell to 6.6 per cent in Q1 FY24/25, the lowest since 2017-18.

Recent data indicates a shift of male workers from rural to urban areas for the first time since 2018-19, while rural female employment in agricul-

ture has grown. Highlighting the challenges

multidimensional poverty that persist, the brief said that index (MPI), non-monetary youth unemployment is 13.3 per cent, increasing to 29 per cent among tertiary education graduates. Only 23 per cent of non-farm paid jobs are formal, and most agricultural employment remains informal. Self-employment is rising,

especially among rural workers and women. Despite female employment rate of 31 per cent, gender disparities remain, with 234 million more men in paid work. The World Bank Poverty

and Equity Briefs (PEBs) highlight poverty, shared prosperity and inequality trends for over 100 developing coun-



VIJAYAWADA | SUNDAY | APRIL 27, 2025





# **CUCUMBER &** MINT COOLER

perfect for hot summer

#### **INGREDIENTS:**

- 1 cucumber (peeled and chopped)
- 1/2 cup fresh mint leaves
- 1 tablespoon honey or agave syrup (optional)
  - Juice of 1 lemon
  - 2 cups cold water
  - Ice cubes **METHOD:**

Blend cucumber, mint leaves, lemon juice, and honey (if using) in a blender until smooth

Strain the mixture into a jug to remove pulp.

Add cold water and ice cubes.

Stir well and serve chilled, garnished with a sprig of mint.

# **WATERMELON & FETA SALAD**

A sweet and salty combination perfect for summer

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups watermelon cubes
   1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
   1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar • Fresh basil leaves, torn • Salt and pepper, to taste

#### **METHOD:**

Combine watermelon cubes and feta cheese in a bowl. Drizzle with olive oil and balsamic vinegar Toss gently to combine, then sprinkle with torn basil leaves. Season with salt and pepper, and serve immediately for a cool, tangy treat.





# **MANGO LASSI**

Turn the classic mango lassi into a frozen treat for those extra hot days.

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ripe mango, peeled and chopped
  - 1/2 cup plain yogurt
- 1/4 cup milk or almond milk • 2 tablespoons honey or sugar (adjust to taste)
- A pinch of cardamom powder (optional)

Blend mango, yogurt, milk, honey, and cardamom powder in a blender until smooth. Pour the mixture into popsicle molds. Freeze for 4-6 hours or overnight. Once frozen, run warm water over the outside of the molds to release the popsicles. Enjoy!

# SPICY ROASTED CHICKPEAS

A crunchy, healthy snack to munch on during summer evenings.

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 can of chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 tablespoon olive oil 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika 1/4 teaspoon cumin powder
  - 1/4 teaspoon chili powder Salt to taste

#### **METHOD:**

Preheat your oven to 400 F (200 C).

Pat chickpeas dry with a towel and toss them in olive oil and the spices. Spread the chickpeas in a single layer on a baking sheet. Roast for 25-30 minutes, stirring halfway through, until crispy.

Let cool and enjoy as a crunchy snack.



#### **COCONUT LIME RICE**

A tropical twist on plain rice, perfect as a side dish for summer BBQs or grilled seafood.

#### **INGREDIENTS:**

- 1 cup basmati rice
- 1 cup coconut milk 1/2 cup water
  - Zest and juice of 1 lime
- Salt to taste Fresh cilantro, chopped (optional)



#### **METHOD:**

Rinse the rice until the water runs clear.

In a saucepan, bring coconut milk and water to a simmer. Add the rice, lime zest, and salt. Cover and cook on low heat for 15-20 minutes, or until the rice is tender.

Remove from heat and fluff with a fork.

Stir in lime juice and garnish with fresh cilantro before serving.

Enjoy these light, flavorful recipes that will help you stay cool and satisfied all summer long!

# WHAT'S NEW

# **STRAIGHT FROM KASHMIR'S** SOUL

HERB HEAVEN is your one-stop destination. There is nothing auite like the saffron strands from Kashmirdeep red in color, beautifully aromatic, and rich in taste. Bringing to you the finest quality saffron, sourced directly from the renowned saffron fields of Pampore, Kashmir.



# LAVIE LUXE FENNY25 SMALL BOX SLING BAG

Add a bold twist to your everyday style with a bold crossbody bag, where function meets fashion. This distinctive boxy bag is compact yet surprisingly spacious, easily fitting all your daily essentials. Its sleek design and well-crafted inner lining ensure durability and effortless accessibility. Made from premium materials, it's perfect for on-the-go styling. Whether paired with a minidress or casual jeans, it adds a touch of personality to any outfit. Key features include two wellorganized compartments, an easyto-carry structure, and ample space for your essentials.

# **CURL CARE'S 3-STEP CURL ROUTINE**

Say hello to your best curls ever with Curl Care's 3-Step Curl Routine — made by a curly, for curlies and wavies! Specially formulated for Indian hair and climate, this vegan and cruelty-free trio gently cleanses, deeply hydrates, and defines curls without sulfates, silicones, or parabens. It includes the Untangled Shampoo to cleanse without stripping, Hydrating Deep Conditioner to moisturize and strengthen, and Define & Shine Curl Cream for all-day bounce and frizz control. Perfect for two washes a week, it transforms dull, dry



#### MAC COSMETICS STROBE BEAM LIQUID BLUSH Cheeks are having a major moment...and everyone wants to go for the glow. Strobe Beam Liquid Blush puts you in control of

the intensity so you can lean in with a cheeky pop of iridescent colour or go bold with layers for a rush of flush. With pigments that bend light for lit-from-within multidimensional luminosity, Strobe Beam Liquid Blush can be used to sculpt, highlight and underpaint any look. Inspired by sunrises and sunsets, each universally flattering shade gives cheeks an ethereal radiance for a "great lighting" effect from day to night.





#### **EPRES HEALTHY HAIR 3-STEP** SYSTEM STARTER KIT

This kit is a one-step spray that actively repairs broken disulfide bonds to restore hair's structure in just 10 minutes. One can cleanse with Healthy Hair Shampoo, which protects against damage as you wash, leaving hair cleaner, lighter, and shinier. Then condition with a Healthy Hair Conditioner, which instantly smooths, detangles, and leaves hair quicker to dry with a high-shine finish. Ideal for all hair types and textures, these quat-free formulas deliver high-performance care for stronger, shinier, healthier hair.

# STAY COOL THIS SUMMER

price range of starts from INR 1999 Wacoal India unveils its Spring/Summer 2025 Cool Comfort Collection, crafted with revolutionary Cool Touch fabric that lowers fabric temperature by 2-3 C for a refreshing feel. Designed for hot weather, it features breathable perforated cups, rice-knit fabric, and serene pastel hues. Choose from three stylish bra styles—padded wired, lacy padded non-wired, and padded non-wired—with coordinating panties.

# **HOROSCOPE**



#### **ARIES** Siblings support you, a project gets approved, and your

charm, creativity, and ambition shine. Embrace personal growth, health, and success while seeking balance, rest, and joy in challenges.

# **TAURUS**



You'll win appreciation at work, manage financial stress, and connect with family. While craving seclusion, your lovalty and emotional depth strengthen

bonds. Embrace change, new ideas

# **GEMINI**

and self-care.



uplift you. Support from peers and loved ones brings success. Travel and new connections boost growth. Separation brings confidence. Your charm, intellect and goodwill shine brightly.

Joy and fresh ideas

# **CANCER**



Frustration may arise, but resilience lifts you. Support others, stay focused

and define goals. Balance emotions, health and ambition. A new contract brings career stability as you reconnect with memories.

# Stay focused despite

missed chances and emotional distance. Your drive and insight fuel success. Embrace unexpected love, reflect on family ties and fight setbacks. Balance humility, and

Joy, introspection, and creativity uplift you. Your caring

ambition wisely.

**VIRGO** 

nature shines, earning love and trust. Support flows in, success follows effort and new experiences build confidence. Romance and fruitful trips await.

# **LIBRA**

Your talent and loyalty win admiration, though delays may hinder progress. Balance ambition with family time. Emotional strength and smart planning help overcome setbacks and bring

#### success in life. **SCORPIO**

Your supportive nature benefits all while balancing love, work and self-growth tests you. Emotions may challenge health, but creativity revives you. Embrace recognition and self-discovery amid seclusion.

# **SAGITTARIUS**

Your past efforts begin to pay off. Stay calm amidst all challenges. Romance, support, and clarity uplift you. Trust vour intuition, avoid negativity, and embrace rewards through thoughtful actions.

# **CAPRICORN**

New connections spark mental joy but avoid being overly critical. A job change looks promising. Emotional balance and support revive relationships. Recognition and unexpected help fuel your success.

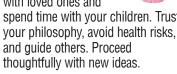
# **AQUARIUS**

Joy, introspection and kindness bring growth, despite feelings of restlessness or criticism. A new relationship offers stability, and a new job brings change. Embrace decisions and overcome doubts.

# **PISCES**

Stay calm in challenging situations. Communicate openly with loved ones and spend time with your children. Trust your philosophy, avoid health risks, and guide others. Proceed









# **SHILPA RAO: I DON'T SEE EXPECTATIONS AS PRESSURE— ONLY THE NEED TO BE HONEST**

In an exclusive conversation with The Pioneer. celebrated singer **Shilpa Rao delves** deep into the emotional landscape of her new track Khudaya Ishq from the film **Abir Gulal. Known** for her soulstirring vocals and poetic sensibility, she opens up about surrendering to love, singing with vulnerability, and trusting the music to guide her. **Rao also reflects** on the legacy of honest music, the invisible role of

pain in art, and

emotionally true

how staying

is the key to

resonance

timeless

ome voices are heard. Shilpa Rao's is felt. It doesn't merely glide over a melody—it pierces through the noise of the world, anchors itself in your soul, and stays long after the music ends. With Khudaya Ishq, her latest track from the evocative film Abir Gulal, Shilpa doesn't just sing about love—she dissolves into it. It's not the flutter of first crushes or the fireworks of infatuation—it's love in its rawest, most sacred form: aching, grown, sur-rendered. The kind that leaves you breathless, not because it's perfect, but because it's true. In this deeply personal reflection, Shilpa opens up about creating from a place of emotional honesty, why heartbreak often holds the key to her most haunting per-



formances, and how musicwhen it's real—has the power to become a praver.

In an exclusive conversation with The Pioneer, the celebrated singer opens up about her newest track Khudaya Ishq, how she taps into emotions while recording, and what makes her music timelessly relevant.

Reflecting on her journey through romantic music, Shilpa shares, "It's always interesting to sing a romantic song because even in love, there are so many different stands apart—not young or playful, but deeply mature. "But love is shades and emotions you can show. With every new romantic track, we explore a new phase of love." She describes Khudaya Ishq as a

still love," she says, "You are fully involved with the other person. That's what this song is about."
Khudaya Ishq has an almost prayer-like quality to it, one that evokes longing and surrender. For Shilpa, such a song is deeply personal. "The lyrics and the composition inspire you, and your experiences of love come into play too," she explains. "Being in love is a blessing, and when you draw from your emotions while singing, it feels like you're reliv-

ing those moments. She adds that she hopes everyone, in their own way, gets to experience a love that mir-

rors the soul of this song.
When asked whether pain helps bring out the best in a singer, Shilpa turns to the core emotion of the track—love. "The strongest feeling in this track was the emotion of falling in love. And when that happens, you don't hold back—you just go all in," she shares. That's exactly what she did while recording Khudaya Ishq: "I didn't let doubts or complicated thoughts come in; I just sang it with pure love."The song's lyrical theme revolves around surrender in love, something Shilpa

believes music helps us confront. "That's the power of art," she affirms. "When you're feeling something deeply but don't know how to express it, art gives you the words and the space to let it out. Khudaya Ishq helps people express that kind of love."

Her first emotional response upon hearing the composition confirmed this instinctive connection. "Occasionally, it's rare to find lyrics and music that blend so well together. I fell in love with the song the first time I heard it and that's the feeling I carried while singing it."

On capturing the ache and longing that defines Khudaya Ishq, Shilpa kept her approach simple and organic. "The only thing I did was stay fully focused. No over-thinking, no fear—just love."

She also touches upon the haunting Sufi undertone that subtly emerges through the track. Rather than planning it consciously, she allowed herself to surrender to the flow. "We don't really plan or compartmentalise while singing. It's best to just feel the moment and go with the flow. Some parts were more rhythmic, and I simply followed what felt natural without overthinking it."

Though the film Abir Gulal is visually rich and emotionally layered, Shilpa reveals she wasn't aware of the film's involvement when she initially recorded the song. "Usually, we don't know. We only ask about the character's emotion or situation," she says. However, once she learned about the context, it all made perfect sense. "It felt like the song and the film were a perfect match—like

they were made for each other."

Despite her massive fan base, especially among younger audiences, Shilpa doesn't feel the pressure of expectations. "I don't think of it as a burden. The goal is always to be honest and sincere in what you sing. If you're true to the song and your feelings, that's what matters most." She believes that honesty in music leads to timelessness. "If you're musically honest, you'll stay relevant— not just today but in the future too. Many great composers and writers made music not just for their time but for generations. Music is a legacy. The ragas, the notes—they've lasted for centuries, and we're just carrying them forward.

Looking ahead, Shilpa shares her excitement for a few upcoming releases. "There are some really cool songs coming up for Jewel Thief. I hope people enjoy that song too. I also have a few indie collaborations releasing this year. I'm excited to share them one by one."

#### **TRENDING**

#### **PERSON**

#### **POPE FRANCIS**



Pope Francis, the 266th pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church. has passed away, leaving behind a legacy of compassion, humility, and reform. Known for his progressive views and deep concern for the marginalized, his death marks the end of a transformative papacy that resonated far beyond the Vatican

#### VIDEO

#### **KASHMIRI MAN CARRYING INJURED TOURIST**

In a powerful act of humanity, a Kashmiri man is seen carrying an injured tourist on his back to safety during the Pahalgam terrorist attack. Amid chaos and violence this moment shines as a reminder that compassion transcends conflict.



#### MOVIE

#### **GROUND ZERO**



Emraan Hashmi's latest release, Ground Zero, has been met with a positive reception from audiences, who are praising his intense performance and the gripping storyline. Fans are flocking to theaters, with many highlighting the film's engaging narrative and Hashmi's compelling portrayal of his character

#### CHOR BAZARI PHIR SE



The makers of the upcoming film Bhool Chuk Maaf have dropped their second musical offering — Chor Bazari Phir Se, and it's already creating waves across digital platforms. Showcasing the sizzling chemistry between Raikummar Rao and Wamiga Gabbi, the song teases the vibrant romance between their characters.

# **PICTURE**

# SKETCHES OF ATTACKERS RELEASED



Security agencies have released sketches of the three terrorists involved in the Pahalgam attack, following a thorough investigation. The sketches are based on eyewitness accounts and are part of ongoing efforts to apprehend the perpetrators and bring them to justice



# Ensure a safe summer for your child

children's health requires extra attention due to the rising temperatures, increased exposure to the sun, and a heightened risk of dehydration. Young children are especially vulnerable to the heat, as their bodies are still developing and can struggle to regulate temperature efficiently. Ensuring they remain hydrated, eat the right foods, wear appropriate clothing, and get adequate rest is essential for keeping them safe and comfortable. Encourage children to drink water frequently, even if they don't feel thirsty, and limit outdoor activities during peak heat hours.

One of the most crucial aspects of summer care is ensuring that children remain properly hydrated. With the heat and active play, children can lose fluids quickly through sweat, putting them at risk of dehydration. Studies show that over 50% of children do not consume enough water daily, which can impact their energy levels and overall health. Water is the most important drink for staying hydrated, but it's equally important to encourage children to consume other hydrating liquids like coconut water, lemonade, or even buttermilk. These drinks help replenish lost electrolytes, essential for proper body function during hot days. Provide a water bottle when children go outside and encourage them to take small sips frequently to stay hydrated. During outdoor activities instruct children to take 10 gulps of water after every half an hour.

In terms of food, the summer season calls for a diet that helps cool the body, provides energy, and replenishes lost nutrients. Fresh,



stomach and help prevent the digestive system from becoming sluggish. Cooling foods such as yogurt, rich in probiotics, promote gut health and boost immunity, while leafy vegetables like lettuce and spinach add hydration and fiber. Avoid spicy, oily, or fried foods as they can increase body heat and cause discomfort.

Clothing plays a crucial role in protecting children from the intense heat of summer. Loose-fitting, lightweight clothing made from natural fabrics like cotton allows the skin to breathe and helps prevent overheating. Cotton

absorbs sweat efficiently, making it an ideal summer fabric. Light-colored clothes reflect sunlight and keep the body cooler, whereas

harmful UV rays, while sunglasses protect delicate eyes from the sun's glare and UV damage. Sunscreen should be applied generously to exposed skin, especially when children are outdoors, to prevent sunburns and long-term skin damage. Dress children in breathable cotton outfits, apply sunscreen 30 minutes before sun exposure and reapply every 4 hours, and ensure they wear hats when outdoors. Proper rest is also essential during the

light scarves add further protection. A wide-

brimmed hat shields the face and neck from

summer, as heat can make children feel more tired and lethargic than usual. Adequate sleep and daytime naps help children maintain energy levels and avoid heat exhaustion. Ensure they sleep in a cool, well-ventilated environment, and consider using fans or air conditioning to maintain comfort. Encourage children to rest during the hottest part of the day and avoid excessive physical exertion.

development, but with the summer heat, it's important to strike a balance. Activities such as swimming, playing in shaded areas, or enjoying waterbased games are excellent ways to help children stay active and cool simultaneously. In some cases, it might be advisable to take breaks indoors in a cool space to prevent overexposure to heat. Plan outdoor playtimes early in the morning or late in the evening when temperatures are lower. By maintaining these essential care practices, parents can help ensure their children stay safe, healthy, and comfortable throughout the summer months. A little extra effort in hydration, food, clothing, and rest goes a long way in making summer enjoyable while keeping children protected from

its extreme effects.

# ESSENTIAL SUMMER CARE TIPS FOR KIDS

- Ensure children drink water and rehydrating liquids at frequent intervals.
- Include hydrating fruits like watermelon, cucumber, and oranges in their diet Serve light and easily digestible meals like soups, salads, and yogurt

Avoid direct sun exposure between 10 AM and 4 PM

- Dress children in lightweight, breathable cotton clothes and light colors Apply sunscreen (SPF 30 or above) and use hats or sunglasses for protection
- Provide a cool, ventilated sleeping environment for quality rest Encourage indoor or shaded outdoor activities to prevent heat-related illnesses

(The author, Dr. Preeti Sharma, is a Senior Consultant Paediatrician, at Ankura Hospital for Women and Children.)



VIJAYAWADA | SUNDAY | APRIL 27, 2025

In the vast and vibrant landscape of Indian cinema, women music directors have been a rare presence. In the South Indian film industry, that rarity narrows even further—there has been only one iconic

name: MM Srilekha. A true trailblazer, Srilekha made history by becoming a music director at the astonishingly young age of 12, breaking barriers in a space long dominated by men. **Born into a family steeped in** musical and cinematic brilliance she is the sister of acclaimed filmmaker SS Rajamouli and legendary composer MM Keeravani—Srilekha carved her own path with remarkable grit and talent. Over the years, she has composed music for more than 75 films and lent her voice as a playback singer, winning hearts with her versatility and soulful compositions.

**Celebrated as one of the finest music** composers in Indian cinema, Srilekha's journey is not just inspiring—it's a testament to passion, perseverance, and the power of paving the way for future generations of women in music. The Pioneer's Suresh Kavirayani in an exclusive chat with the seasoned musical maestro, takes you through a closer look at the visionary, who changed the tune of

**South Indian** cinema.



**CHASING SPB AT AGE OF 5** 

I was born in a village called Amareshwara Camp, near Raichur, in Karnataka. There is

no medical center in that village, so I was born at home. I don't know how it

came to me, but I was drawn to music when I was just five years

old. One day, after I watched

Sankarabharanam, I felt a strong desire to meet SP

Balasubrahmanyam to learn music. I asked

my parents to take

We shifted to Chennai. Ever since I can remember, even from the time I understood imagination, I knew only music — and I wanted to pursue nothing else. I didn't go to school regularly and never had any formal educational certificates. Everything I learned was at home. Though my parents enrolled me in a school near our house, I went only for a few days. The teachers started complaining because I was constantly singing songs and

#### **SLOKAS PLANTED** THE **SEEDS** As I mentioned earlier, Dasari garu brought me on

**MUSIC** When I was my uncle

REJECTED

MM Keeravani and SS Raiamouli are mv

brothers, and though we are technically

cousins, we all grew up as part of a joint family.

asked me to drop the idea of becoming a singer.

Keeravani annayya used to leave his harmonium free on

Saturdays and Sundays, so I would take it and play by myself on

those two days. During that time, I constantly asked my family members

to take me to meet SP Balasubrahmanyam (SPB) sir, as I wanted to sing

and learn music from him. One day, they finally took me to SPB sir and

because my voice wasn't good. After hearing this, my family members

**MUSICAL JOURNEY WITH RAJAMOULI** 

My brothers have always been great supporters of my music journey, and

I share a special bond with them. I worked with Rajamouli annayya for the

background music (BGM). At that time, CDs were popular, and he would

give me new ones to explore. These exchanges shaped my understanding

of sound and storytelling through music. Keeravani anna was happy with

through the film 'Little Soldiers', for which Sri was the music director.

serial 'Santhi Nivasam', where we discussed various ideas, including

my progress and praised me. I even sang many songs for his compositions. Interestingly, my first playback singing opportunity came

told him about my passion for music and my dream to sing. But he

immediately rejected me. He told them that I was not fit for singing

me to memorize

but since my father encouraged it, I

# A TOY KEYBOARD

**FLOP** 

THAT LED TO

While the songs were appreciated, the film

unfortunately turned out to be a flop at the box office.

However, Rama Naidu, the producer of the film,

recognized my potential and offered me his next

project — Taj Mahal. That film marked a turning

point in my career. After that, I never looked back. I went on to work with Rama Naidu on

13 films, a journey filled with learning,

growth, and memorable

music.

him that day. Unlike most girls who would carry dolls at that age, I took my me. My uncle replied, "She is my brother's daughter." Dasari garu then turned to me and asked, "What are you studying?" I told him about myself and my interest in music. Playfully, he asked me to compose a tune -

remember asking my brother and others how many chocolates and outfits I could buy with Rs 25,000!



# MY FIRST FILM RECORDING

The next day, I was thrilled — especially because I too had a car waiting for me associate directors, other technicians, and film personalities were already song. He mentioned he would return in the evening, but I requested him to stav in another ten minutes. Gangadhara Sastry and Padmapriya rendered the song, both making their debut as playback singers through it. On the same day, the The film was released, and the songs became a super hit. That's how my debut

second opportunity as well — he roped me in for his film Kondapalli Rathaiah, which was produced by another legendary figure, Rama Naidu.

# FROM REJECTION **TO HIT DUET: MY REDEMPTION**

**WITH SPB** 

As I mentioned earlier, SPB sir had initially rejected me as a playback singer because of my voice. However, I knew music director Koti garu well and requested him for a chance to sing. He gave me an opportunity for the film 'Ayanaki Iddaru',

directed by EVV Satyanarayana. SPB sir was also singing in the same project. When he saw me at the studio, he asked, "What are you doing here?" I replied, "To sing a song." He immediately told Koti that I wasn't a good singer. But Koti insisted he listen to me. I completed my portion first. SPB sir heard it and, to my surprise, complimented me, saying: "Kaki kokila eppudu ayindi" (The crow has become the cuckoo). Our duet 'Andalamma Andaalu' became a huge hit, and EVV sir even asked me to sing another song for the same film.



getting involved in music-related activities, so I left the school.

# **OF** as the music director for his film Kondapalli Rathaiah

eight years old,

noticed my deep interest in music Seeing my passion, he asked

Soundaryalahari, the sacred verses written by Adi Shankaracharya. I didn't know what it meant at the time,

memorized all hundred slokas. Only later did I realize the spiritual depth and power these verses held — and perhaps, it's because of their blessings that I stand today as a music composer.

# SINGING TO THE GODDESS WITH

My uncle also introduced me to a few ragas and I began singing them in front of the Goddess. They gave me a small keyboard, and every two hours. I would sit and sing devotional songs. That became my routine. Slowly, I started catching the nuances of tunes and melodies. Whenever my brother Keeravani visited home, I would share the tunes I'd come up with. He used to say, "If you get a really nice tune, I'll buy you an ice cream." That was all the motivation I needed.



#### **ANNAYYA'S ASSISTANT MUSIC DIRECTOR**

At the same time, I was fascinated by the cars that came to pick up my brother for his music recordings. I once told my father, "I want a car to come for me too." He replied, "If you give good tunes and become a music director, then your car will also wait outside one day." Motivated by my family and uncle's support, my brother Keeravani eventually made me his assistant music director. I got to work on iconic films like Allari Mogudu, Allari Priyudu, Gharana Mogudu, and Kshanam Kshanam under his guidance. People began to recognize that I wasn't just passionate about music — I was serious about making it my life.

# **COMPOSING FOR THE MASTER** BLASTER

In 2014, I had the honor of composing the theme song for the Kerala Blasters football team, which was owned by cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar. Being a huge fan of his, it was a dream come true. Sachin was incredibly humble and down to earth. I'll never forget the moment he spoke about me on the opening day in Kerala, saying that just as he achieved 100 centuries early in life, he wished I would complete 100 films as a music director. As a composer, this was one of the most cherished moments of my life, and it still remains unforgettable

#### **DEBUT IN TAMIL WITH** THALAPATHY VIJAY

My uncle Vijayendra Prasad once went to narrate a story to actor Vijay, and I accompanied him. At that time, Vijay's father, SA Chandrasekhar, was preparing to launch him as a lead actor. The film was titled 'Naalaiya Theerpu', and I was brought on board as the music director. That marked my debut in Tamil cinema with Vijay's first film. From there, my career took off and I stayed busy with multiple projects.



# **'UNIKI' TO 'HIT 2'**

I've known Sailesh Kolanu for several years now. In 2019, he created a short film titled 'Uniki', for which I composed the music. Later, I also composed a song for 'Hit 2' in 2022 — the song 'Urike Urike' remains a favorite among fans and continues to rank high on

#### IN THE STUDIO AND AT HOME

As a woman music director, I've never faced major struggles in the industry. In fact, I've received encouragement from all sides. I always stay focused on my work and avoid distractions. I don't usually share personal details, but I can say that I got married in 2004 and we have a child. My husband works in real estate



vijayawada12

# **ANNAYYA'S WISE WORDS**

At that time, my brother Keeravani was working with music director Chakravarthi and was quite busy. Cars from various production houses would often come to our home to pick him up for recordings. Since I wasn't going to school, my brother began taking me along with him to music sessions. I would silently observe how he worked on compositions and the kinds of discussions that happened in the studio. He always told me one important thing: "Don't copy from anyone. Do it on your own." I was deeply fond of llayaraja's music, and I used to play his tunes at home on the harmonium. But my brother would gently remind me — never to imitate, but to create

# 12-YEAR-OLD WHO IMPRESSED A LEGEND

When I was nearly 12 years old, my uncle, Vijayendra Prasad, went to narrate a story to the legendary director Dasari Narayana Rao. I accompanied keyboard player with me. Dasari garu noticed this and asked my uncle about which I did, right there on the spot. He was stunned and went into his house. I assumed he was impressed and had gone in to get me a chocolate. But to my surprise, he returned with a cheque for Rs 25,000 and said, "You are the music director for my film Nannagaru, and tomorrow, I will send a car for you." I couldn't believe it. That night, I didn't sleep at all. I



like my brother. I went to the recording studio, where Dasari garu's assistant and present. Dasari garu narrated a situation from the story — it was for a duet for just ten minutes. Within that time, I gave him the tune. He then asked me to compose the charanam (the secondary section of the song), which I completed muhurat (auspicious launch) of the film and the recording took place. Many industry stalwarts, including Chiranjeevi and Mohan Babu, attended the event. film happened. Dasari garu was so impressed that he gave me a



