

The Pioneer

Paper with passion since 1864

RNI No.APENG/2018/76468

*LATE CITY VOL. 7 ISSUE 175 | *Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

PUBLISHED FROM: VIJAYAWADA DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH DEHRADUN HYDERABAD

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The Pioneer

It is shameful that Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan read a script written by someone and spread false news about the Congress. If Pawan wants to please Modi, he should sit and dance at #7, Race Course Road, the residence of the PM. Or Pawan should quit politics and make films to please Modi

- Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy, Bhongir MP



Pak Minister's open confession exposes it as a 'rogue state'



'INDIAN ECONOMY TO GROW ON BACK OF RIGHT STRATEGIES'



NTR-Prashanth Neel's Action Drama Gets Release DATE



DON'T MISS...

Traffic curbs for PM's Amaravati visit

In preparation for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the State capital, Amaravati, to restart capital construction projects, the Police Department will implement traffic diversions on National and State Highways in the Vijayawada and Amaravati areas on 2 May from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. In a press release issued on Tuesday, Director General of Police (DGP) Harish Kumar Gupta stated that the measures are intended to ensure public convenience and minimise traffic congestion on the highways. He said the diversions would facilitate the smooth...

-PAGE: 3

20 Punjabis elected as MPs in Canada

Punjab's Sujapur village erupted in a celebration when Liberal candidate Sukh Dhalwal was elected an MP for the sixth time in the Federal polls in Canada on Tuesday. Dhalwal is among more than 20 Punjab-origin candidates who were elected to the House of Commons in Canada. This time, around 65 Punjab-origin candidates contested the Federal polls in Canada. The Liberal Party won the federal elections in Canada. In 2021, 18 Punjabis had won the polls, while in 2019, 20 Punjab-origin...

-PAGE: 5

India in reasonably good spot: Sebi

India is in a reasonably good spot despite global headwinds and retail investors should stay invested for long market volatility notwithstanding, Sebi Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey said on Tuesday. India has shown a lot of resilience ever since the tariff war began to impact markets worldwide, Pandey said in an exclusive interview. "I would suggest that...despite the global headwinds, India is in a reasonably good spot," the markets regulator said, highlighting the economic strength of the country...

-PAGE: 8

Cricket world praises Vaibhav Suryavanshi

What were you doing at 147? asked some of cricket's biggest names as they saluted the fearless and evidently gifted Vaibhav Suryavanshi for his blazing hundred in the IPL, describing the child prodigy as a star in the making. After Suryavanshi, playing for Rajasthan Royals, smashed Gujarat Titans' Rashid Khan for a six over mid-wicket in Jaipur to become the youngest centurion in T20s last night, the cricketing world duly applauded his special feat. "Vaibhav's fearless approach, bat speed, picking..."

-SPORTS

Forces free to decide when and how to hit

PM'S BIG MESSAGE ON PAHALGAM ATTACK



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Tuesday that the armed forces have "complete operational freedom" to decide on the mode, targets and timing of India's response to the Pahalgam terror attack, as he chaired a meeting with the top defence establishment.

During the high-level meeting, which was attended by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and the chiefs of three services, Modi affirmed that it is the national resolve to deal a crushing blow to terrorism, government sources said. Modi expressed complete faith and confidence in the professional abilities of the armed forces.

"They have complete operational freedom to decide on the mode, targets and timing of our response," a source quoted Modi as saying. Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan was also part of the meeting, which was held amid India weighing its options for countermeasures following the Pahalgam terror attack which left at least 26 civilians, mostly tourists, dead.

Modi has vowed to pursue the terrorists behind the attack and their patrons, a clear reference to Pakistan, which has a history of sponsoring terror strikes in India, to the "ends of the earth" and inflict the harshest punishment on them "beyond their imagination".

Continued on Page 2

Go to Pakistan if you love it: Dy CM Pawan

Announces Rs 50 lakh ex gratia on behalf of Jana Sena to kin of terror strike victim from Kavali



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Chief Minister K Pawan Kalyan launched a scathing attack in response to the recent terror strike in Pahalgam, Kashmir, urging those who sympathise with Pakistan to "go there" and calling for national unity across religious lines to stand firm against terrorism.


The Jana Sena Party held a condolence meeting in Vijayawada on Tuesday to mourn the deaths of two Andhra Pradesh residents — Somiseti Madhusudhan Rao and JS Chandramouli — who were among those killed in the gruesome attack by terrorists in Pahalgam.

Pawan Kalyan announced an ex gratia payment of Rs 50 lakh to the family of Madhusudhan Rao of Kavali, on behalf of the Jana Sena Party, and pledged all possible support. He also said he would urge Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu to provide financial aid from the government, expressing grief over the loss of a party activist.

Continued on Page 2

CM NAIDU'S APPEAL TO BANKERS

Power MSME growth in AP



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday urged bankers to ramp up support for MSMEs, tenant farmers, DWCRAs women, and marginalised communities, calling for a unified push towards Andhra Pradesh's development goals. He appealed while chairing the 231st State-Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC) meeting at the State Secretariat.

Unveiling the Annual Credit Plan for 2025-26, the CM lauded the banking sector for surpassing this year's credit disbursement target. Against a target of Rs 5.4 lakh crore, the banks achieved a record Rs 6.83 lakh crore—marking a 127% achievement rate. Of this, Rs 4.14 lakh crore was under the priority sector, with Rs 2.68 lakh crore allocated to the non-priority sector.

Naidu urged banks to go further, aligning financial outreach with the Swarnandhra-2047 vision and the State's mission to eradicate poverty by 2029. He emphasised financial inclusion as a critical pillar of infrastructure-driven, innovation-led growth. MSMEs, he said, would be promoted in every Assembly constituency under the 'one entrepreneur per family' model, supported by initiatives like the Ratan Tata Innovation Hub.

Highlighting agriculture as the State's backbone, Naidu called for direct credit to fishermen to cut out exploitative middlemen. He also outlined regional development plans—Visakhapatnam as a financial and industrial hub, Amaravati as a future-ready capital, and Rayalaseema as a horticulture and electronics manufacturing zone. He urged bankers to tap into opportunities in the petro-corridor and maritime economy.

Reaffirming his government's 'Zero Poverty P-4' policy, Naidu said PPP models would drive inclusive wealth creation.

Bankers assured their full cooperation, citing active disbursements to women entrepreneurs, SHGs, and sectors such as education and housing.

However, Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav flagged concern over declining credit growth and called for an in-depth review to ensure sustainability.

The SLBC meet concluded with a clear message: banks are central to Andhra Pradesh's roadmap for inclusive growth and innovation-led prosperity.

- Credit success:** Rs 6.83 lakh crore disbursed in 2024-25, 127% of target.
- Focus areas:** MSMEs, tenant farmers, DWCRAs women, and direct credit to fishermen.
- Vision 2047:** Align banking support with Swarnandhra goals and 'Zero Poverty P-4' by 2029.
- Regional growth:** Visakhapatnam (industry), Amaravati (capital), Rayalaseema (horticulture/electronics).
- Bankers' response:** Positive, with assurances on support to women, SHGs, housing, and education.

Expose govt's failures: Jagan to cadre

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



YSRCP chief and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday called upon party leaders to expose the failures of the Chandrababu Naidu-led coalition government, accusing it of neglecting key sectors like education, health, and agriculture. He said public discontent was rising due to corruption, lack of MSP for farmers, and unfulfilled promises.

Addressing district presidents, Jagan stressed the need to work from the grassroots level to rebuild the party structure by October. He urged the cadre to take up people's issues, especially those of farmers and the poor, and act as the voice of the voiceless.

He said the party's real leadership strength would be seen in the Opposition and tasked leaders with forming mandal, village, and booth-level committees over the next few months. Jagan emphasised that district presidents would have autonomy in choosing candidates and must aim to win all seats in their regions.

Fast-track key projects, Nimmala tells officials



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Water Resources Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu has directed officials to fast-track major irrigation projects in line with targets set by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. Chairing a virtual review meeting from the State Secretariat in Amaravati on Tuesday, the minister called for the completion of the Handri-Neeva and Polavaram Left Canal projects by June 2025, and the Veligonda project by June 2026.

The meeting was attended by Engineer-in-Chief M. Venkateswara Rao, along with Chief Engineers, Superintending Engineers, Executive Engineers, and representatives of construction agencies.

Expressing dissatisfaction with the pace of work at the Handri-Neeva and Polavaram Left Canal sites, the minister said the current progress was falling behind schedule. He instructed that Phase 1 of the Handri-Neeva main canal be completed before the upcoming irrigation season and informed that the Chief Minister is likely to inspect the site shortly.


With regard to the Polavaram Left Canal, the minister criticised the sluggish progress and urged contractors to deploy additional machinery, including dumpers, excavators, batching plants, and rollers, to accelerate the works. He warned that failure to meet the deadlines would attract strict action.

Nimmala further announced that a Panel of Experts (PoE) would inspect the Polavaram project between 4 and 8 May. He asked the Chief Engineer to finalise the Earth-Cement-Rock-Fill (ECRF) dam designs before the visit and complete Gap-1 works ahead of taking up Gap-2.

Officials reported that 217 metres of diaphragm wall have been constructed at Gap-2 using two cutters and two grabbers, with a third cutter expected to be operational in early May. The Buttress Dam, aimed at reinforcing the upper coffer dam before the monsoon, is scheduled for completion by the end of May.

On the Veligonda Project, the minister expressed dissatisfaction over the slow progress of Tunnel-2 works in April. He instructed that tenders for feeder canal lining and retaining wall construction be floated within 10 days and that work begin immediately. He insisted that measurable progress be shown across all projects by the next review meeting.

BJP's Paka files papers for RS bypoll from AP



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

BJP's Rajya Sabha candidate from Andhra Pradesh for the upcoming by-election, P Venkata Satyanarayana, filed his nomination on Tuesday. He submitted his nomination papers to the Returning Officer, Vanitha Rani, at the Legislative Assembly.

"NDA alliance's Rajya Sabha candidate, Paka Venkata Satyanarayana, filed his nomination on Tuesday," an official press release stated. Andhra Pradesh is currently governed by the NDA alliance, comprising the BJP, TDP, and Janasena. Satyanarayana was accompanied by Minister of State for Steel B Srinivas Varma, Andhra Pradesh Health Minister Satya Kumar Yadav, and other leaders. The vacancy in the Rajya Sabha arose following the resignation of former YSRCP leader V Vijayasai Reddy, necessitating the by-election.

With Satyanarayana's election, the BJP's Rajya Sabha strength from the southern state will rise to two.

BC leader R Krishnaiah is the other BJP Rajya Sabha member from Andhra Pradesh.

TRAGEDY AT WORKSITE

3 masons die as scaffold collapses

PNS ■ TIRUPATI



In a heart-wrenching incident, three daily-wage masons lost their lives after falling from the fifth floor of an under-construction apartment complex at the TUDA Quarters in Mangalam on Tuesday.

The workers were engaged in plastering work while standing on a temporary platform made of bamboo when the structure gave way, leading to their fatal fall. All three were declared dead on the spot.

The deceased were identified as Botathotti Srinivasulu (40), Vasanth (41), and K. Srinivasulu (35). All were known to be experienced in the trade and were the sole breadwinners of their families.

Police have registered a case and sent the bodies to the government hospital for post-mortem. Preliminary inquiries suggest serious safety lapses at the site.

Municipal officials revealed that the building's fourth and fifth floors were being constructed illegally, without proper permissions. Authorities are now investigating possible negligence by the builders.

The tragic accident has shaken the local construction community and raised concerns about worker safety and unregulated city construction.

'Lights Off' protest against Waqf Act today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA


A state-level meeting of conveners and co-conveners from various Muslim minority organisations and associations in Andhra Pradesh has resolved to observe a 'Lights Off' protest today, 30 April, demanding the repeal of recent amendments to the Waqf Act.

The meeting, held in Vijayawada on Tuesday, extended support to the nationwide call given by the All India Muslim Personal Law Board under the banner "Protect Waqf - Save the Constitution."

Andhra Pradesh members of the Muslim Personal Law Board, Muhammad Ishaq and Maulana Syed Zakir Ahmad Rashadi, stated that the protest would remain peaceful until the amendments were withdrawn.

All set for 'Chandanotsavam' today

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM



The ancient Sri Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple atop Simhachalam hill is bracing for a massive devotee influx as it prepares to celebrate the annual Chandanotsavam on Tuesday (April 30). The highlight of the festival is the rare 'Nijaroopa Darshanam' of Lord Narasimha, when the sandalwood paste traditionally covering the idol is ceremoniously removed, revealing the deity's original form.


The sacred rituals will begin in the early hours with 'Suprabhatam' at 1 a.m., followed by a series of Vedic ceremonies. As per custom, the temple's hereditary trustee, Shri P. Ashok Gajapathi Raju, and his family will be the first to offer prayers at 3 a.m.

The State Endowments Department will present silk robes to the deity on behalf of the government, while the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) will also make a similar offering. VVIPs and dignitaries will be allowed darshan during designated slots.

General darshan will begin at 4 a.m., with exclusive timings for protocol VIPs from 5 a.m. to 6 a.m. and again from 8.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. The 'Nijaroopa Darshanam' will conclude with abhishekam and Vedic rituals by 11 p.m. Notably, there will be no 'ashirvachanam' or inner sanctum darshan on this day.

Amaravati: The resurgence of AP's dream Capital

C PRADEEP KUMAR
cpk007@gmail.com
■ VIJAYAWADA



In a landmark decision that signals a new chapter for Andhra Pradesh, the NDA government has breathed life back into the development of Amaravati, the State's planned Capital. This move offers a glimmer of hope to over 30,000 farmers who, in a historic gesture of commitment, gave up their land for the ambitious project. With this revival, the Centre has reaffirmed its dedication to cooperative federalism and inclusive growth, shifting the trajectory of the State's future.

Amaravati, conceived after the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh in 2014, was envisioned as a state-of-the-art Greenfield city — a model of urban planning that could compete globally. Built on an innovative land pooling scheme, the city gathered 33,000 acres from 29,881 farmers, who were promised annuities, developed plots, and social benefits in return. The project was initially hailed as one of India's largest people-driven urban developments.

The vision for Amaravati was grand. Internationally renowned firms like Foster + Partners and Surbana Jurong crafted a blueprint featuring expansive roads, underground utilities, and cutting-edge infrastructure designed to be environmentally sustainable. In a powerful symbol of unity, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the city on October 22, 2015, with overwhelming support from farmers of diverse backgrounds. This underscored the inclusive nature of the project.

However, after the 2019 elections, the newly elected YSRCP government abruptly halted the project, citing concerns over its feasibility. The government suspended key infrastructure works, withheld payments to contractors, and introduced a controversial proposal to divide administrative functions across three cities — Amaravati, Visakhapatnam, and Kurnool. This led to intense political and legal turmoil, with Amaravati's future hanging in the balance. Despite a 2022 ruling from the Andhra Pradesh High Court reaffirming Amaravati as the state capital, the government's resistance continued, culminating in a 1,631-day protest by aggrieved farmers.

The revival of Amaravati marks a turning point in Andhra Pradesh's journey, restoring faith in the state's dream capital. Backed by the NDA's renewed push and Rs 2,500 crore commitment, this move rekindles hope for thousands of farmers who gave their land. Amaravati's resurgence signals not just development, but justice and a bold step toward inclusive progress.

Continued on Page 2

CBN's land acquisition move for Amaravati worrying public

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's move to take over thousands of acres of additional land is worrying the people of Amaravati. Telugus are emotionally connected to the name Amaravati due to its historical significance, and it is widely accepted by the people as their capital. The people of residual AP voted for N Chandrababu Naidu, considering his experience in ruling United AP, and that led him to decide to have a new capital, although Hyderabad was the joint capital for 10 years for both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.



Chandrababu decided to invite Prime Minister Modi for resuming construction of the capital to draw public attention. Modi is expected to lay the foundation stone for works in the capital region, expected to cost Rs 1 lakh crore. Work will start the very next day after Modi's visit.

Chandrababu was found trying to convince a TRS leader to vote for the TDP nominee in the Legislative Council elections. This created a flutter in Telangana politics, and Chandrababu had to move from Hyderabad to Vijayawada, the place initially proposed for constructing the new capital of residual AP. Chandrababu, who had assured people that he would be in the joint capital of Hyderabad for 10 years, had to leave for Vijayawada as he was warned by KCR that he would face 'serious consequences' if he continued in Hyderabad.

It can be said that Chandrababu can be considered the person who is responsible for the AP Government losing its right to continue in Hyderabad for 10 years till the new capital, Amaravati, was ready.

Earlier, in 1997, during his first stint as Chief Minister, he

had floated a document named 'Vision-2020' for bringing about sustainable growth in United AP in the next 25 years. Ironically, the same Chandrababu had to pave the way for AP's bifurcation by writing a letter to the Centre on behalf of his TDP in 2008. It was after that that the Telangana Movement gained momentum.

Although Chandrababu brought out the Vision-2020 document, he couldn't stick to it and had to give a letter to GoI supporting AP's bifurcation. If he were to stick to his document, he should have

been able to remain in the same seat till the document period was over. Instead, he decided to write a consent letter to GoI okaying the bifurcation of United AP. Chandrababu decided to use the capital issue during the 2019 general elections. For that, he started examining various designs for the construction of Amaravati. Contrary to his expectations, the people of AP defeated him and voted in the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) headed by YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. The TDP ended up with its lowest score of just 23 seats in the Assembly,



M D RATNA KUMAR
Senior Journalist
ratnakumarm@gmail.com

although it managed to get the principal opposition tag. Jagan went against CBN's Amaravati plans by rejecting the idea of constructing the new capital in a region where the Kamma community's hold is very high. Jagan didn't hesitate to make use of caste to check the TDP's moves. So he proposed to have three capitals like South Africa, and CBN's idea of constructing a new capital came to a grinding halt.

Chandrababu resumed his moves to make Amaravati the capital after coming back to power in alliance with the Jana Sena Party (JSP) and the BJP. The TDP shared power at the Centre too by making two of its MPs ministers. Now Chandrababu is trying to expand his Amaravati plans by acquiring thousands of acres more to meet future needs. The people of Amaravati are now tense wondering whether the CM is going for land pooling or land acquisition. If it is land acquisition, it would be clearly against the will of the people.

The move to construct an airport in Amaravati on thousands of acres has become a matter of great concern for the people. They are opposing the proposal for a new airport at the international airport at Gannavaram (Vijayawada) is just 40 km away. As per civil aviation norms, there should be a minimum distance of 150 km between two airports. For example, there is a proposal to construct an airport at

Warangal in Telangana. But it faced opposition as the distance of the proposed Warangal airport from Hyderabad's RGIA is less than what is prescribed between two airports.

The Telangana Government decided to hold talks with the Centre regarding this. The AP government can also try that, but many people think that it would serve no purpose. A former cabinet colleague of Chandrababu, V. Sobhanadreeswara Rao, questioned the propriety of the Chief Minister constructing an airport at Amaravati, as it is just 40 km from the Gannavaram airport.

Chandrababu decided to invite Prime Minister Modi for resuming construction of the capital to draw public attention. Modi is expected to lay the foundation stone for works in the capital region, expected to cost Rs 1 lakh crore. Work will start the very next day after Modi's visit.

But the same Modi had laid

the foundation stone for the construction of Amaravati a decade ago and had even brought water and mud from New Delhi for the new capital. The same thing is going to take place again on May 2. The Amaravati idea will survive only if at least 75 per cent of its construction is completed before 2029. If it is not so by that time and if there is a change of guard after the next general elections, there would be uncertainty again.

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy had declared before the recent Assembly elections that Visakhapatnam will be the executive capital of AP if he retains power. Amaravati is alive today only because Jagan was defeated. Otherwise, it would have vanished from public minds.

Meanwhile, TDP cadres are praising Chandrababu as a visionary by citing Amaravati. Anyhow, Amaravati can survive only if at least 75 per cent of its work gets completed before Chandrababu's current term is over.

'Rail connectivity vital for industrial growth'

AP INDUSTRIES MINISTER BHARAT MEETS UNION RAILWAY MINISTER ASHWINI VAISHNAW

Minister for Industries, Commerce and Food Processing, TG Bharat, met Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav in New Delhi on Tuesday, emphasising the pressing need for improved rail connectivity to accelerate industrial development in Andhra Pradesh. During the meeting, Minister Bharat submitted a comprehensive proposal seeking support for the development of railway infrastructure across key industrial nodes under national industrial corridors.

Orvakal Node under the Hyderabad-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor and the Krishnapatnam Node under the Chennai-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor. Minister Bharat proposed the construction of a new chord railway line from Dupadu Railway Station to Bethamcherla via Orvakal, along with a 53-km railway siding to connect the Orvakal industrial node. He also suggested a 12-km railway siding from the Obulavaripalle-Krishnapatnam section to the Krishnapatnam Industrial Node.

Highlighting the strategic importance of these nodes, Bharat outlined plans to develop them into integrated, multimodal logistics hubs with modern infrastructure. He noted that successful implementation of these projects could generate over four lakh direct and indirect employment opportuni-



Minister Bharat proposed the construction of a new chord railway line from Dupadu Railway Station to Bethamcherla via Orvakal, along with a 53-km railway siding to connect the Orvakal industrial node. He also suggested a 12-km railway siding from the Obulavaripalle-Krishnapatnam section to the Krishnapatnam Industrial Node.

ties and attract investments estimated at around Rs 55,000 crore, including substantial foreign direct investment. "Rail connectivity plays a vital role in industrial progress and is indispensable for the economic growth of the state," said Bharat. The minister outlined the state's ongoing collaboration with the Central Government to develop three major industrial nodes under different corridors — Orvakal (Hyderabad-Bengaluru), Krishnapatnam (Chennai-Bengaluru), and Koppurthy (Visakhapatnam-Chennai). He informed that trunk infrastructure works are already in progress at the Krishnapatnam Node, while the Orvakal and Koppurthy nodes have recently received Central Government approval.

Referring to recommendations from the 73rd Network Planning Group meeting and DPIIT discussions, Bharat urged the Railway Ministry to prioritise and sanction Andhra Pradesh's proposals for railway sidings and new line developments at these nodes. Enhanced rail connectivity, he said, would enable efficient movement of goods to and from logistics parks, cargo terminals, and ports, thereby strengthening the state's industrial ecosystem.

VWADA SCR DIVN'S STEPS TO CLEAR SUMMER RUSH

44 originating, 222 en-route trains to be operated in May

RELIEF MEASURES

In view of the increased travel demand during the summer season, South Central Railway's Vijayawada Division has introduced special measures to ensure smooth and comfortable journeys for passengers. Acknowledging the surge in passenger movement, the Division has operated 64 originating Summer Special trains and 276 en-route specials in April 2025. For May, it plans to run 44 originating and 222 en-route specials to manage the continued rush. Additionally, 230 extra coaches have been attached to popular express trains to boost seating capacity and ease congestion.

- Installation of water kiosks and clay pots at stations for drinking water.
- Buttermilk distribution at major stations through local NGOs.
- Stocking extra water bottles and refreshments at catering stalls.
- Ensuring watering of coaches in long-distance trains at key junctions.
- Improved crowd management at foot-over bridges and concourses.
- Deployment of RPF teams to assist general passengers at origin and en-route stations.
- Regular checking and replenishment of water storage tanks at stations.
- Deployment of staff to refill train tanks at designated stops.

Amaravati: The... BIS: Choose to hallmark gold this Akshaya Tritiya

Continued from Page 1

Now, with the return of the TDP-JSP-BJP alliance and a "double engine" government, Amaravati's revival is underway. Prime Minister Modi is set to relaunch the project on May 2, in a high-profile ceremony, with the Centre reaffirming its Rs 2,500 crore commitment. Of this, Rs 1,500 crore will go towards public infrastructure in Amaravati, while Rs 1,000 crore will be allocated to develop the State's backward regions.

This revival is more than just about physical infrastructure — it represents the restoration of faith and justice for the farmers who put their trust in the capital's vision. With renewed political will, global-standard planning, and grassroots support, Amaravati is once again on track to become a beacon of modern governance and economic revival for Andhra Pradesh.

With Akshaya Tritiya around the corner, the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), Vijayawada Branch, has appealed to consumers to ensure the purity of their gold purchases by opting for BIS Hallmarked jewellery.

In a statement, MAJ Vinod, Scientist and Head of BIS Vijayawada, emphasised the importance of hallmarking in protecting buyers from impure or adulterated gold. Hallmarking certifies the accurate content of pre-

cious metals in gold and silver articles, ensuring they meet stringent purity standards. Under the BIS Hallmarking Scheme, jewellers dealing in gold or silver must register with BIS through a free and straight-forward online process at www.manakoonline.in. Registered jewellers can then get their products hallmarking with BIS-recognised Assaying and Hallmarking Centres. Each hallmark item bears the BIS logo, the purity in carats, and a six-digit alphanumeric Hallmark Unique ID (HUID). The HUID system enhances traceability and transparency, enabling each piece of jewellery to be easily tracked back to its source — adding an extra layer of assurance for consumers.

To further support buyers, BIS has also introduced the BIS CARE mobile app, which allows users to verify the authenticity of their jewellery using the HUID number. The app also offers options to lodge complaints and access other essential BIS services.

Security forces, Maoists exchange fire in ASR district

Combing operations intensified in Koyyuru mandal; Maoists flee, leaving behind arms and equipment

An exchange of fire broke out between personnel of the Special Armed Forces and members of the outlawed Communist Party of India (Maoist) near Kakulamamidi village under Koyyuru mandal in Alluri Sitarama Raju (ASR) district late on Monday. The incident was confirmed in a press release issued by the ASR district police on Tuesday.

According to police sources, based on credible intelligence inputs regarding the Maoist movement in the forested terrain of Koyyuru mandal, a special combing operation was launched on the morning of April 27.

At around 10:30 a.m., security personnel encountered an armed group of approximately 15 Maoists clad in olive green uniforms near Kakulamamidi.

On spotting the security forces, the Maoists reportedly opened fire, prompting the police to retaliate in self-defence.

The ensuing gunfight was brief, as the Maoists fled into the dense forest cover, abandoning a cache of arms, ammunition, and equipment. Among the items recovered were a self-loading rifle (SLR) magazine, advanced communication devices, a Kindle tablet, medicines, and a kit bag. No injuries or casualties were reported on either side.

Later in the afternoon, around 2:30 p.m., the same group was reportedly sighted near Kantavaram village. A second exchange of fire

occurred after the Maoists again initiated an attack before retreating deeper into the forested region.

Police officials suspect the involvement of senior Maoist leaders in the operation, including Jagan, company commander Suresh, and Andhra-Orissa Border (AOB) Special Zonal Committee secretary Uday. The group was reportedly seen earlier near Revulakota-Kantavaram, approximately five kilometres from Palakajeedi in Koyyuru mandal. Comb and search operations have been intensified in the area as part of continued counter-insurgency efforts, the police added.

Modi chairs meet... and their handlers. The prime minister's tough assertions, coupled with his government's avowed muscular stand on the issues of national security have heightened expectations of a stringent counteraction from India.

In the past, the Modi government carried out surgical strikes inside Pakistan after the terror attack on army soldiers in Uri in 2016 and the Balakot air strike after the killings of CRPF personnel in Pulwama.

Following the terror strike in Pahalgal, India has taken a series of measures targeting Pakistan, including putting in abeyance the Indus Waters Treaty with the neighbouring country.

Earlier in the day, Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan had chaired a high-level meeting which was attended by chiefs of three paramilitary forces and senior officers of two other security organisations, sources said.

TODAY	
ALMANAC	
Month & Paksham:	Sukla Paksha
Tithi:	Apr 29 05:31 PM to Apr 30 02:12 PM
Chaturthi:	Apr 30 02:12 PM to May 01 11:23 AM
Nakshatram:	Rohini: Apr 29 06:47 PM to Apr 30 04:18 PM
Mrigashirsha:	Apr 30 04:18 PM to May 01 02:20 PM
Rahukalam:	12:13 PM to 1:48 PM
Yamagandam:	7:29 AM to 9:03 AM
Varjyam:	09:26 PM to 10:54 PM
Gulika:	10:38 AM to 12:13 PM
Amitkalam:	01:25 PM to 02:51 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham:	Nil

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Partly Cloudy
Temp: 38°
Humidity: 63%
Sunrise: 5:43 AM
Sunset: 6:26 PM

Updated: April 29, 2025 5:00 PM

Questioning of IPS officer Anjaneyulu concludes

The three-day custodial questioning of senior IPS officer PSR Anjaneyulu by the Andhra Pradesh Crime Investigation Department (AP CID) ended on Tuesday. The inquiry is in relation to the alleged illegal detention of Mumbai-based actress Jatwani Kadambari and her parents.

The questioning took place at the CID office in Tadigadapa, Vijayawada, under the direct supervision of CID Assistant Superintendent of Police Prasad. On the final day, Anjaneyulu was transferred from Vijayawada district jail to the Government General Hospital for routine medical tests before being returned to the CID office for further questioning.

The interrogation began at 11 am and lasted until 5 pm, with CID officials asking over 80 questions regarding the controversial case. However, sources suggest that the former intelligence chief remained largely uncooperative, providing vague and unrelated answers, even when presented with documentary evidence.

Go to Pakistan if you love...

Continued from Page 1

Condemning the brutal killings, Pawan Kalyan said, "Those who love Pakistan, why stay here? Go there. Being secular doesn't mean appeasement." He blamed the deteriorating law and order situation in Kashmir on the political changes following recent elections, arguing that the region remained peaceful under President's rule.

Recalling his conversation with Madhusudan Rao's widow, he said the couple had gone to Kashmir on holiday, believing it to be a safe part of India. He narrated how she told him she wore modern clothes for the first few days, but on the tragic day wore traditional attire and a bindi, which allegedly led the attackers to identify them as Hindus. "When you are targeted for your religion, you must call it out — it's not about hating anyone, but about exposing the truth," he declared.

Kalyan warned against excessive tolerance, saying too much leniency weakens a nation. He observed that while India's Muslim population is nearly the same as Pakistan's, India has never discriminated against any community. He also condemned recent attacks on Hindus and the destruction of temples in Bangladesh.

Forces free to decide when and how...

Continued from Page 1

Modi has vowed to pursue the terrorists behind the attack and their patrons, a clear reference to Pakistan which has a history of sponsoring terror strikes in India, to the "ends of earth" and inflict the harshest punishment on them "beyond their imagination". Terrorists had gunned down tourists, who were from different parts of the country, in the popular destination of Pahalgal in Kashmir exactly a week ago on April 22.

This most brutal attack on civilians in a long period in the region has sparked a wave of outrage across the country and a demand for retaliatory action against the perpetrators.

Earlier in the day, Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan had chaired a high-level meeting which was attended by chiefs of three paramilitary forces and senior officers of two other security organisations, sources said.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH FOREST DEPARTMENT E-AUCTION TENDER NOTICE

RC No: 281/2024-25 Date: 28-04-2025

Bids are invited for e-auction of Jamoli or Nilgiri wood in 47 VSS plantations at Eluru, Jangareddygudem and Amaravaram in Eluru division during 2025. The total quantity of Jamoli wood ready for auction is 21484.25 Metric tons. The interested bidders should register their names in the portal <https://www.konugolu.ap.gov.in>. The date commencement of e-auction: 1st call on 08-05-2025 and second call on 22-05-2025. Time: 14.00 to 16.00 hours. For details, call 9440810041 or 9494497611.

DPR R.O. No: 102423/2021/12-25. Dt. 25.04.2025 Sd/- District Forest Officer, Eluru Dist.

Traffic curbs for PM Modi's Amaravati visit on May 2

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In preparation for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the State capital, Amaravati, to restart capital construction projects, the Police Department will implement traffic diversions on National and State Highways in the Vijayawada and Amaravati areas on 2 May from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m.

In a press release issued on Tuesday, Director General of Police (DGP) Harish Kumar Gupta stated that the measures are intended to ensure public convenience and minimise traffic congestion on the highways. He said the diversions would facilitate the smooth conduct of the Prime Minister's foundation stone-laying ceremony and the associated public meeting in Amaravati.

According to the DGP, heavy goods vehicles travelling from Chennai to Visakhapatnam via Vijayawada and Ibrahimpattam will be diverted from Throvagunta in Ongole district to take the following route: Chirala - Bapatla - Repalle - Avanigadda - Pamaru - Gudivada - Hanuman Junction towards Visakhapatnam and Ibrahimpattam. Similarly,



In anticipation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's high-profile visit to Amaravati, the Andhra Pradesh Police have laid out an elaborate traffic management plan, reflecting both the scale of the event and the government's focus on ensuring a smooth and orderly affair. With a web of diversions mapped across key routes and special measures for heavy vehicles, the mood is one of meticulous coordination and heightened preparedness. Authorities are urging public cooperation, signalling the significance of the occasion as the capital's development plans are poised to be revived

vehicles travelling from Visakhapatnam to Chennai must follow the same diversion route.

Vehicles heading to Visakhapatnam from Chilakaluripet will be rerouted via NH-16 through Pedanandipadu, Kakumanu, Ponnur, Chandolu, Cherukupalli, Bhattiprolu, Penumudi Bridge, Avanigadda, Pamaru, Gudivada and Hanuman Junction.

Vehicles travelling from Guntur to Visakhapatnam will be diverted via Budampadu Cross, Tenali, Vemuru, Kollur, Vellatur Junction, Penumudi

Bridge, Avanigadda, Pamaru, Gudivada and Hanuman Junction. Meanwhile, vehicles from Gannavaram heading towards Hyderabad must take the route through Aagripalli, Shobhanapuram, Ganapavaram, Mylavaram, G Kondur and Ibrahimpattam.

Additionally, heavy goods vehicles travelling from Visakhapatnam to Hyderabad should proceed from Hanuman Junction towards Nuzvid, Mylavaram, G Kondur and Ibrahimpattam. The same route applies for Hyderabad to Visakhapatnam. Special instructions have

been issued for multi-axle goods vehicles. Those travelling from Chennai to Visakhapatnam will be halted at Chilakaluripet, Ongole and Nellore on the National Highway without diversion, the DGP said.

Similarly, vehicles coming from Visakhapatnam to Chennai will be stopped at Hanuman Junction and the Pottipadu Toll Gate. All halted multi-axle vehicles will be permitted to proceed after 9 p.m. on 2 May. The DGP urged vehicle drivers and the public to cooperate to ensure smooth traffic flow during the Prime Minister's visit.

'P4' programme launched for uplift of 'golden families' in NTR district

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In line with Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu's vision to eradicate poverty, the Andhra Pradesh government launched the pioneering P4 (Public, Private, People Partnership) programme in Muppalla and Nandigama constituencies of NTR district on Tuesday. The initiative aims to uplift 'Bangaru Kutumbalu' (Golden Families) through structured mentorship and sustainable livelihood support.

This marks the first time such a mentorship-driven programme is being implemented in the State. Unlike conventional financial aid schemes, P4 provides continuous guidance to underprivileged families, helping them achieve self-reliance and eventually mentor others.

Four mentors have already adopted families and extended crucial support. In the presence of Government Whip and Nandigama MLA Tangirala Sowmya and NTR District Collector Dr G Lakshminsha, Crux Biotech donated an autorickshaw to the Pagadala Nagaratham family. Sentini Bio Products contributed another auto to the Kondru Venkataravamma family.

Several beneficiaries — including Pagadala Nagaratham, Kondru Venkataravamma, Uppelli Nagajyothi, Bobba Sri Lakshmi, Pagadala Priyanka, and Bolnidhi Sirisha — received sewing kits from a local plywood company, Amba Coach Builders Private Limited issued employment letters to K Lakshmaiah



and K Ramadevi, while nine individuals received medical kits to support independent practice.

Addressing the gathering, Collector Dr G Lakshminsha likened the initiative to Neil Armstrong's moon landing, saying, "It may seem a small step now, but it's a giant leap towards eradicating poverty." He emphasised the long-term goal of transforming all 96,000 families

in the district with the help of four lakh mentors. "This is not CSR. This is far more profound — a structured model guiding people from education to employment," he added, citing the example of mentoring a seventh-grade student from a poor background to become a doctor.

MLA Tangirala Sowmya expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister, mentors, and the district administration for launching this transformative programme. She recalled that the Margadarshi - Bangaru Kutumbalu scheme was initiated by CM Naidu on April 5, commemorating Babu Jagjivan Ram's birth anniversary. She commended the Collector's leadership and said the initiative was the first of its kind in three decades. "It's heartening to see the Bangaru Kutumbalu receiving tangible, life-changing support. I hope they soon become mentors themselves," she said. Nandigama RDO K Balakrishna, Muppalla Sarpanch K Veeramma, Amba Coach Builders representative E Anuradha, and Margadarshi Manoj and Bhanumurthy were also present.

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As part of the ongoing Thirunalla Mahotsavam, a grand Laksha Kumkumarchana was held on Tuesday at the Samarasata Sri Ganganamma Ammavari Devasthanam in Bodapadu, near here. The ceremony, dedicated to world peace, attracted hundreds of women devotees.

The temple committee provided free puja materials, with special rituals led by committee secretary Vijayalakshmi, alongside other members. Chief priest Venugopalaswamy guided the rituals, assisted by Guruvaiah and Brahmarshi Meduri Sai Pawan Kishore Sharma. Renowned astrologer Dr Mamillapalli Phanikumar conducted additional rites.

The main Jatra festival will conclude on April 30, with special rituals and Annadanam for all devotees.

Hundreds take part in ritual for world peace



APCC takes strong exception to Pawan's comments

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) has strongly condemned the controversial remarks made by Deputy Chief Minister K. Pawan Kalyan, in which he suggested that those who "love Pakistan" should move there. APCC Vice-President Kolanukonda Shivaji, in a statement issued on Tuesday, recalled that Congress leaders, including former Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, had sacrificed their lives in the fight against terrorism.

"The Congress party has always strongly condemned terrorism, including the Pahalgam terror attack. Rahul Gandhi visited the victims in hospital, and AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge, along with Rahul Gandhi, stated that the Congress would support whatever actions the central government takes against the terrorists," Shivaji stated.

He further pointed out that while Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed a public meeting in Bihar, he did not visit the violence-hit state of Manipur, a move that was criticised by the APCC Vice-President.

PB Siddhartha College bags top ranks in higher education survey

College ranked 17 among private autonomous colleges



PB Siddhartha College academic officer G Chakravarthy and Krishna Univ Rector Basaveswara Rao receiving the Grand Jury award at a ceremony in New Delhi

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

PB Siddhartha College of Arts and Science, a reputed autonomous degree college based in Vijayawada, has achieved a remarkable feat by securing the 17th rank at the national level and first rank in Andhra Pradesh among private autonomous colleges in the EducationWorld India Higher Education Rankings 2025-26.

The college also bagged the sixth rank in the 'Emerging Study Programmes - Pioneer' category under the prestigious Grand Jury Awards, and stood first in Andhra Pradesh in that category as well.

EducationWorld editor Dilip Thakur presented the awards at a ceremony in New Delhi to the college's academic officer, G Chakravarthy, and Krishna University Rector Prof. MV Basaveswara Rao. The rankings are based on a comprehensive survey conducted by an independent agency on behalf of EducationWorld.

The evaluation was carried out using six key parameters such as competence of faculty, faculty welfare and development, curriculum and pedagogy, placements, infrastructure and facilities, and leadership and governance quality.

In a press release issued on Tuesday, College Principal Dr M Ramesh expressed happiness over the feat, stating that the institution takes pride in its achievements at both State and national levels. College Director Vemuri Baburao emphasised the transparency and depth of the ranking process.

Siddhartha Academy president M Rajaiiah, secretary P Lakshmana Rao, and college convenor N Lalitha Prasad congratulated the faculty and administrative staff, commending their teamwork and dedication that led to this success. They urged everyone to continue working with the same spirit in the coming years.

VMC team visits Thiruvananthapuram Corporation

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As part of a knowledge-sharing tour to various municipal corporations in South Indian States, a delegation of corporators from the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) visited the Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation in Kerala on Tuesday.

The Vijayawada team was warmly received by Thiruvananthapuram Deputy Mayor PK Raju, who welcomed Deputy Mayor of Vijayawada Avuthu Sri Sailaja Reddy, tour coordinator and YSRCP Floor Leader Venkata Satyanarayana, TDP Deputy Floor Leader Ummadi Venkateswara Rao, and other corporators.

During an interactive session, Deputy Mayor PK Raju briefed the delegation on the civic structure and operations of Thiruvananthapuram

Delegation told that because of space constraints, decentralised waste management practices are being implemented there



Vijayawada Municipal Corporation councillors inspecting the compost plant in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, on Tuesday

Corporation. He highlighted that the corporation comprises 100 divisions across 25

zones. He said that being the State capital, Thiruvananthapuram faces

space constraints for waste management. To address this, decentralised waste manage-

ment practices are being implemented effectively within a limited space.

Further, PK Raju informed the visiting team that compost plants are operating in 70 areas, converting organic waste into manure. Furthermore, a total of 64,430 three-layered bins have been distributed to an equal number of households, and approximately 87,000 households are engaged in compost production through pipe composting methods, he explained.

The VMC corporators were later taken on a field visit to observe the composting process firsthand, offering them valuable insights into sustainable waste management practices.

SDMSMK hosts meet on solar power tech

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



Sri Durga Malleswarar Siddhartha Mahila Kalasala (SDMSMK) in Vijayawada held an awareness conference on Solar Energy - Technology on Tuesday, aimed at educating students on the significance and applications of solar power.

The event was jointly organised by the Departments of Physics and Electronics, with support from the Institution's Innovation Council, an initiative of the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

S Pradeep Kumar, Director of Smart Home & Industrial Solutions, was the chief guest and delivered the keynote address. He emphasised the importance of solar energy in the current climate scenario, elaborating on its environmental benefits, the functioning of solar panels, energy storage systems, and thermal applications. College Principal Dr S Kalpana and several faculty members also took part in the programme.

B.Tech student dies by suicide

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A 20-year-old B.Tech student, Ch Subash from Sullurupeta in Nellore district, allegedly died by suicide after jumping from a building at a private university on Tuesday. Subash, a second-year Computer Science student, was reportedly under severe academic stress and feared facing his semester exams. Mangalagiri rural police said no suicide note was found, but his mobile phone and laptop have been seized for forensic examination.

CCTV footage is being reviewed to ascertain the sequence of events. His body was sent for post-mortem, and a case has been registered for further investigation.

'Complete Addanki LI schemes in time'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar has emphasised the timely completion of ongoing lift irrigation schemes in the Addanki Assembly constituency to prevent any difficulties for farmers in the upcoming agricultural season.

The Minister held a detailed review meeting on Tuesday at his camp office in Tadepalli with officials from the Irrigation Development Corporation (IDC), the Water Resources Department, and local farmers.

He reviewed the current status of lift irrigation projects in Addanki and questioned officials about the pace of work. He also heard suggestions and concerns from farmers regarding the implementation of the schemes.

Minister Ravi Kumar issued firm instructions to ensure that



all ongoing lift irrigation schemes are completed without delay. He directed officials to prioritise canal repairs and desilting works and complete them before the agricultural season begins. He specifically called for immediate commencement of works in Thimmaipalem, Kamepalli, Thangedumilli, Kotavaripalem, Konidena, and Guntupalli. He also ordered planning to begin

for new lift irrigation schemes in Manikeswaram and Kongapadu.

Criticising the negligence of the previous government, he instructed that the stalled Uppalapadu and Thammapuram schemes, halted during the YSRCP regime, be resumed and completed without further delay. He urged contractors to carry out the pending works on a war footing.

To avoid disruption, the Minister directed IDC officials to ensure adequate funding for the projects and to monitor progress closely until completion.

IDC Executive Engineer P Bhagyalakshmi, Deputy Engineer SK Siraj Ahmad, and several farmers and officials from the IDC and Water Resources Department attended the review meeting.

Narayana: Arrangements almost over for PM's visit

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Minister for Municipal Administration P. Narayana has said that preparations for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the Amaravati capital region on May 2 are nearly complete.

The Prime Minister is scheduled to relaunch development works in the Andhra Pradesh Capital Region and address a massive public gathering in Amaravati. Accompanied by senior officials, Minister Narayana inspected key arrangements at the venue on Tuesday, including the dais, VIP enclosure, parking areas and approach roads.

He stated that 90 per cent of the arrangements have already been completed. PM Modi is expected to arrive at the venue around 2:30 p.m. and will felicitate farmers who had vol-



untarily given their land for the construction of the capital city, before addressing the public meeting.

Highlighting the vision behind Amaravati's development, Narayana noted that Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu had envisioned building a world-class capital with support from

Singapore, which provided the Master Plan for the city.

According to the Minister, the new capital will feature 365 km of trunk roads and 1,500 km of layout roads. He recalled that during the 2014-19 term, the Naidu-led government initiated development projects worth Rs 41,000 crore in the capital region, and paid bills

amounting to Rs 5,000 crore for completed works.

"Prime Minister Modi will inaugurate development works worth Rs 43,000 crore in Amaravati on May 2. After the Naidu-led government returned to office, these works are being resumed," he added. The Minister also vowed to complete all capital region development works within three years.

Chief Minister Naidu has personally invited the farmers who gave up their land for the capital city to attend the Prime Minister's programme.

Meanwhile, Chief Secretary K.S. Jawahar Reddy reviewed the arrangements and directed the Additional DGP (Law and Order), District Collectors and Superintendents of Police to prepare traffic management plans in view of the heavy vehicle movement expected from across the state.

Vizag Dy Mayor post sought for Jana Sena

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Jana Sena Party (JSP) corporator P.L.V.N. Murthy has urged Deputy Chief Minister and party president K. Pawan Kalyan to appoint a JSP member as Deputy Mayor of the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC). In a letter, Murthy said the party played a key role in recent GVMC political developments, including the no-confidence motions and the Mayor's election. He said the demand reflects the views of JSP corporators and workers.

Highlighting the party's role as a strong opposition, exposing YSRCP's alleged irregularities, Murthy claimed many YSRCP corporators had since joined the JSP.



HM Anitha reviews steps for 'Amaravati Restart' event

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha conducted a comprehensive review of the arrangements for the launch of the Amaravati capital reconstruction works. She stated that the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the event is a highly auspicious and encouraging development for the state.



expected from across the state. Anitha reviewed traffic and public safety measures and instructed officials to ensure smooth movement for both the public and VIPs.

A grand event is being planned, with over 6,000 police personnel deployed for security. Surveillance will be maintained through CCTV cameras, and central forces have also been engaged to ensure safety. The administration is working to provide all necessary amenities to those attending the ceremony.

Secretary Nara Lokesh, and the people for their steadfast commitment to Amaravati. She also welcomed the Central Government's cooperation in the reconstruction efforts.

The launch of Amaravati's reconstruction is being seen as a celebratory moment by the people, with large crowds

Home Minister Anitha concluded by expressing gratitude, on behalf of the people, to visionary leader and Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu for fulfilling the long-cherished dream of Amaravati.

Boat rally taken out to hail hike in fishing ban period compensation

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Fishermen and boat owners in Kakinada took out a boat rally on Tuesday in the Upputeru backwaters, displaying Telugu Desam Party (TDP) yellow flags and banners featuring Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, welcoming the increase in fishing ban period compensation from Rs 10,000 to Rs 20,000.

City MLA Vanamadi Venkateswara Rao led the rally aboard a mechanised fishing boat decorated with yellow flowers and holding the TDP flag.

The fishermen expressed their joy and gratitude by releasing yellow balloons into the sky

and raised slogans in support of the NDA government and Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu. The rally commenced at the Boat Owners' Association office in Yetimoga and passed through the Jagannadhapuram bridge across Upputeru.

Addressing the gathering from the boat, Venkateswara Rao stated that the Chief Minister had honoured his pre-election promise by doubling the compensation during the fishing ban period, reaffirming his commitment to the welfare of the fishing community.

He said the amount had already been credited directly into the fishermen's bank accounts. He alleged that the

previous YSRCP government, under Jagan Mohan Reddy, had deceived the fishermen. In Kakinada city alone, there are 390 fishing boats and over 4,000 fishermen eligible for the benefit. "The entire fishing community is indebted to Naidu and will remain loyal to him," he added.

Fishing Boat Owners' Association president Sangani Nageswara Rao, vice-president Malladi Raju, Fishermen's Cooperative Society president Balasadi Rangarao, boat owners Nati Babu, Palepu Dharmarao, Lankadi Raju, and TDP leaders Mallipudi Veeru, Tummalam Ramesh, and Omni Balaji also participated in the rally.



GGH modernisation underway: Min Kollu

PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM

Minister for Mines and Excise, Kollu Ravindra, has stated that the Government General Hospital (GGH) in Machilipatnam is being modernised and that the construction works of the affiliated nursing college are being expedited. The Minister, along with APSRTC Chairman Konakalla Narayana, inaugurated a Clinical Lecture Gallery on the hospital premises on Tuesday. He also launched a free buttermilk distribution programme for patients and attendants.

On the occasion, the Minister unveiled a statue of Florence Nightingale and inaugurated a garden within the hospital grounds. He also planted saplings as part of the event.

Speaking at the function, Kollu Ravindra paid tribute to Florence Nightingale for her lifelong dedication to medical services and said her contributions

continue to inspire. He highlighted the rich history of the district hospital, which dates back to the British era and has long maintained a strong reputation.

The Minister informed that about 200 students are currently enrolled at the nursing college affiliated with GGH and the medical college. He assured that necessary funds would be provided and that building works would be completed at the earliest.

Admitting a shortage of doctors in the casualty department, he said the matter would be taken up with the Health Minister for resolution.

Dr D Ashalatha, Nursing Superintendent Dr Asha Sajjan, RMO Dr Niranjan, Nursing College Principal Roja Ramani, Deputy Superintendent Dr Srinivas, Corporator Anitha and Agricultural Market Committee Chairman Kunche Nani were present.

394 kg of ganja seized, 5 held

PNS ■ ELURU

A major drug haul was made at Jangareddygudem when the police seized nearly 395 kilograms of cannabis being transported in two cars and arrested five drug peddlers.

Eagle Wind IG A.K. Ravikrishna, accompanied by SP K. Pratap Shiva Kishore, informed the media on Tuesday that a team led by Sub-Inspector Sk. Jabeer was conducting vehicle checks at the market yard check-post on the

Devarapalli-Tallada NH-516D.

During the checks, two cars moving suspiciously were intercepted. Upon inspection, the police found 394.795 kilograms of cannabis packed in 189 packets and stuffed into 12 plastic bags. The police seized the contraband, estimated to be worth Rs 39,47,950, along with two cars and four mobile phones. Five persons involved in the transportation of the cannabis were taken into custody.

IG Ravikrishna appreciated the efforts of Jangareddygudem

CI V. Krishna Babu, SI Sk. Jabeer, RSI Eagle N.V. Sampath Kumar, Head Constable N. Umamaheshwar Rao, and Constables B. Ramesh and B. Rajasekar for their role in the successful seizure and arrests.

He warned that strict action would be taken against anyone involved in the transport, sale or consumption of cannabis. He also noted that 165 medical shops had been inspected recently, and cases were registered against five for selling prohibited drugs.

Durgesh to accompany Rijiju for Buddha relics expo in Vietnam

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Tourism, Culture and Cinematography Minister Kandula Durgesh has been accorded a rare honour by the Centre. As per the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) directive, Durgesh will accompany Union Minister for Minority Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju to Vietnam from May 1 to 6.

The duo has been entrusted with overseeing the transportation and exhibition of Lord Buddha's sacred relics in Ho Chi Minh City. The event, organised in response to a request from the Vietnamese government, aims to promote cultural and spiritual ties between the two countries. The relics, preserved in



India, will be flown to Vietnam on a special helicopter with tight security. Buddhist devotees will be able to pay their respects during the six-day exhibition.

Durgesh expressed gratitude for the honour and is set to leave for New Delhi on Wednesday evening for further coordination ahead of the visit.

Congress is a secular party serving India, declares Kiran

Counters Pawan's criticism

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress's Bhongir MP, Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy, said that it is shameful for Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan to read a script written by someone and spread bad news about the Congress, which has a 'history of 140 years'.

As the Deputy Chief Minister, Pawan Kalyan should speak only after proper thought, he said, and declared that the Congress is a 'secular' party.

Countering Pawan Kalyan's criticism against the Congress on Tuesday at a party workers meeting held in Bhongir on Tuesday, Kiran said that if Pawan Kalyan wants to please Modi, he should sit and dance

at the #7, Race Course residence of the PM. Otherwise, Pawan should quit politics and make films to please Modi, he added.

"Don't talk as you like, hurt our feelings and the feelings of the people and Congress workers. Your leader is not a person who creates a divide between castes and religions. If you want to stand up, you should stand up for your leader. If four people come and get shot, you go around telling fake stories. Four gunmen killed 28 people. Whose failure is it that they have not been arrested even after a week? Is it not the 'failure' of the Centre? Is it not the 'failure' of Intelligence? Modi, who repealed Article 370, should answer," he said.

Modernise crematorium, DC tells civic officials

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector Chadalavada Nagarani has directed municipal authorities to modernise the Gunupudi crematorium in Bhimavaram and to expedite the construction of pink toilets catering specifically to women.

At a review meeting with concerned officials, the Collector stressed the need to develop the crematorium to the highest standards while ensuring a serene and green environment in its surroundings.

She noted that the Gunupudi crematorium, spread across approximately 1.9 acres, has received Rs 56 lakh under the 15th Finance Commission for development works. Tenders have been invited, and work is expected to begin shortly.

The Collector instructed officials to beautify the premises by landscaping vacant areas, plant-



ing ornamental shrubs along the pathways, installing a drip irrigation system, and ensuring regular watering of the lawns.

The Municipal Commissioner informed her that a proposal has been prepared at an additional cost of around Rs 90 lakh to build six cremation platforms using gas or electricity, a large Shiva idol, a waiting hall, shower facilities, and a room for storing ashes. He requested that funds for this be sourced through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) con-

tributions. Collector Nagarani emphasised that there should be no compromise in quality. "The crematorium should resemble a well-maintained park, enhancing the sense of peace for visitors," she said, instructing the Municipal Commissioner to approach TTD for more land if necessary.

On the matter of pink toilets, the Collector directed that one be built near the out gate of the new bus stand immediately. She said

the State Government is prioritising such facilities across towns to meet women's needs, and stressed they should be both functional and aesthetically pleasing. She also ordered similar facilities be developed at Tanuku bus stand.

Joint Collector T Rahul Kumar Reddy, Bhimavaram Municipal Commissioner K Ramachandra Reddy, and District Tourism Officer A Appa Rao were among those present at the meeting.

'Govt keen on solving public issues'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Andhra Pradesh Assembly Deputy Speaker Raghurama Raju, on Tuesday, stated that the State government is committed to addressing public grievances in a structured and transparent manner. He was speaking at the first meeting of the Assembly Petition Committee held in Visakhapatnam under his chairmanship. MLAs Ganta Srinivasa Rao, Vishnu Kumar Raju, Palla Srinivasa Rao, and Konatala Ramakrishna were present at the meeting. Addressing the media after

the session, Deputy Speaker Raghurama Raju highlighted that this was the inaugural meeting of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Public Complaints held in the city. He acknowledged that both the public and many legislators are still unaware of the committee's procedures and role. "We are reaching out to the media to increase public awareness about the committee's function and encourage participation through proper channels," he said.

Raghurama Raju clarified that all public complaints must be routed through MLAs, who



will then forward them to the committee for deliberation. Based on the discussions, the committee will issue recommendations to the authorities concerned. However, he pointed out that the committee does not have the authority to

take direct action.

He also noted that while several petitions have already been received, the committee lacks the mandate to take up cases on its own (suo moto). Stressing the need for operational efficiency, he added, "Though the committee has been in existence for many years, we are now taking steps to make it more effective and responsive."

The session marked a renewed focus on strengthening institutional mechanisms for addressing citizens' concerns through legislative oversight.

Govt nod for flood repair works worth Rs 17.5 L

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government has approved two critical Flood Damage Repair (FDR) projects in NTR district to restore infrastructure damaged by recent heavy rains.

The sanctioned works include repairs to the Lingala Causeway over the Muniyeru River on the Jaggaiahpet-Wyra Road and urgent restoration of the Vijayawada-Vissannapeta Road near the CVR Flyover in Chittinagar, Vijayawada.

The combined estimated cost of the projects is Rs.17.50 lakh. A Government Order was issued on Tuesday by Transport, Roads & Buildings Department Principal Secretary Kantilal Dande, enabling the immediate commencement of the repair works.

Drone tech can transform farming: Joint Collector

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

Joint Collector S Sethu Madhavan underscored the transformative potential of drone technology in the agricultural sector at a district-level awareness conference held at the Collectorate Auditorium on Tuesday.

The conference featured live demonstrations of Kisan drones, offering farmers hands-on experience and insight into their practical applications. Organised under the Joint Collector's supervision, the event

witnessed participation from certified drone manufacturers, representatives from banking and financial institutions, agricultural scientists, Agriculture

Department officials, and trained drone group conveners and pilots from across the district. Madhavan stated that the initiative aimed to create awareness about emerging agricultural technologies, enhance skill development among farmers, and promote the adoption of digital tools to modernise farming practices.



ACROSS THE STATES



Techie uses AI tool to overcome language barrier

Bargaining with autorickshaw drivers in Bengaluru can be a real challenge, especially if one does not speak Kannada. But, a tech enthusiast from Odisha has demonstrated how artificial intelligence can bridge this gap. Sajan Mahto from Raurkela posted a short video on his Instagram page, showing how he used an AI tool to negotiate with an autorickshaw driver in Kannada in Bengaluru. "ChatGPT Vs Autowala. Use ChatGPT for language translation FREE!! This is an attempt to educate how one can use CHATGPT in day today life. To harm any sentiments regarding any emotions is not intended. The sole purpose is education only. This is an act performed not real Autowala," he wrote in his social media post, clarifying that the video was solely for educational purposes and not to offend anyone. In the video, the driver initially asked for Rs 200 as fare, but Mahto wanted to pay Rs 100. Since he did not know Kannada, he used the AI tool on his phone to negotiate.



Arunachal Guv reviews NEEPCO's power projects

Arunachal Pradesh Governor KT Parnaik on Tuesday reviewed the various projects being implemented by the North Eastern Electric Power Corporation (NEEPCO) in the state. NEEPCO Director (Personnel) Maj Gen RK Jha called on the governor at the Raj Bhavan and held a detailed discussion. Maj Gen Jha apprised the governor of the current status of the ongoing projects and future plans of the corporation in the state, a statement said. At the meeting, Parnaik emphasised the need to focus on creating model villages in project areas, having facilities such as schools, health centres, community halls, and markets. It is vital for residents in and around the project areas to tangibly benefit both during the construction phase and in the long term after the completion, he said. Jha assured him of NEEPCO's commitment to inclusive and responsible development.



Maha Govt shells out Rs 47 lakh for 'Raghujii Sword'

Maharashtra Government has acquired the famous "Raghujii Sword" for Rs 47.15 lakh, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said on Tuesday. It is a historic sword belonging to Raje Raghujii Bhonse, founder of the Bhonse dynasty of Nagpur, who in 1745 led the battle against the Nawab of Bengal, Fadnis said on X. The sword was acquired not directly but through an intermediary due to some technical problems, the CM said. Sotheby's which conducted the auction on Tuesday, said on its portal that the basket-hilt sword (khanda) was sold for 38,100 pounds. The estimate before the auction was between 6,000 and 8,000 pounds, it added. "The slightly curved, European-style single-edged blade with two fullers and imitation maker's marks towards the forte, the spine gold inlaid with Devanagari script, set in a traditional 'basket'-style hilt fully overlaid with worked gold, the grip covered in green woven wool," is how the global auction house described the sword.

INDIA AT UN

Pak Minister's open confession exposes it as a 'rogue state'

PNS ■ UNITED NATIONS

India said that the open confession of Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif admitting to his country's history of supporting and funding terrorist organisations exposes Pakistan as a "rogue state" fuelling global terrorism and destabilising the region.

India's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Yojna Patel delivered a strong Right of Reply at the hybrid launch event for the 'Victims of Terrorism Association Network' (VoTAN) of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism here Monday when Pakistan's delegate made a reference to the Pahalgam terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir.

"It is unfortunate that one particular delegation has chosen to misuse and undermine this forum to indulge in propaganda and make baseless allegations against India," Patel said.

"The whole world has heard the Pakistani Defence Minister Khawaja Asif admitting and confessing Pakistan's history of supporting, training and funding terrorist organisations in a recent television interview," she said.

Patel asserted that "this open confession surprises no one and exposes Pakistan as a rogue state fuelling global terrorism and destabilising the region."

The world can no longer turn a blind eye. I have nothing further to add," she said. In a recent interview on Sky News, Asif said "Well, we have been doing this dirty work for the United States for about three decades, you know, and West, including Britain" to a comment that he



admits that Pakistan has had a long history of backing, supporting, training and funding these terrorist organisations.

Also, India said that the "strong, unequivocal" support and solidarity extended by global leaders in the wake of

the terrorist attack in Pahalgam is a testimony to the international community's "zero tolerance" for terrorism. "The Pahalgam terrorist attack represents the largest number of civilian casualties since the horrific 26/11 Mumbai attacks in 2008," Patel

said. "Having been a victim of cross-border terrorism for decades, India fully understands the long-lasting impact such acts have on victims, their families and society," Patel said during the launch of the event.

CHINA REITERATES CALL FOR INDIA, PAKISTAN TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT

PNS ■ BEIJING

China on Tuesday reiterated its call for India and Pakistan to exercise restraint, saying their harmonious coexistence is vital to the peace, stability and development of the region.

Both India and Pakistan are important countries in South Asia, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Guo Jiakun told a media briefing here.



Guo made the remarks in response to a question on the exchange of gunfire by the troops of the two countries

following the Pahalgam terror attack that left 26 people dead.

"Their harmonious coexistence is vital to the peace, stability and development of the region," Guo said.

As the neighbour of the two countries, China calls on the two sides to exercise restraint, properly handle differences through dialogue and consultation, and jointly keep the region peaceful and stable, he said.



Chhattisgarh: candidates who clear UPSC mains exam to get Rs 1 lakh

PNS ■ RAIPUR

Candidates from Chhattisgarh who clear the 'mains examination' of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) will be given Rs 1 lakh as an incentive, the state government has announced.

On the direction of Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, the urban administration department on Monday issued a letter to all municipal commissioners in this regard, said an official statement.

The letter stated that Rs 1 lakh can be paid from the Mayor's fund as 'Mayor Samman Nidhi' to such candidates.

Five candidates from Chhattisgarh cleared the UPSC 2024 mains examination this month. The results were declared on April 22.

These candidates are: Poorva Agarwal (Raipur, 65th

rank), Arpan Chopra (Mungeli, 313th rank), Mansi Jain (Jagdulpur, 444th rank), Keshav Garg (Ambikapur, 496th rank) and Shachi Jaiswal (654th rank).

With their hard work and dedication, these candidates not only achieved individual success but also made Chhattisgarh proud, the statement said.

The incentive of Rs 1 lakh was part of his government's commitment to motivate the youth to join civil services, CM Sai was quoted as saying. "This incentive will not only honor the hard work of candidates, but also awaken a spirit of enthusiasm and competition towards UPSC preparation among other youth."

Our goal is to create a favorable and inspiring environment for civil services examinations in Chhattisgarh," Sai said.

'Version 2.0 loading', says Stalin on DMK's 2026 electoral prospects

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Exuding confidence about his DMK retaining power in next year's Assembly polls in Tamil Nadu, Chief Minister M K Stalin on Tuesday said "Version 2.0 loading in 2026."

"Wrapping up the debate in the Assembly on his Home portfolio, the CM listed out the various achievements of the 4-year-old DMK government.

The state achieved great heights under the party-led government and Tamil Nadu was "No.1" in 2024-25 with



9.69 per cent growth rate, Stalin, the DMK president, said.

This was higher than the nation's economic growth of 6.5 percent.

Tamil Nadu's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) was

Rs 17.23 lakh crore, the highest among the Indian states and the per capita income in the state was Rs 3.58 lakh in 2024-25, while the national per capita income was only Rs 2.6 lakh.

Electronic goods exports accounted for 14.65 million USD and this was nearly 41.23 percent share in the country. Last year, the state mopped up Rs 5.80 lakh crore through commercial tax, Stalin said.

Such a growth rate was unprecedented, he indicated and said central statistics have also validated this.

He listed out achievements including "no dropout" in middle schools, poverty eradication efforts, and strides in higher education.

Further, law and order was maintained well "although some year," it gets affected, the CM said.

Had former Chief Minister M Karunanidhi (his father) been alive he would have boasted saying that Stalin was the epitome of achievements, the CM said recalling his father once stating that Stalin was synonymous with hard work.

Welfare of children paramount in custody battles fought by parents: SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said the welfare of children was "paramount" in the legal battles over their custody between estranged parents.

"In cases of child custody, the paramount consideration should be the welfare of the

child.

The utmost sincerity, love and affection showered by either of the parents, by itself, cannot be a ground to decide the custody of a child," said a bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath, Sanjay Karol and Sandeep Mehta.

The observations came in a judgement in which the top

court set aside a Kerala High Court order of December 11, 2014.

The high court granted the interim custody of two minor children for 15 days every month to the father, but the apex court called arrangement "unfeasible" and "detrimental" to the children's well-being.

The verdict came on an

appeal by the mother, a software professional, who challenged the high court's interim custody order in favour of the estranged husband, a general manager at a construction company in Singapore.

The couple married in 2014 and has two children — a daughter born in 2016 and a son born in 2022.

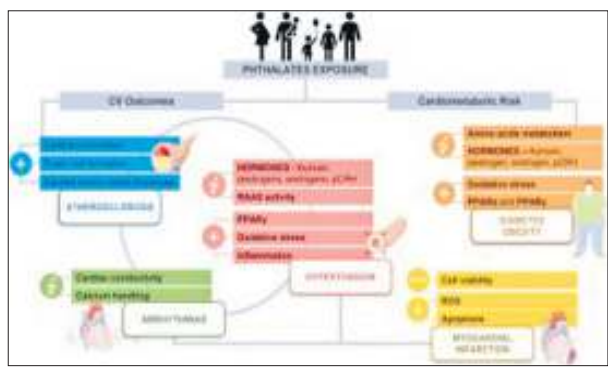
Exposure to phthalates in plastics linked to 13 pc of deaths : Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A daily exposure to phthalates -- commonly used in making household plastic items -- has been related to over 3.5 lakh, or 13 per cent, deaths in the world due to heart disease in 2018, among those aged 55-64, a new study has found.

India had the highest count at 103,587 deaths, followed by China and Indonesia, the study, published in the journal eBioMedicine, found.

It also found that about three quarters of the 3.5 lakh deaths were bore by South Asia, along with the Middle East, East Asia, and the Pacific, even as use of phthalates is



widespread. Researchers, led by those at the New York University, analysed health and environmental data from population

surveys to estimate exposure to phthalates across 200 countries and territories.

The study focused on a kind of phthalate called 'di-2-ethyl-

hexyl phthalate (DEHP)' -- used for making plastics in items, such as food containers, softer and more flexible.

Data, including those from urine samples, was analysed to discern amounts of products formed due to a chemical breakdown of the phthalate.

"By highlighting the connection between phthalates and a leading cause of death across the world, our findings add to the vast body of evidence that these chemicals present a tremendous danger to human health," lead author Sara Hymen, an associate research scientist at New York University's school of medicine, said.

The authors wrote, "In 2018, an estimated 356,238 deaths globally were attributed to DEHP exposure, representing 13.497 per cent of all cardiovascular deaths among individuals aged 55-64."

Phthalates have been shown to break down into microscopic particles and enter human bodies, increasing the risk of wide-ranging conditions, such as obesity, fertility issues and cancer.

Exposure to this compound has been studied to trigger inflammation in the heart's arteries, which, over time, is associated with increased risk of heart attack or stroke, the researchers said.

Pahalgam is hottest ever as heatwave sweeps Kashmir

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Pahalgam, the picturesque tourist resort in Kashmir, recorded the highest-ever maximum temperature in April on Tuesday, as a heatwave swept the valley, with all weather stations registering above normal day temperatures.

Srinagar -- the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir -- recorded the highest maximum temperature in April in the last about eight decades on Tuesday, officials said.

Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag district on Tuesday recorded the maximum temperature of 30.8 degrees Celsius on Tuesday, the second-highest in April ever, they said.

The all-time maximum in the city is 31.1 degrees



and the highest ever.

The previous highest was 27.4 degrees Celsius recorded on April 28, 1979, officials said. Srinagar recorded the maximum temperature of 30.8 degrees Celsius on Tuesday, the second-highest in April ever, they said.

The all-time maximum in the city is 31.1 degrees

Celsius, recorded on April 20, 1946, they said.

The day temperature in the city on Tuesday was 7.7 degrees above the season's normal.

Heatwave conditions continue to prevail across the Kashmir valley, as the day temperatures hover 5.5 to 8.4 degrees above the normal.

Editor's TAKE

Canada elects: In the shadow of Trump

Canada's elections have unfolded at a time when its close ally has drifted away

Mark Carney will retain the office of Prime Minister of Canada as the Canadians have put a seal of approval on his candidature. He was declared the winner in Canada's federal election, promising to fight against US President Donald Trump's trade war and threats of annexation.

Notably, the ongoing influence of Trump-era tariffs continues to cloud Canada's trade relationships — especially with the United States, its largest economic partner. The elections have brought to power a leadership that faces immediate pressure to redefine Canada's external economic posture.

Tariffs on Canadian steel, aluminium, and other goods have left lasting scars on Canada's perception of its reliance on American markets. This environment has prompted Canadian policymakers to look beyond the US for more resilient and diversified trade partnerships.

For India, the elections signal an opportunity to deepen economic and strategic engagement with Canada's new regime. Talks around a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between the two nations have been on and off for years.

However, for that to happen, Canada and India would have to develop a mechanism to mitigate distrust and both nations will have to take baby steps to build confidence and repair relations.

Earlier this month, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney joined the Hindu community in celebrating Ram Navami. It signalled Carney's resolve to mend fences with India. Beyond trade, there are shared interests in technology collaboration, education exchanges, green energy transitions, and the critical minerals sector — where India has a growing appetite and Canada boasts abundant resources.

Additionally, Canada's large and politically significant Indian diaspora one of the largest outside India — will continue to play a bridge-building role, especially if the new Government recognises and leverages this demographic strength.

However, challenges remain. Diplomatic ties have occasionally been strained over issues such as Sikh separatism and differing geopolitical alignments. Recent tensions involving Khalistan sympathisers have caused friction, and even a pro-trade Government would need to carefully navigate domestic political sensitivities.

Canada's elections, set against the backdrop of lingering Trump-era trade disruptions, offer a pivotal opportunity for Ottawa to recalibrate its foreign and economic policies. For India, this could mean a more open and motivated partner willing to invest in a broader, more diversified bilateral relationship.

But success will depend on political will, strategic patience, and a willingness to address longstanding irritants with pragmatism. If handled wisely, the next few years could usher in a new era of India-Canada cooperation — less reliant on the ebb and flow of US politics, and more focused on shared growth and global influence.

Leaderspeak



It's an incredibly important relationship, the Canada-India relationship, on many levels. On the personal level, with Canadians having deep personal ties, economically, strategically... There are strains on that relationship that we didn't cause, to be clear, but there is a path forward to address those with mutual respect and to build out.

MARK CARNEY, PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA

The endless war for Kashmir

The latest civilian attack in Pahalgam by Pakistan-backed terrorists not only shattered a long-standing unspoken pact against targeting tourists but also reignited calls for retribution, hinting at a dangerous new phase

The latest civilian attack in Pahalgam by Pakistan-backed terrorists not only shattered a long — standing unspoken pact against targeting tourists but also reignited calls for retribution, hinting at a dangerous new phase.

The doyen of India-Pakistan relations, late Stephen Cohen, said, 'They will fight a hundred years'. Add the numerous terrorist attacks by Pakistan (mainly against BJP Governments) and India's retaliatory covert actions across LoC/IB and the cost is staggering — a setback to the economic progress of the region, countless loss in human lives and deepening roots of hate and violence.

Twenty soldiers, 0.5 JCOs and 1.7 officers were being killed in counter-terrorism operations every month — akin to fighting one Kargil every 16 months. By strengthening deterrence — though deterrence is not effective against terrorists — and kinetic operations following terrorist attacks in Uri and Pulwama (as well as political measures like revocation of Article 370), levels of terrorism were significantly lowered from the peak of 4,000 to 5,000 terrorists in 2001 to around 100 terrorists today, of whom 75 are foreigners.

But Pahalgam has punched a hole in the Government's claim that J&K is free of terrorism and Kashmiris have joined the mainstream. Many have not — due to continuing alienation resulting in considerable local support for terrorists. Otherwise, hundreds upon thousands of overground workers and administration officials would not have been rounded up, with reprisals against families which would rebound and affect J&K's statehood.

Earlier, mainly military targets — like Pathankot air



base, Uri brigade headquarters and Pulwama CRPF convoy — were chosen. Pahalgam was a civilian target. In the Pentagon's book, an attack against civilian targets is terrorism.

The cardinal sin of terrorists was breaking the compact with Kashmiri awaam: not to attack tourists. This was the first time they did so; this would hurt the local economy and livelihoods badly.

There was yet another difference. One of the terrorists told the wife of a victim that they were sparing her so that she could tell Modi about the attack. Targeting women and children is taboo for terrorists and insurgents, who also spare doctors.

Terrorists have made Pahalgam personal for Modi. After every major attack, Pakistan has denied its involvement, even after Mumbai 2008 where Kasab was captured. It has always demanded 'credible evidence' and invariably suggested a joint probe, though this time a 'neutral probe' endorsed by China.

During Parakram, India's biggest and longest military mobilisation, its initial demands on December 14, 2001 were the termination of activities of Jaish and Lashkar terrorists, detention of leaders and sealing of their offices. These demands were later expanded to Pakistan stopping cross-border terrorism

and full renunciation of terrorism in all its manifestations. Pahalgam terrorists chose their targets deep in the hinterland with the advantage of quick escape into high-altitude pine forests. Prime Minister Modi has directed terrorists to be hunted down till the ends of the earth. A bounty of ₹20 lakh has been offered. India's retribution so far has been chiefly diplomatic, economic and people-to-people. The already truncated Indian embassy in Islamabad has been scaled down to virtually nothing.

Unprecedented and unknown in effect, the Indus Water Treaty, which had survived all previous conflicts, has been held in abeyance. The war of words has begun: 'Not a drop of water from the Indus River will flow into Pakistan'; 'will bring Pakistan to its knees' are ministerial threats from India. Pakistan has responded with 'Indian blood will flow if water is stopped'. Modi has famously said, 'blood and water can't flow together'.

The long-threatened water wars could start. Usual war cries are also being issued from TV studios. Oft-repeated kinetic plans are being rebranded. Indians are crying out for revenge. A Pakistani minister has said its 130 nuclear missiles are not for show. Nuclear signalling has also begun.

But surprise — surprise: Ceasefire 2021 along the LoC is still breathing. Patriotism and nationalism should not blindside Indians to ground reality — though Pakistan's signature on terrorist attacks is well known. But a study of Pakistan's National Security Committee

statement in response to the release of India's CCS decisions post-Pahalgam could balance the debate about victimhood. While Pakistan is the acclaimed epicentre of terrorism, Indian agencies are no longer papal and pristine. Pakistan's NSC statement mentions Kubbhushan Jadhav and Indian covert activities in Balochistan and Afghanistan. NSA Ajit Doval's expressed threats on Balochistan are historic. After the serial attacks by BLA in Balochistan recently, including Jaffar Express, Pakistan's DG ISPR Lt Gen Ahmad Sharif Chaudhary said: 'the rules of the game have changed', hinting at Indian involvement.

There is no news of contact with terrorists. Their exfiltration will nail the blame on the Pakistan complex. India's inevitable kinetic response must be measured — not driven by public sentiment and emotion and below the escalation threshold. In Balakot, high risk of escalation was underwritten by Trump and high domestic electoral reward. Trump 2.0 is unpredictable, though Bihar elections are approaching. For Pakistan, no risk is too high to keep the Kashmiri masalacentre stage.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. Views are personal)

Fighting anaemia and malnutrition in Gujarat

SECOND Opinion

BY SWAPNA MAJUMDAR

When Hemant Deshmukh talks about health and nutrition, the community in Dang and Navsari, Gujarat, listens. This is not just because Deshmukh is educated, unlike many of them, but also because he happens to be a tribal like them. Being from the same community has helped Deshmukh build trust, make learning fun and debunk myths and misconceptions to improve the health and nutrition status of women, children and adolescents in both these predominantly tribal districts. Just how important reaching out to these communities has been can be gauged from the data of the latest National Family Health Survey 2019-2021 (NFHS-5).

According to NFHS-5, almost 77 per cent of adolescent girls in Dang and 72 per cent in Navsari are anaemic, and a significant percentage of tribal women are impacted by anaemia (72 per cent in Dang and about 60 per cent in Navsari). Further, anaemia prevalence among children under five is 82 per cent in Dang and 75.3 per cent in Navsari — both higher than the national average (67 per cent). It was these worrying statistics that prompted CHETNA, the Ahmedabad-based not-for-profit working on health and nutrition awareness, to focus its attention on these two districts. In March 2022, it began implementation of its three-year project in 16 villages in these two

districts to improve nutritional status and access to health-care services for women, children and adolescents. The first step of this project, called Arogya, was to ensure that the cultural and traditional sensitivities of the tribal community were respected. The decision to choose Deshmukh as the field coordinator proved to be a good one, as he not only belonged to the same tribal community but also spoke the local dialect and was well-versed in the local customs and beliefs. He was able to counsel pregnant women, adolescents and caregivers of children below five years in Dang and Kunki, the local dialects, on diets, health issues and even menstruation. Deshmukh was helped by the innovative anaemia kit developed by CHETNA to raise awareness of nutritional anaemia. Largely illustrative, the kit has multiple communication tools, including technical information on anaemia, a set of three posters on key messages, a script for a role play and a guide for the field workers on how to use these tools.

Additionally, it comprises a handout of local folk songs modified to include anaemia messages, and a spinning disc game to make discussions on the causes and prevention of anaemia engaging. The kit also comprises a window chart. In this, the image of women who eat greens and full meals are shown as healthy; and to show how women who do not follow this healthy diet look, an image of a weak and tired woman is inserted atop it. Also handy was the kit explainer — to assuage fears of anaemic pregnant women that if they ate too much the baby would get suffocated in the womb; or if they ate brinjals, the baby would be dark-skinned; and that eating white-coloured food would cause difficulty during labour. Another effective

strategy used was collaboration with the local frontline health workers like the ASHA, ANM and Anganwadi workers. By getting them on board, Deshmukh was able to ensure an increase in access to Government schemes related to maternal, child and adolescent health. Thanks to the novel multi-pronged strategies and the dedicated effort by Deshmukh, women are no longer consulting witch doctors — a practice popular before Arogya was initiated. Instead, they are visiting primary and community health centres close to their villages and are registering their pregnancies. Their families are maintaining a watch on their health and nutrition so that no woman is undernourished or anaemic when she delivers. Women are coming for ante and post-natal check-ups, getting their tetanus shots and having folic iron tablets.

Another visible change has come in the form of women making use of the nutrient — rich food packets distributed at the Anganwadi centre to pregnant women and lactating mothers. Before the Arogya project started, these packets were being fed to the cows at home so that they produced good milk. However, after demonstrations by Deshmukh and his team on how to cook these packets by adding locally available vegetables like jackfruit, dates and drumsticks, these are being consumed by the women. Undernourished infants are now also being fed four or five small meals a day to meet their nutritional requirements — underlining that change is possible with people-centred programmes.

(The author writes on development and gender. Views are personal)

Letters to the Editor

Pakistan must stop exporting terrorism

Madam — One is hearing criticism from some humanitarians against India walking out of the 'Indus water treaty' and sending back Pakistani patients who had come here for treatment even before the ongoing enquiry into the Pahalgam terror attack is complete.

The 'liberal critics' who expect unending magnanimity from India would also do well to advise its recalcitrant neighbour to deserve the same.

For any enquiry to be a success, there has to be cooperation from all the parties involved. It is naive to expect even an iota of cooperation from a neighbour, who is a global exporter of terror, especially to India.

Despite submitting dossiers of evidence in the past, against those who have committed acts of terror and then found safe sanctuary in that country, no credible action has been taken. Against this backdrop, when facts cannot be immediately ascertained, there has to be conjecture, based not on emotion, but on past record.

In the circumstances, the completion of enquiry is a mere formality. Meanwhile, India needs to act on its own to defend and neutralise the terrorists who constantly infiltrate into its land from across the Western border and commit heinous acts of terror. If India and Pakistan are to be good neighbours Pakistan must act against its rogue elements.

V JAYARAMAN | CHENNAI

Online information can be misleading

Madam — Information available on the internet may not always be authentic. Almost everyone goes through the internet; but only some grow through it. Many doctors are baffled by the "immense internet knowledge" of patients and their relatives who blurt out their understanding on the subject through internet with regards to diagnosis, investigations, drugs and treatment.

Often it is almost like the patients take a second opinion from the doctor after having consulted their primary doctor, the internet.

Details on drugs and side effects can be, to an extent, accrued on the net. But when the addiction to internet propels the users to go for a drug not recommended by a doctor, or discontinue a treatment on their own, then the issue can get complicated.

In the process, the fine line between information and interaction, knowledge and experience, treatment and management, use and misuse get blurred. Unfortunately, people with Internet Derived Information Obstruction Treatment (IDIOT) syndrome or Cyberchondria are on a self medicating spree.

As a result, more and more patients who could have benefited from an early consultation with a doctor are going untreated or are being treated late in the day. Internet is a great resource but one must tread it with caution.

GANPATI BHAT | AKOLA

Vaibhav Suryavanshi is a rare talent

Madam — It's natural, there was no exuberance, when Rajasthan Royals head coach Rahul Dravid rose from his wheelchair to applaud the 14 years and 32 days young sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi, etched his name in IPL history by becoming the youngest centurion. Kudos to Rahul Dravid for identifying and mentoring this young player. Representing Rajasthan Royals, Vaibhav blazed his way to a century in just 35 balls against Gujarat Titans at the Swamin Singh Stadium. The record of fastest century in IPL belongs to former West Indies batter Chris Gayle, who had brought up his triple figure mark in 30 balls for Royal Challengers Bengaluru against Pune Warriors in April 2013.

Vaibhav obviously is natural, superbly talented and fearless. Many would have succumbed to the pressure but he was absolutely a picture of calm. After his last three IPL performances, cricket lovers hope Vaibhav should be groomed by Dravid to have good mental strength and character apart from cricketing skills.

No doubt Vaibhav Suryavanshi is a precocious talent like the great Sachin Tendulkar! He is a very quiet boy but when it comes to cricket, he is a great talker. Let him now progress in cricket at his own natural pace and with proper guidance from experts. He should be advised not to get too excited and then think ahead of himself. Hope the corporates don't tempt him with endorsements and kill his talent.

BIDYUT KUMAR CHATTERJEE | FARIDABAD

THE INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY LAPSES AT PAHALGAM

The intelligence and operational lapses that led to the terrorist attack in Pahalgam in which 26 people were shot dead, regrettably echo a pattern of past blunders — including Kargil in 1999, Mumbai in 2008, Pulwama in 2019 and Ladakh in 2020 — all devastating.

This rare admission came during an all party meeting in New Delhi on Thursday (April 24) evening, convened three days after the April 22 terrorist strike.

Parliamentary affairs minister Kiren Rijiju said that Intelligence Bureau and home ministry officials had briefed MPs about the massacre in Pahalgam's unguarded Baisaran meadow, but offered no further details.

The opposition MPs, however, revealed that the official explanation for the glaring intelligence failure was a misguided assumption: that militants would not target tourists, given their contribution to Kashmir's local economy an assumption now tragically proven false. In other words, despite upwards of 1,000 tourists visiting

the site every day, no security personnel were deployed or present when the gunmen struck. Even after the attack, response times were painfully slow.

On April 22, all three layers failed simultaneously. The area was left wide open with multiple access routes through surrounding forests and trails. Moreover, the attackers, apparently in Indian Army fatigues, were never sighted en route to the meadow, indicating a severe lapse in surveillance.

Their undetected escape further underscored the breakdown in coordination between the Army, CRPF, J&K Police, and Kashmir's much — touted Unified Command structure. Even more startling was the absence of any immediate response despite the terrorists firing over 40 rounds from AK-47 rifles in an acoustically resonant mountainous terrain. There were no drones, surveillance cameras, or alert systems in place at Baisaran, despite its status as a popular tourist site.

BHAGWAN THADANI | MUMBAI

Please send your letter to the letterstopioneer@gmail.com. In not more than 400 words. We appreciate your feedback.

Trump's 'tariffs' trigger global trade turmoil

US President Donald Trump imposed sweeping new 'reciprocal tariffs' ranging from 10 per cent to 49 per cent on imports from nearly 60 countries, The move risks igniting retaliatory measures worldwide, with early signs of deepening economic strain already visible in the tit-for-tat tariff war with China

FIRST Column

Issuing an executive order citing "national emergency" on April 2, 2025, US President Donald Trump slapped additional customs duties branded as "reciprocal tariffs" (RTs) — in the range of 10 — 49 per cent — on nearly 60 countries including India, which faces a 26 per cent extra levy on most products across industrial and farm categories. While a 10 per cent baseline duty is applicable from April 5, 2025, the full additional impost takes effect from April 9, 2025.

The additional tariffs will apply over and above the current US levies, which average 3.3 per cent on a most favoured nation (MFN) basis. While the above levies are applied country-wise, certain product — level tariffs also take effect concurrently in all countries.

A 25 per cent duty on steel and aluminium products has already become operational from March 12, 2025, and a 25 per cent impost on automobiles and auto parts took effect from April 2, 2025. The US had earlier announced special extra tariffs for three of its largest trading partners — namely China, Mexico and Canada.

On imports from China, the US imposed a 54 per cent additional tariff (34 per cent RTs plus 20 per cent special extra tariff). China retaliated by imposing 34 per cent RTs on its imports from the US. The latter retorted with an additional impost of 50 per cent on imports from the former — taking the total to 104 per cent.

This bullied China to impose a further RT of 50 per cent on imports from the US, taking its total additional tariff to 84 per cent. Trump escalated the tariff war, levying a total of 125 per cent on Chinese imports (including a 20 per cent Fentanyl-linked tariff, which comes to 145 per cent). China has struck again — increasing its additional tariff to match the US at 125 per cent.

Even as EU countries, Japan and Australia had earlier hinted at retaliation, Trump's announcement of a 90-day truce with countries other than China (however, a 10 per cent baseline duty will apply) has led them to defer their plans for now. Reciprocal tariffs are trade duties that one country imposes in response to tariffs placed on its goods by another country.

In simple terms, if Country A charges extra taxes on goods from Country B, then Country B does the same in return. It's like a "tit-for-tat" in trade. This approach is seriously flawed. First, Country B need not be importing the same goods from Country A that the latter does from the former. Even when the product basket is the same, the foundational principle of comparative advantage suggests that Country B should import a product from Country A if the latter can deliver it at a lower price.

It makes no sense for Country B to artificially increase the price of the product (albeit cheaper) coming from Country A by imposing a higher import duty/tariff. There can be exceptions to this foundational principle for less developed or developing countries wherein the Governments are committed to protecting certain sectors. For instance,



UTTAM GUPTA

under the WTO rules, developing countries have the right to keep relatively higher "bound tariffs" (giving reasonable room for tariff hikes, if need be) for agricultural commodities.

The USA certainly doesn't fall into this category. Trump's argument that the imposition of "RTs" will help in re-invigorating domestic manufacturing by prompting companies to invest in the USA is far-fetched.

Firms are enthused to invest and expand capacities only when they are assured of demand. But a levy of RTs will kill demand by pushing up prices. And don't forget the devastating effect on demand for US products in other countries when the latter go for "tit-for-tat".

Forget any gains — it could take a serious toll on the US growth itself. According to former US

6
TRUMP ESCALATED THE TARIFF WAR, LEVYING A TOTAL OF 125 PER CENT ON CHINESE IMPORTS (INCLUDING A 20 PER CENT FENTANYL — LINKED TARIFF, WHICH COMES TO 145 PER CENT). CHINA HAS STRUCK AGAIN, INCREASING ITS ADDITIONAL TARIFF TO MATCH THE US AT 125 PER CENT.

Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, Trump's RTs will wipe out nearly US \$30 trillion — roughly equivalent to its one-year GDP.

The manner of arriving at the applicable additional tariff is mysterious. These tariffs seek to match the tariff and non-tariff burden that American businesses face while exporting to other countries. For instance, in the case of India, he looks at not just the existing tariffs but also loads on the tariff equivalents of non-tariff barriers and other trade-impacting measures like subsidies and currency adjustments. This way, it arrives at a high figure of 52 per cent. Having artificially inflated the number, Trump — in a gesture of benevolence — says 'we are imposing on India an additional duty of 26 per cent only, which is half of what New Delhi charged the US'.

The reality is that even the 'discounted' tariff of 26 per cent is more than double India's current trade-weighted tariff rate of 12 per cent on its imports from the US. Such a disingenuous and opaque method of arriving at RTs is evident in individual product categories. The resulting sharp

increase in tariffs on major export items from India such as chemicals, metals, gems and jewellery, engineering, automobiles, food products etc. will have a devastating effect on these sectors. India may have some reason to feel relieved when it sees RTs on its exports to the USA in juxtaposition with tariffs imposed on its key Asian competitors — viz. China (125 per cent), Vietnam (46 per cent), Thailand (36 per cent), Bangladesh (37 per cent) etc. In textiles and garments, India will have a clear edge over China and Bangladesh.

In electronics and telecom, steep tariffs on exports from Vietnam and Thailand should give India a leg up. In January 2025, the US imposed restrictions on the export of computer chip — making equipment, software, and high-bandwidth memory chips to China. This has undermined the latter's capabilities to boost the production of its goods such as electronics, automobiles etc.

China has also been impacted by EU countries imposing tariffs on their imports of Chinese EVs. These measures targeting China should help India find space for its electronics, EVs and automobiles in US/EU markets.

Trump has kept pharmaceutical formulations imposing tariffs on their imports of Chinese EVs. (besides energy and semiconductors) out of the purview of reciprocal levies. India caters to nearly half of the US market for branded generic medicines. The Americans get these medicines very cheaply when compared to the stuff made by US firms. It is, therefore, natural that the Administration has exempted their imports.

The US has offered some relief from its tariff assault to a country that takes significant steps to remedy non-reciprocal trade arrangements. For such countries, Trump says "I may decrease or limit in scope the duties imposed under this (reciprocal tariff) order."

India has already taken some steps such as cutting taxes on bourbon whiskey, fish feed, motorcycles, mobile phone components and satellite parts. It could offer more under the Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) with the USA it intends to conclude by the end of 2025. But Trump won't be satisfied with some more cuts here and there.

He has put forth big demands such as reforming India's stockholding programme for food security, allowing the import of GM (genetically modified) food, lowering tariffs on farm products, amending its Patent Act to allow evergreening (a fancy term for extending patent protection for older drugs and delaying generic alternatives), removal of ban on inventory-based model in e-commerce, granting US firms access to Government contracts including defence.

It won't be possible for India to yield ground in any of these areas. In February 2025, during a joint press conference at the White House, Trump had said Modi was "a much tougher negotiator" than him. Events seem to be proving otherwise.

(The writer is a political analyst and columnist. Views are personal)

The co-sequences of experimenting with Yoga

Yoga, rooted in deep spiritual and scientific traditions, is increasingly at risk of being diluted by modern, hybrid practices that prioritise aesthetics and fitness over inner transformation

Growing up, I always learnt and practised Yoga with a quiet, disciplined, and almost sacred approach. In India, Yoga was never just an exercise; it was a deeply spiritual and scientific system, honed over thousands of years to align the body, mind, and spirit. Whether it was traditional forms like Hatha Yoga and Ashtanga Yoga, or guru — shishya lineages such as Sivananda Yoga, Iyengar Yoga, or Satyananda Yoga, the core practices remained largely consistent, with only minor variations, and were intentionally grounded in both physical discipline and profound philosophical wisdom.

Hatha Yoga, which I practise at Sivananda School of Yoga, for instance, is not merely about bending the body into various shapes. It is about balancing the masculine and feminine energies within oneself ('Ha' in 'Hatha' means Sun and 'tha' means Moon). The slow, purposeful asanas are designed to prepare the body for deeper spiritual practices like meditation and so on.

Ashtanga Yoga demands discipline and synchronisation of breath with a progressive series of postures, promoting physical endurance and mental clarity.

Iyengar Yoga, developed by BKS Iyengar, emphasises precision and alignment. Props like belts and blocks are used not as gimmicks but as intelligent aids to help practitioners achieve the correct posture safely. Satyananda Yoga, from the Bihar School of Yoga — also a disciple of Swami Sivananda, offers a holistic system combining asanas, pranayama (breath control), and meditation, deeply grounded in ancient scriptures yet highly accessible to modern practitioners.

These traditional forms of yoga were complete systems — designed not just to build strong bodies but to cultivate resilience, compassion, inner peace, and eventually, spiritual awakening.

But today, the variations presented, especially to attract younger audiences — are at times of concern. In the quest to make Yoga more "appealing", a whole new breed of hybrid practices has emerged, at times sans focus on posture or mind-breath-body coordination.

While innovation can often bring new energy to old traditions, in the case of Yoga, I worry that something fundamental is being lost. Yoga, for example, was developed to suit the Western craving for calorie-burning workouts. It emphasises speed, strength, and sweat but often sacrifices breath awareness, alignment, and the contemplative aspects that are central to Yoga.



SHARMILA DAS

Aerial Yoga uses silk hammocks to suspend practitioners in mid-air. While it might look beautiful on social media, it introduces new risks to the musculo skeletal system, especially if taught without a proper understanding of traditional postures and body mechanics.

HIIT Yoga and CrossFit Yoga attempt to fuse high-intensity interval training and weightlifting principles with yogic postures. The fact is that Yoga was never intended to be a high-stress activity on the body.

Then there's Paddleboard Yoga and Spin and Yoga, both interesting combinations, but ones that often seem to dilute the inward focus that traditional Yoga demands. Balancing on a paddleboard or spinning on a cycle while trying to breathe deeply and remain mindful often

6
SHISHYA LINEAGES SUCH AS SIVANANDA YOGA, IYENGAR YOGA, OR SATYANANDA YOGA, THE CORE PRACTICES REMAINED LARGELY CONSISTENT, WITH ONLY MINOR VARIATIONS, AND WERE INTENTIONALLY GROUNDED IN BOTH PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE AND PROFOUND PHILOSOPHICAL WISDOM.

becomes more of a challenge to one's physical endurance rather than an invitation to stillness and self-inquiry. What concerns me is not merely the creation of these hybrids, but the way they are marketed: Yoga is increasingly sold as a product — a lifestyle choice that promises flat abs, glowing skin, and mental sharpness in 30 days or less.

The ancient aim of Yoga — union with the higher self — is often barely mentioned. The sacredness of the practice, its depth, and its inherent science seem at risk of being trivialised into a trendy hashtag or a flashy gym class.

Experimenting with traditional practices without a deep understanding of their purpose and structure can be risky. Traditional Yoga evolved slowly, through painstaking observation of the human body and mind. Every asana was designed with attention to anatomical, energetic, and psychological effects. Disrupting this carefully developed sequence, speeding it up, loading it with

weights, suspending it mid-air — can lead to injuries ranging from minor sprains to serious spinal issues.

Traditional Yoga balances the nervous system, calming the fight-or-flight response and cultivating parasympathetic dominance (rest and digest mode). High-intensity fusions may instead overstimulate the nervous system, leaving practitioners wired and anxious rather than grounded and serene.

Having said that, I believe there is always room for creativity. Yoga should be alive, growing, and meeting the needs of new generations. But this growth must be rooted in respect for the science behind traditional systems. Without that grounding, we risk turning Yoga into just another fitness fad — here today, gone tomorrow — when in fact it is one of humanity's most precious treasures for holistic health and self-realisation.

As someone who has felt the profound benefits of traditional Yoga, I urge others — especially younger audiences drawn to "new-age" Yoga — to explore the traditional systems first. Understand the depth before seeking novelty. Build a strong foundation before experimenting. After all, Yoga isn't just something we do, it's something we become, and it's a way of life.

And that transformation is far too sacred to be rushed, repackaged, or compromised. Yoga, rooted in deep spiritual and scientific traditions, is increasingly at risk of being diluted by modern, hybrid practices that prioritise aesthetics and fitness over inner transformation. While innovation can breathe fresh life into ancient systems, it must not come at the cost of Yoga's core purpose — union, awareness, and holistic well-being.

Traditional Yoga is not just movement; it is a precise, time-tested science designed to harmonise body, mind, and spirit. Fusing it with high-intensity workouts or gimmicky formats may attract attention, but it often undermines its healing, meditative essence.

The danger lies not only in physical injury but in reducing Yoga to a trend, stripped of its depth and sacredness. For Yoga to remain a transformative path, its evolution must be rooted in respect and understanding. Before reinventing it, we must first embody it. Let us not forget — Yoga is a journey inward, not a performance outward.

(The author is a certified Sivananda Yoga teacher with over 30 years of practice. Views are personal)

IN BRIEF



BEML hands over electric rope shovel to Coal India

State-owned BEML on Tuesday announced the official handover of an indigenously developed electric rope shovel to mining giant Coal India. The mining equipment was formally handed over to Northern Coalfields CMD B Sairam in the presence of Coal India CMD PM Prasad and BEML CMD Shantanu Roy, the company said in a statement. "In a major leap for India's mining sector and a powerful stride towards the government's Aatmanirbhar Bharat mission, BEML Ltd has launched the country's biggest indigenously designed and developed electric rope shovel - BRS21," it said. The BRS21 is a high-capacity, electric rope shovel purpose-built for large-scale overburden removal in open cast mining operations. With an operating weight of 720 tonnes and a 21 cubic metre bottom dump bucket, it ranks among the most capable shovels globally. "The successful development of this colossal mining equipment by BEML in just 24 months speaks volumes of our engineering strength and collective resolve."



IndusInd Bank CEO Sumant Kathpalia resigns as CEO & MD

IndusInd Bank MD and CEO Sumant Kathpalia on Tuesday resigned with immediate effect in the wake of accounting lapses costing Rs 1,960 crore to the lender in the 2024-25 fiscal year. Kathpalia, Managing Director & CEO, has by his letter dated April 29, 2025, resigned from services of the bank with effect from the close of working hours on April 29, 2025. IndusInd Bank said in a regulatory filing, "I undertake moral responsibility, given the various acts of commission/omission that have been brought to my notice. I would request that my resignation be taken on record at close of working hours today." Kathpalia said in resignation letter addressed to the board of the bank. The board has sought approval of the Reserve Bank of India to constitute a 'Committee of Executives', to discharge the duties, roles and responsibilities of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the bank, for an interim period until a permanent CEO is appointed by the bank, the filing said.



Strides Pharma subsidiary buys 4 ANDAs for US market

Strides Pharma Science on Tuesday said its subsidiary has acquired four approved abbreviated new drug applications (ANDAs) for the US market from Nostrum Laboratories, Inc for USD 2.07 million. Strides Pharma Inc, a step-down wholly-owned subsidiary of the company in the US, has acquired the ANDAs. The portfolio consists of liquids and immediate-release solid orals, which are in the therapeutic segment to treat infections associated with UTIs (urinary tract infections), pain management, allergy symptoms, attention deficit disorder (ADD/ADHD) and narcolepsy, the drug firm said in a regulatory filing. Total consideration for acquisition of the said ANDAs is USD 2.075 million (Rs 176 million). As per IQVIA data, the cumulative market size for the acquired portfolio is around USD 57 million. "Two ANDAs acquired are commercial products and expected to be launched within 12 months. With access to these products, Strides will expand its portfolio of niche and difficult-to-manufacture products," it said.

'Indian economy to grow on back of right strategies'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the right strategies in place, continued domestic reforms, and a strong focus on infrastructure development and job creation, the economy can demonstrate resilient growth despite global uncertainties, a finance ministry report said on Tuesday.

India's long-term growth is driven by macroeconomic stability, a resilient external sector, declining fiscal deficit, easing inflation, improving employment prospects, and high consumption expenditure, the March edition of Monthly Economic Review released by Department of Economic Affairs said.

Private capital formation holds the key to the sustainability of this favourable constellation, it said, adding that public policy and regulatory measures can both facilitate and nudge the private sector to do its part.

Nevertheless, it said, while geopolitical uncertainties present challenges for India, too, they also offer an opportunity to strengthen its position in international trade and manufacturing by leveraging its comparative advantages in select goods and services.

With renewed and sustained



focus on geopolitical developments, India can mitigate these risks and capitalise on emerging opportunities through strategic trade negotiations, domestic reforms and manufacturing investments, it said.

"That said, uncertainties stemming from global developments constitute a key risk for the growth outlook for FY26. More than trade, the perception of prolonged uncertainty may cause the private sector to put its capital formation plans on hold. The private sector and policymakers must be mindful of this risk and act urgently to avoid making uncertainty feed upon itself," it said.

The domestic economy is large and capital formation can lead to a mutually reinforcing cycle of investment-income

growth-demand growth-additional capacity creation, it said.

"In contrast to normal times, action and execution have greater impacts now. It is an opportunity not to be missed," it said.

With the government's strong commitment to fiscal consolidation, the report said, the availability of domestic savings to finance private sector investment has improved.

Going forward, it said, the planned reduction of public debt to GDP will create additional domestic resources for private investment, especially as states also work to decrease their debt burdens.

As a result, fiscal discipline is expected to enhance the momentum of economic growth, it stressed.

Observing that the prospects of the agriculture sector remain bright, supported by healthy reservoir levels and robust crop production in the current financial year, it said, manufacturing activity is showing signs of revival with robust business expectations.

Services sector activity continues to be resilient.

On the demand side, it said, the favourable outlook for the agricultural sector augurs well for rural consumption, which remains robust.

Bajaj Finance profit rises 16 pc to Rs 3,940 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

NBFC firm Bajaj Finance on Tuesday reported a 16 per cent rise in its stand-alone net profit to Rs 3,940 crore in the March 2025 quarter.

It had registered a net profit of Rs 3,402 crore in the same period a year earlier.

Total income during January-March of 2024-25 rose to Rs 15,808 crore against Rs 12,764 crore in the corresponding year-ago period, Bajaj Finance said in a regulatory filing.

Interest income increased to Rs 13,824 crore from Rs 11,201 crore a year ago. On a consolidated basis, the net profit grew by 19 per cent to Rs 4,546 crore from Rs 3,825 crore in the same quarter previous fiscal.

The total assets under management as on March 31, 2025, increased by 26 per cent to Rs 4,16,661 crore. The company said its gross non-performing assets (NPAs) and net NPAs as of March 31, 2025, stood at 0.96 per cent and 0.44 per cent, respectively.

Gold climbs Rs 1,050 to Rs 99,450/10 gm

Silver bounces Rs 3,500 ahead of Akshaya Tritiya

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices climbed Rs 1,050 to Rs 99,450 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday on the back of fresh buying by jewellers and stockists ahead of Akshaya Tritiya, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Akshaya Tritiya, which is celebrated on the third day of bright half of Hindu calendar month Vaisakha, falls on April 30 this year.

On Monday, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity declined Rs 1,000 to Rs 98,400 per 10 grams.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity jumped Rs 1,100 to Rs 99,000 per 10 grams against the previous close of Rs 97,900 per 10 grams.

So far this year, the yellow

metal prices have added Rs 20,500 per 10 grams or 26 per cent from Rs 78,950 on December 31, last year.

In addition, silver prices also bounced Rs 3,500 -- the steepers in nearly three weeks -- to trade near an all-time high at Rs 1,02,000 per kg on Tuesday. The white metal had closed at Rs 98,500 per kg in the previous market session.

On March 19, silver prices rose Rs 1,000 to hit an all-time high of Rs 1,03,500 per kg.

According to experts, the gold market is humming with excitement on the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya. Akshaya Tritiya holds immense cultural significance in India, traditionally marking a surge in gold purchases.

Further, experts said this

India, US looking for 'early mutual wins'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and the US are exploring opportunities for an interim trade arrangement in goods to secure an "early mutual wins" ahead of finalising the first phase of the proposed bilateral trade agreement by fall of this year.

The commerce ministry said on Tuesday that both the countries have initiated sectoral level talks and more engagements are planned from May end.

To give an impetus to the talks, India's chief negotiator Rajesh Agrawal, additional secretary in the department of commerce, and Assistant US Trade Representative for South and Central Asia Brendan Lynch held a three-day talks last week in Washington.

During the meetings in Washington, the teams deliberated on wide-ranging subjects including tariff (related to goods) and non-tariff matters.

"The team discussed the pathway for concluding the first tranche of the mutually beneficial, multi-sector bilateral trade agreement (BTA) by fall (September-October) of 2025, including...opportunities for early mutual wins," the ministry said in a statement.

TRADE PACT



An official said that an interim agreement with regard to trade in goods could take place as part of early mutual wins in case both sides agree.

"Initially we are focusing on goods. The non-tariff barriers being flagged by Indian side included in sectors such as marine," the official said, adding the formal first round of negotiations are expected to start after the May meetings.

These deliberations assume significance as the US has suspended the additional 26 per cent tariffs on India till July 9. Both the nations want to take advantage of this window to push the trade talks.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent on Monday said that India is likely to be among the first countries to finalise a bilateral trade agree-

ment with the US to avert reciprocal tariffs by President Donald Trump.

"Negotiations with our Asian trading partners are going very well. Vice President (JD) Vance was in India last week and talked about substantial progress. I have mentioned that the negotiations with the Republic of Korea have gone very well. And I think we've had some very substantial negotiations with our Japanese allies," Bessent said during an interview with CNBC's Squawk Box.

The US, on April 2, announced an additional 26 per cent tariff on Indian goods entering the US. But on April 9, the Trump administration announced the suspension of these on India for 90 days until July 9 this year.

Enerparc Energy to set up 35 MW solar project

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Enerparc Energy on Tuesday said the company will set up a 35 megawatt solar project in Gujarat to cater to the Commercial and Industrial (C&I) consumers.

Scheduled to commence power supply in August 2025, the project will generate approximately 58 million units of clean electricity annually, contributing to a reduction of 41,000 tons of CO2 emissions annually, Enerparc Energy said in a statement.

Early off-takers include industry leaders from recycling, automotive, packaging and plastics, and global mining sectors, it said.

In the statement, the company did not elaborate any further details related to the project.



Daewoo to enter automotive lubricants biz in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

South Korean conglomerate Daewoo on Tuesday announced its foray into the Indian automotive lubricant sector in partnership with petroleum and chemical products manufacturer Mangali Industries. As part of the collaboration, Mumbai-based Mangali Industries Ltd (MIL) will be

the exclusive partner to manufacture and sell Daewoo lubricants in the country. The lubricants will cater to a wide variety of vehicles from two-wheelers and passenger cars to commercial and agricultural vehicles. "Through this powerful alliance between Daewoo and Mangali Industries Ltd, we are shaping the future of high-performance

lubricants in one of the world's most dynamic and demanding markets," Daewoo Director - Strategy & Growth Vineet Singh told reporters here. Speaking to PTI, senior company officials said the partners were also looking to scale up business in India with plans to set up a second manufacturing unit in Kandla, Gujarat.

India in reasonably good spot: Sebi

Says retail investors should stay invested for long

PNS ■ MUMBAI

India is in a reasonably good spot despite global headwinds and retail investors should stay invested for long market volatility notwithstanding, Sebi Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey said on Tuesday.

India has shown a lot of resilience ever since the tariff war began to impact markets worldwide, Pandey said in an exclusive interview with PTI.

"I would suggest that...despite the global headwinds, India is in a reasonably good spot," the markets regulator said, highlighting the



economic strength of the country.

These include consistent economic growth, low fiscal deficit, reasonable external debt, no twin balance sheets

problem and manageable current account deficit, among others, Pandey said, adding that the country is also negotiating various bilateral trade deals.

"No doubt, there are global headwinds, arising from the geoeconomic fragmentation in the past as well as trade actions, especially by the US," he said.

Over the impact of the ongoing volatility on the retail investors, Pandey acknowledged that many such investors have joined the journey recently and have not seen any downturn.

This should act as a "learning curve" for retail investors, Pandey said, advising them to stay invested for the long term.

"If that's the strategy they adopt, they would definitely be in a much better position rather than, you know, getting panic over the short term," the career bureaucrat-turned-regulator, who took over as the Sebi chairperson in March this year, added.

There is also a need for the retail investors to have better awareness and take bets with "proper information," he noted.

Goyal addresses India-UK Roundtable in London

PNS ■ LONDON

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, who is in London on a two-day visit focused on bilateral trade and investment ties, addressed an India-UK Business Roundtable bringing together prominent business leaders and CEOs from both countries on Tuesday.

The roundtable heard from the minister about the wide-ranging investment opportunities across sectors in India and the potential for innovation-led growth with greater two-way partnerships.

"Highlighted opportunities to strengthen economic ties, drive innovation-led growth, and expand investment avenues between India and the UK," Goyal said after the roundtable.

It follows his interactions on Monday with a range of senior business leaders to explore the potential for greater collaborations with the UK.

After a meeting with UK Business and Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds to advance the ongoing Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations, Goyal held talks with Revolut Chair Martin Gilbert with a fintech focus and De Beers Group

CEO AI Cook with a focus on "global trends in the gems and jewellery sector."

"Exchanged views on the immense opportunities in India's fintech ecosystem and the importance of partnerships with global players to drive innovation and growth," Goyal posted on social media after he met with Gilbert.

"We discussed India's opportunities, sustainable practices, and growth prospects for the diamond industry," the minister said about his meeting with Cook.

These one-on-one discussions were followed by an interaction with a delegation of CEOs travelling from India, including Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Industry (FICCI), Senior Vice-Chairman Anant Goenka, and past presidents Harsh Pati Singhania and Rajan Bharti Mittal.

"Interacted with members of the Indian business delegation over dinner. Discussed the robust growth of our industry and avenues for greater collaboration with the UK for mutual prosperity," said Goyal. On Tuesday, the minister will meet UK Chancellor Rachel Reeves, among other senior officials.

Punjab hybrid rice ban to cost farmers up to Rs 10,000 per acre: FSII

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Federation of Seed Industry of India (FSII) on Tuesday sought Centre's intervention in the Punjab government's ban on hybrid paddy seeds, warning of significant income losses for farmers as the kharif sowing season approaches.

FSII Chairman Ajai Rana said the April 7 ban could reduce farmer incomes by Rs 8,000-10,000 per acre.

"By blocking these seeds, the state is effectively writing off roughly one month income of a small farmer's earnings,"

Rana said in a statement. The Punjab government prohibited hybrid rice cultivation citing groundwater depletion concerns and alleged poor milling recovery. However, FSII disputes these claims, stating hybrid varieties offer higher yields, conserve water, and reduce stubble burning.

"FSII has filed side-by-side milling results from Punjab Agriculture University, ICAR multi-location trials and the IRRRI Grain Quality Lab: hybrids posted 70-72.5 per cent total milling recovery and more than 60 per cent head-rice, comfortably above



The industry body has approached both Punjab authorities and the Union Agriculture Ministry while also filing a petition in the Punjab and Haryana High Court. Justice Kuldeep Tiwari has asked the state government to justify the legal basis for the ban

FCI norms," Rana said.

The industry body has approached both Punjab authorities and the Union

Agriculture Ministry while also filing a petition in the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

Justice Kuldeep Tiwari has asked the state government to justify the legal basis for the ban.

Pankaj Tripathi is back as Madhav Mishra — *The Soul of Criminal Justice*

Kahaani ke do pehlu hote hain, par sach ka sirf ek hota hai?

This quiet, philosophical line has been the soul of *Criminal Justice* since its debut—a reminder that while every story may have two sides, truth is often singular, elusive and disturbingly subjective. As the critically acclaimed legal drama returns with Season 4 on May 22, it digs even deeper into that central paradox, asking: What happens when truth becomes a performance and the courtroom its stage?

At the center of the storm is Madhav Mishra, once again played with understated brilliance by Pankaj Tripathi. Clad in simple kurtas and armed with sharp observation rather than courtroom theatrics, Mishra isn't your typical lawyer. He's a philosopher at heart, a reluctant hero whose quiet intelligence anchors the chaos around him.

"I return to Madhav like you return to an old friend," Tripathi shared in a statement. "He doesn't shout for attention, but he always has something wise to offer. That emotional consistency—Tripathi's gift for subtlety—has made Mishra one of Indian streaming's most compelling char-



acters. Directed by Rohan Sippy and produced by Applause Entertainment in collaboration with BBC Studios India, this season of *Criminal Justice* promises to evolve the show's tone while staying true to its thoughtful core. Expect a heady mix of romance, betrayal, and murder—but don't expect easy answers.

"We've built a world where moral certainties are blurred," says Sippy. "This season's ensemble only heightens that ambiguity."

Joining the fray are a mix of new and familiar faces: Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub, Surveen Chawla, Mita Vashisht, Asha Negi, Shweta Basu Prasad, Khushboo Atre and Barkha Singh—all bringing varied emotional charge to a story rooted more in tension than spectacle.

Unlike many crime shows that rely on shock value, *Criminal Justice* takes its time. It unfolds slowly, with the measured pacing of real-life courtrooms, drawing viewers into its emotional and ethical complexities. Over the years, the show has carved out a unique space in the Indian streaming landscape—subtle, introspective and strikingly human.

Kalki Koechlin says feeling like an outsider made her a more empathetic actor



Kalki Koechlin shared that her multicultural upbringing made her adaptable and allowed her to explore different facets of herself. This experience has helped her bring greater empathy and depth to her acting. Asked whether feeling like an outsider has helped her bring more empathy and depth to her roles, Kalki said: "I'm sure it has. I've grown up with so many different influences: French, Tamil, English and diverse belief systems. All of that has allowed me to adapt and be very different in various circumstances." Kalki, who was born in Pondicherry to French parents, added: "I'd be a very different person speaking French at the dinner table with my parents, a very different person at school and a very different person playing with the kids in my neighborhood." Kalki said that her diverse experiences have allowed her to connect with many different sides of herself. The actress added: "I think that has given me access to a range of different personalities, in a way and I love that part. That's why I love acting; I can express all these different aspects of myself." Kalki was last seen on the big screen in 2023's *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* a coming-of-age buddy drama film directed by Arjun Varain Singh.

DEV PATEL TO DIRECT HIS SECOND FILM *THE PEASANT*



Actor Dev Patel is set to step into the director's shoes once again with his upcoming project *The Peasant*.

According to the entertainment news outlet The Hollywood Reporter, the actor will also write and star in the film from Fifth Season and Thunder Road Pictures.

Described as a revenge thriller, the film is said to have shades of *Braveheart* and *John Wick* as well as notes of King Arthur as it mashes up medieval knights with feudal India.

Set in the 1300s, it centers on a shepherd who embarks on a rage-fueled campaign against a group of mercenary knights who ransacked his community, revealing himself to be more than he seems.

Patel, best known for *Slumdog Millionaire*, made his directorial debut with *Monkey Man* last year. The film also featured Sobhita Dhulipala.

The Peasant will mark another collaboration between Patel and Thunder Road Pictures, which produced *Monkey Man*.

Akshay Oberoi calls 'playing warm' role in *Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari* a 'delightful change'

Bollywood actor Akshay Oberoi, who is gearing up for *Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari*, said that playing a warm, charming, and family-oriented character is a delightful change.

In *Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari*, Akshay, who has showcased his intense side with *Fighter*, *Illegal 3*, *Broken News 2*, *Ghuspaithiyen* and *Kisko Tha Pata*, is all set to showcase his boy-next-door charm.

Reflecting on this transition, Akshay says, "Stepping into *Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari* has been an incredibly refreshing experience for me. Over the last few years, I have explored intense, layered characters—roles that were dark, complex and psychologically demanding. But this film allows me to tap into a completely different energy."

He added: "Playing a warm, charming and family-oriented character is a delightful change, but it also comes up with a twist, that I am going to keep a surprise

for everyone and I'm excited for audiences to see this side of me."

The actor will be sharing screen space with Varun Dhawan, Janhvi Kapoor, Sanya Malhotra, Rohit Saraf and Maniesh Paul in the film.

The actor added: "Working with such an incredible cast has made this journey even more special."

"The energy on set has been nothing short of electric, and collaborating with Varun, Janhvi, Sanya and Rohit has been an absolute joy. And, of course, having Karan Johar produce and Shashank Khaitan direct this project ensures that the film is filled with heart, laughter and entertainment. I can't wait for people to experience the magic we've created."

Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari is set to release on September 12. It is directed by Shashank Khaitan who is known for *Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania*, *Badrinath Ki Dulhania* and *Dhadak*.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



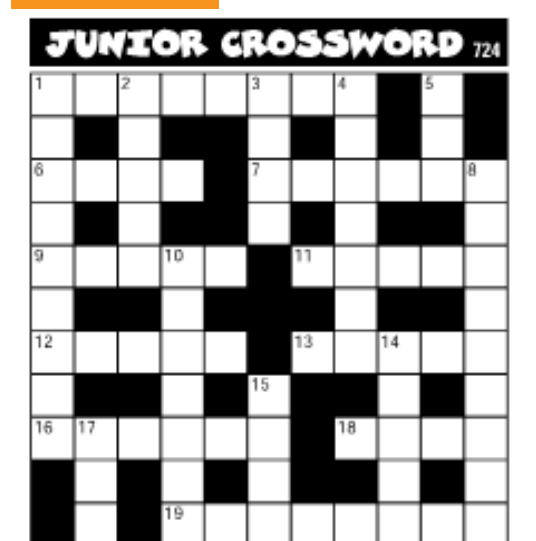
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



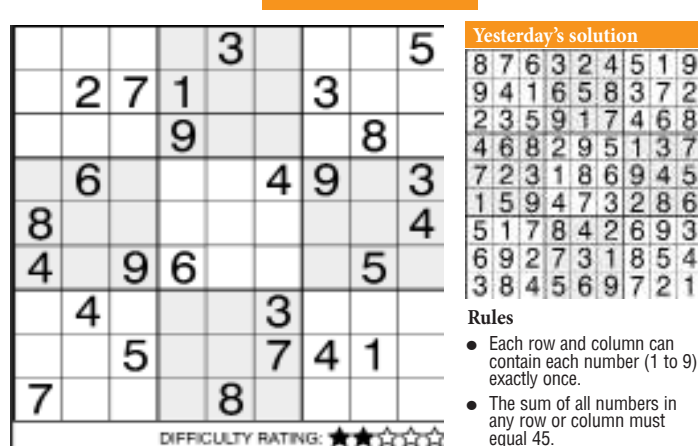
CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



GINGER MEGGS

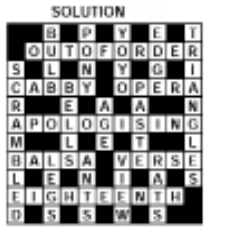


ACROSS

- 1 Without any bends
- 6 Travel by horse
- 7 Bigger
- 9 A plant's underground parts
- 11 Flying creatures
- 12 Sweeten food with this
- 13 Sit on this
- 16 Be unlike
- 18 Too
- 19 Writer of music
- 4 From Turkey
- 5 Tell a fib
- 8 A large store of water for supplying a town
- 10 The movement of cars and people in the street
- 14 A book of maps of countries
- 15 Wheel a baby about in this
- 17 Liquid in a pen

DOWN

- 1 Startled
- 2 Listen to music on this
- 3 A precious metal



The Pioneer Vijayawada

Follow us on
@TheDailyPioneer
facebook.com/
dailypioneer

WEDNESDAY APRIL 30, 2025

'DANCE IS MY SAFE SPACE—IT GROUNDNS AND HEALS ME'



In an exclusive chat with **Shruti Sinha**—dancer, actress, and youth icon known for *Roadies*, *Ace of Space*, *MTV Splitsvilla* and *Campus Beats*—the multi-talented performer opens up about the transformative power of dance in her life. From classical Kathak to the graceful rigour of ballet, Shruti shares how movement has shaped her identity, grounded her mental health and become her emotional outlet through life's toughest moments. Recounting everything from reality show breakdowns to the joy of discovering her natural calling, she describes dance as her "safe space" and "natural antidepressant," offering a deeply personal look into her journey as an artist and individual.



TEJAL SINHA
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

Best known for her dynamic presence on *Roadies* and *Campus Beats*, dancer and actor Shruti Sinha speaks with the kind of clarity and conviction that can only come from lived experience. For Shruti, dance is not just a talent or a profession—it's her language, her therapy, her identity. In a candid conversation with *The Pioneer*, she opens up about how dance has not only shaped who she is but continues to help her navigate life's most intense emotional landscapes.

Shruti's relationship with dance runs deep—so deep, in fact, that she likens it to her morning routine. "Dance is like brushing my teeth for me. I have to do it every morning," she says, not with frustration, but with a smile that reflects her deep connection to the art. "It's a necessity for me. I'm not saying this in a way where it's a burden. I know my life cannot happen if dance is not there. It's a part of me—it's who I am—and it has shaped me into whatever I've become now."

Every part of her being, from how she walks and talks to how she experiences the world, is rooted in her dance journey. Having been trained since childhood, Shruti began with Kathak—a classical Indian dance form that demands both theoretical and practical knowledge, including formal exams. Later, she explored ballet, another physically demanding discipline that requires intense dedication and endurance.

"I've gone way too deep into understanding the art form," she says of her classical training. "Pain as a concept is very differently wired in my brain. Sometimes I feel like—no pain, no gain. I know it's cliché, but I need that to learn a new skill. I need to know what it feels like to fall, to understand the actual move." For Shruti, the lessons she's learned in the studio apply far beyond the dance floor. "All of these lessons, I learned inside a studio, but I also apply them in real life."

While she's trained in multiple styles, ballet holds a particularly special place in her heart. "Honestly, I love ballet, even though I haven't done it for a while because it's a form that you need to be regular at, and with my schedule it's a little difficult," she admits. "Some people actually find it very boring because the music is the same, the exercises are the same, but I just love it."

Shruti also adores Kathak, which she studied for 14 years, and pole dancing, which she finds equally empowering. But ballet gave her her first moment under the spotlight. "I got my first centre stage through ballet," she recalls. "I remember in one of my Kathak classes, Pandit Birju Maharaj ji told me, 'You look like a Russian ballerina.' That time, I wasn't even learning ballet!"

Her ballet teacher Elina echoed the sentiment.

"She always used to say that my body is made like I'm a ballerina—I have longer legs, and my feet are always pointed. The relaxed position of my foot is a pointed foot. I also walk with turned-out feet. So it comes naturally to me and I love, love, love, love it so much."

Among the many moments where dance offered Shruti healing, one in particular stands out—her time on the reality show *Ace of Space*, which followed a captive reality format. "It was mentally very exhausting. We were there for almost 90 days. I don't think I was in the best mental space. There was no outlet per se to just let go. I needed a class, I needed to go dance—but I couldn't over there."

Between the politics of the game, shifting friendships, and the mental strain of isolation, Shruti felt drained. One night at 4 a.m., the show's host called her into the activity area and asked how she was doing. "I said, 'I'm not feeling the best. I just want to go back home.' He said, 'Okay, breathe. I'll give you a minute.' And then he played the song *Ik Kudi*. I absolutely love that song. He just said, 'Dance.'"

In that moment, something clicked. "For a second, I froze. Then I closed my eyes and danced. I started crying and just kept moving. At 4 a.m., from my sleep, I'd woken up and danced. I felt so light. So good. Nothing—no conversation or clarification—was needed. Just dance. Even though the world might be against me, I felt like I had this one thing that is mine. I can't even explain how good that felt."

Shruti's connection with dance goes beyond movement—it's a deep emotional experience that helps her process life. "Dance just makes me feel everything very intensely," she says. "In general, I don't process emotions quickly. I take a lot of time. Dance is my way to feel and deal with emotions."

She's often found herself unexpectedly in tears after performing a piece. "It's like pent-up emotions come to the surface. Otherwise, I'd just say, 'Yeah, I'll deal with it, I'll move on.' But dance is my way to let go and also feel everything to the core. Ignoring isn't always the best way to deal with things, and dance helps me face what I'm going through." Currently recovering from an injury, Shruti admits the inability to dance has been emotionally taxing. "I can barely move and it's taking a toll on me. I'm very stressed and I only wish I could go and dance my heart out. I know that would make me feel so much better."

Shruti is also deeply aware of how dance can impact mental well-being and personal growth. "It's not just movement—it's expression, it's connection and it's release," she says. "I read somewhere that dancing is a natural antidepressant. That says everything."

For her, dance is therapeutic not only because it's a physical activity, but because of the emotional clarity it brings. "You feel very connected to your inner self—your body, your emotions. That's powerful. It helps you understand what's going on inside you. You can address what's happening on your own."

Shruti even considered studying dance therapy while in school. "It's amazing. Through movement, therapy happens. It's a guided process where you can explore memories and emotions. I have a few friends from my dance class who actually ended up studying dance therapy—and it really works." For Shruti Sinha, dance is far more than performance—it's an ongoing dialogue with herself, a tool for healing, and the foundation of her identity. As she continues to grow as a performer and person, dance remains her most trusted companion. "It's my safe space," she says. "It really helps me with everything in life."



Soha Ali Khan shares Sharmila Tagore's priceless acting tip



Fresh off the release of *Chhorii 2* on Prime Video, Soha Ali Khan is basking in the glow of audience appreciation for her role in the horror sequel. But beyond the chilling frames and eerie silences, Soha recently revealed a deeply personal and insightful nugget of advice—one that came from none other than her legendary mother, Sharmila Tagore. In a candid chat with IANS, Soha shared what she calls one of the most intriguing pieces of acting wisdom she's ever received. "Forget the comments—there have been many, good and bad. But I remember something she said that stayed with me," Soha recounted. "She told me to imagine the camera as a man I'm interested in. That I should flirt with it. Not by looking directly at it, but by letting everything I say register with him. Like he's sitting across from me in a restaurant—I want him to notice me, find me beautiful, hear what I say, but I'm never speaking to him directly. It was such an unusual and brilliant way to build a connection with the camera."

It's not the only gem Sharmila Tagore has shared over the years. Soha also opened up about another moment of maternal guidance—this time, on emotional detachment from a role. "After I finished my first film, I found myself missing the set, the people, and especially the character. I told my mother I wanted to stay in that world longer," she said. "She told me, 'It's normal to fall in love with your character, but you must learn to detach. That's the only way to reset, recalibrate, and fully commit to your next role.'"

COOL CUTS AND HOT COLORS

As summer approaches, several chic and versatile hairstyles are emerging as popular choices for women seeking a fresh look. When selecting a summer haircut, consider factors such as your hair texture, face shape and lifestyle to ensure the style aligns with your preferences and maintenance routine.

The blunt lob: A sleek, shoulder-length cut with straight-across ends, the blunt lob offers a polished appearance.

Soft curtain bangs: Adding long, feathered curtain bangs can transform your hairstyle by framing the face and introducing softness.

The christy cut: Inspired by supermodel Christy Turlington's—this short, tousled and shaggy haircut is perfect for adding texture and movement, especially suited for curly hair.

Layered shaggy haircuts: Combining effortless style with an edgy flair, layered shaggy cuts enhance natural hair movement and are customisable for various textures and face shapes. This style is very easy to maintain.

The bob: the bouncy bob offers a lively and sophisticated look. Achieving this style involves using volumising products and blow-drying techniques to create movement and body.

The butterfly haircut: the butterfly haircut blends shorter and longer layers throughout the hair, including face-framing pieces. This versatile style creates numerous layers and volume works best for hair that is shoulder length.

FRENCH BOB

The French bob, a chin-length cut exuding Parisian chic. This precision cut offers a sophisticated and modern aesthetic, suitable for various hair textures. Its versatility allows for both sleek and tousled styling.

SIDE FRINGES

Side fringes offer a flattering option for various face shapes. This style adds volume and a modern twist to traditional bangs, allowing for versatile styling that can



be both polished and relaxed.

ULTRA SHORT BOBS

Cropped just below the ears or even slightly above the jawline, ultra short bobs are making a bold statement. This low-maintenance style can be tailored to suit different face shapes and hair textures, offering a chic and modern look.

FACE-FRAMING LAYERS

face-framing layers highlight natural bone structure. This subtle cut refreshes the hair's appearance without sacrificing length, complementing both wavy and straight textures.

As the summer of 2025 approaches, several hair color trends are emerging that blend classic styles with contemporary twists. Here are some of the shades gaining popularity:

Buttery blonde: This soft, creamy blonde with subtle golden undertones offers a warm and refined alternative to traditional platinum hues. It's a versatile shade

that complements various skin tones

Cool caramel brown: A harmonious blend of rich caramel tones with ashy undertones, this shade provides depth and dimension without excessive warmth. It's ideal for those seeking a balanced brunette look that's both natural and sophisticated.

Cherry cola: A fusion of deep red and brunette hues, cherry cola offers a multidimensional appearance with depth and longevity.

Almond-milk blonde: A cooler, paler blonde with warm undertones, almond-milk blonde provides a fresh and elegant look. It's a subtle shift from traditional blondes, offering a contemporary feel while maintaining a timeless appeal.

Espresso brunette: Darker shades like espresso n rich chocolate brown are dominating the hair colour spectrum this year. These hues offer low maintenance with minimal upkeep required

Cowboy copper: A warm, radiant shade that complements various skin tones, cowboy copper is rich and vibrant without being overpowering. It's an excellent choice for those seeking a bold yet wearable color.

Mocha mousse: Inspired by the Pantone color of the year, mocha mousse is a rich, warm brown with a hint of coolness. It offers a sophisticated look with added dimension, making it suitable for those desiring a subtle yet distinctive change.

Jewel tones: For a more adventurous approach, vibrant jewel tones like emerald green, sapphire blue, amethyst purple, and ruby red are gaining traction. These bold colors can be applied as highlights or full coverage, providing a striking and unique appearance.

Lived in colour: Subtle natural looking hair colour with soft shadow roots are in demand providing a low maintenance. It embraces a more natural influence with soft blonde without requiring frequent touch ups. When considering a new hair color, it's essential to consult with a professional colorist to determine the best shade for your skin tone and hair type.

(The author, **Sonia Presswalla** is the Creative Stylist at Looks Salon.)

CSK look to turn around fortunes against PBKS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Chennai

Their play-off hopes all but over, Chennai Super Kings (CSK) would look to turn around a floundering campaign when they square off against a better-placed but erratic Punjab Kings (PBKS) in their Indian Premier League match here on Wednesday. It has been a disappointing season for five-time champions CSK, languishing at the bottom of the table with just two wins out of nine games. PBKS, on the other hand, are placed fifth in the standings with five wins from nine matches and would look to rise up with a victory against a demoralised CSK side, which failed to get its combinations right so far in the season. What has been most disheartening for CSK is their inability to master the home conditions at the Chepauk, considered a fortress for a long time. CSK would be desperate to register their

third win of the tournament to keep slim hopes of making it to the playoffs alive. Even a talisman like Mahendra Singh Dhoni has failed to fire up the side after taking over the leadership from Rituraj Gaikwad, who has been ruled out due to an elbow injury. And Dhoni admitted that CSK are struggling to get their line-ups right. "If you see the powerplay, whether it is the combination or the conditions, we are struggling with both bat and ball," Dhoni had said. **Key match-ups** CSK's young recruit Ayush Mhatre, who grabbed eyeballs on his IPL debut, will look to put on a strong display when he takes on Arshdeep Singh in the powerplay. The most entertaining battle is expected to be between Shivam Dube and Yuzvendra Chahal in the middle overs. Chahal has been in magnificent form for PBKS in the second half of the tournament,



and it would be interesting to see how the CSK middle order handles him. Priyansh Arya and Prabhsimran Singh have been in good form for PBKS while opening the batting and the onus would be on left-arm pacer Khaleel Ahmed to contain the duo. In skipper Shreyas Iyer, PBKS have got a batter, who can control the pace of the game, but CSK would rely on Afghanistan spinner Noor Ahmad to deliver the goods. At 43, Dhoni has shown glimpses of his legendary finishing skills but despite being a shrewd tactician, he is struggling to field a winning combination on the field. Rachin Ravindra too has been inconsistent at the top. The struggles of Ravindra Jadeja, Ravichandran Ashwin and Matheesha Pathirana haven't helped CSK's cause either. On the batting front, the likes of Vijay Shakar, Deepak Hooda and Rahul Tripathi have been below par. In Marco Jansen, PBKS have a very good all-rounder, while the bowling unit will be spearheaded by Arshdeep and Chahal.

Teams

Chennai Super Kings: MS Dhoni (c&twk), Dewald Brevis, Devon Conway, Rahul Tripathi, Shaik Rasheed, Vansh Bedi, Andre Siddharth, Ayush Mhatre, Rachin Ravindra, Ravichandran Ashwin, VJ Jay Shankar, Sam Curran, Anshul Kamboj, Deepak Hooda, Jamie Overton, Kamlesh Nagarkoti, Ramakrishna Ghosh, Ravindra Jadeja, Shivam Dube, Khaleel Ahmed, Noor Ahmad, Mukesh Choudhary, Nathan Ellis, Shreyas Gopal, Matheesha Pathirana. **PBKS:** Shreyas Iyer (c), Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Marcus Stoinis, Nehal Wadhara, Glenn Maxwell, Vyshak Vijaykumar, Yash Thakur, Harpreet Brar, Vishnu Vinod, Marco Jansen, Lockie Ferguson, Josh Inglis, Xavier Bartlett, Kuldeep Sen, Pyla Avinash, Suryansh Shedje, Mushheer Khan, Harnoor Pannu, Aaron Hardie, Priyansh Arya, Azmatullah Omarzai.

Vaibhav can serve Indian cricket for long, says Rathour

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Jaipur

Rajasthan Royals (RR) batting coach Vikram Rathour termed 'wonder kid' Vaibhav Suryavanshi as a special talent who can serve Indian cricket for a long time if he keeps his focus. Suryavanshi, on Monday, made a record 38-ball-101 to become IPL's youngest centurion at 14 years and 32 days. The left-handed Suryavanshi smashed 11 sixes and seven fours in his stunning onslaught against an array of international bowlers including Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Washington Sundar and Afghanistan's Rashid Khan and Karim Janat to hand RR eight-wicket win. "We have been watching it nets for last few months, we knew what he is capable of and what shots he can play but to do it in front of these kind of crowd and in a situation like this against a really good bowling attack, it was really special and

lot of credit to him (Suryavanshi)," Rathour said at the post-match press conference. "He is a special talent and he has got great downswing if go into technique and that helps him generate this kind of power and today he showed everybody how good he is. **It is too early and it is unfair on the kid to be compared to Sachin Tendulkar. He is a special kid and he is a special talent** - VIKRAM RATHOUR, RR COACH "For a 14-year-old kid to play like this definitely makes him special. We saw him first time four months back when he came for the trials and from that day onwards we knew we have found something special and it was on us to nurture him and bring him to this level." Rathour feels Suryavanshi can serve Indian cricket for long, provided he continues to work hard.

"Lot of credit to him that he kept his nerves. He has a solid head on his shoulders, he showed great temperament today. Even the couple of games earlier also he showed what he is capable of and today was an extra ordinary innings. "Exceptional knock, spectacular knock. The kind of power he generates, the kind of position he gets into, cleanly hits the ball. "Everything is special about that kid and if he keeps going and keeps working hard, he is going to have a long, long career in Indian cricket," he said. Vikram Rathour, however, said it would be unfair on Vaibhav Suryavanshi to compare him with someone like Sachin Tendulkar who made his India debut at the age of 16. "It is too early and it is unfair on the kid to be compared to Sachin Tendulkar. He is a special kid and he is a special talent," said the former India coach. Rathour believes RR still have an outside chance of qualifying for the play-offs if they win

their remaining four games. "Every season is important but it is a long term vision as well. We picked a young team and looking at the way they played today, I think we have a special team. "We still have four games to go and if we win all four still I am not sure whether we are in a position to qualify but 14 points can get you to the play-offs sometimes. So fingers crossed," he said. Gujarat Titans batter Sai Sudharsan too was effusive in his praise for Suryavanshi. "No credit taken away from Vaibhav the way he batted was tremendous and was fantastic to watch but at the same time we could have reacted well. The way they started the powerplay was brilliant but we could have better plans," Sudharsan said. "When we finished we felt it was par or may be 10 runs above par. But the way they started and batted showed us we were wrong and we could have also maximised a bit more."



Cricket world praise Vaibhav Suryavanshi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

What were you doing at 14?" asked some of cricket's biggest names as they saluted the fearless and evidently gifted Vaibhav Suryavanshi for his blazing hundred in the IPL, describing the child prodigy as a star in the making. After Suryavanshi, playing for Rajasthan Royals, smashed Gujarat Titans' Rashid Khan for a six over mid-wicket in Jaipur to become the youngest centurion in T20s last night, the cricketing world duly applauded his special feat. "Vaibhav's fearless approach, bat speed, picking the length early, and transferring the energy behind the ball was the recipe behind a fabulous innings. End result: 101 runs off 38 balls. Well played!" the iconic Sachin Tendulkar, himself a child prodigy who went on to become one of the best batters in the game, wrote on 'X'. Suryavanshi broke former Rajasthan Royals batter Yusuf Pathan's record for the fastest hundred by an Indian with his 35-ball century. Suryavanshi was not even born when Pathan smashed a 37-ball hundred 15 seasons ago. "Many congratulations to young #VaibhavSuryavanshi for breaking my record of the fastest @IPL hundred by an Indian! Even more special to see it happen while playing for @rajasthanroyals, just like I did. "There's truly something magical about this franchise for youngsters. Long way to go, champ!" wrote Pathan. India great Yuvraj Singh too was left hugely impressed. "What were you doing at 14!!! This kid is taking on the best bowlers in the world without blinking an eyelid! Vaibhav Suryavanshi - remember the name! Playing with a fearless attitude. Proud to

see the next generation shine!" wrote Yuvraj. Former India opener Kris Srikkanth called Suryavanshi the next superstar of Indian cricket. "At 14, most kids dream & eat Icecream. Vaibhav Suryavanshi delivers a fabulous 100 against one of the contenders for IPL! composure, class, and courage beyond his years. We are witnessing the rise of a phenomena. Indian cricket's next superstar is here," said Srikkanth. The national T20 captain and Mumbai Indians star Suryakumar Yadav lauded the teenager as well and described his knock as a "carnage of an innings". "Absolutely insane!" he posted on Instagram. India pacer Mohammed Shami wrote: "Vaibhav Suryavanshi, what an incredible talent. Scoring a century at just 14 is unreal. Keep shining brother." Former India women's team captain Mithali Raj was among the greats of the game who were left in awe of the teenager from Bihar. "Watching Vaibhav Suryavanshi today felt like witnessing history in the making. At just 14, he has taken on a 200+ chase with a level of confidence beyond his years. 100 off 35 balls, and he made it look effortless. Well played, champ!" she wrote. Cricketer-turned-commentator Ian Bishop was left stunned by Suryavanshi's onslaught. "I hope we don't go too far with praising him, but you cannot step back from the fact that tonight was absolutely mind-blowing, other-worldly," he said on 'ESPNcricinfo'. Former Australia captain Aaron Finch joined the chorus of applause by expressing his amazement at the Suryavanshi's talent. "What you ever seen anything like this? #vaibhavsuryavanshi what a talent!" he wrote on X.

Rüdiger to miss season after knee surgery

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Madrid

Real Madrid defender Antonio Rüdiger underwent knee surgery on Tuesday and is expected to miss the rest of the season. Madrid said Rüdiger successfully underwent surgery on a meniscus tear in his left knee and will begin "his recovery process shortly." Rüdiger had to be replaced in extra time of Madrid 3-2 loss to Barcelona in the Copa del Rey final on Saturday. He made headlines for shouting at the referee from the bench and for apparently throwing a small bag of ice onto the field. Rüdiger apologised for his behavior but the incident prompted former Germany player Dietmar Hamann to call for the defender to be left out of Germany's squad for the Nations League final four in June.

Shadman's century gives Bangladesh lead in 2nd test against Zimbabwe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Chattogram

Opener Shadman Islam hit a century to give Bangladesh a narrow lead in the second and final test against Zimbabwe. Shadman made a career-best 120 to guide Bangladesh to 291-7 at stumps on Day 2, leading the visitors by 64 runs. But a late flurry of wickets prevented Bangladesh from taking complete control as Zimbabwe leg-spinner Vincent Masekesa claimed 3-44 on his debut. Masekesa's three-for included the wicket of Mominul Haque (33) and captain Najmul Hossain Shanto (23), who appeared set for a big knock. Veteran Mushfiqur Rahim was run out for 40 to give Zimbabwe further hope. Shadman and Anamul Haque gave

Bangladesh a good start, adding 118 runs for the team's first century partnership in the opening stand since December 2022. They kept the side unscathed throughout the morning session after Zimbabwe couldn't add to its overnight score and was all out for 227 in the first innings. Bangladesh bowler Taijul Islam got the better of Blessing Muzurabani with the first ball of the day, leaving Tafadzwa Tsiga stranded on 18. Taijul finished with 6-60 from 27.1 overs. Anamul and Shadman were proactive right from the start with the latter slashing Richard Ngarava for a boundary past point in the third over to show his aggressive intent. Playing his first test in three years, Anamul got off the mark with two boundaries against Ngarava in

the fifth over. But just after the lunch session, Muzurabani had Anamul leg-before for 39 after a gritty 80-ball-knock that was laced with four fours. Shadman, who made just 12 and 4 in the two innings of the first test in Sylhet, drove pacer Richard Ngarava for a boundary past cover to raise his second test ton off 147 balls. His first century also came against Zimbabwe in Harare in 2021. He also became the 16th Bangladeshi batter to reach 1,000 runs. Shadman and Mominul added 76 runs for the second-wicket stand but then fell in two balls just before tea. Left-arm spinner Wellington Masakadza (1-77) broke the partnership by dismissing Mominul for 33 and Brian Bennett got rid of Shadman in the next over.

Rameshwar fails dope test, gets five-year ban from AIU

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Rameshwar Munjal, who had won title in the Navy Half Marathon in Mumbai on December 8 last year, was on Tuesday handed a five-year ban by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) of World Athletics after he tested positive for prohibited substances. The 27-year-old had clocked 1 hour, 9 minutes and three seconds to win the IndianOil WNC Navy Half Marathon but he is now stripped of his title as his in-competition urine sample was found to contain Erythropoietin (EPO) and Darbepoetin (dEPO) — which are prohibited at all times.

His sample was tested at the World Anti-Doping Agency-accredited National Dope Testing Laboratory in New Delhi which reported the Adverse Analytical Finding (AAF) on March 12 this year. The AIU reviewed the AAF and notified the athlete of the adverse result. On Monday, Munjal admitted to the anti-doping rule violation and accepted the consequences. It was Munjal's first doping offence and under normal circumstances, his maximum ban period would have been four years. But, the presence of multiple prohibited substances in his urine sample would come under the definition of "aggravating circumstances", which would

lead to an increase in the period of ineligibility unless the athlete can establish that he did not knowingly commit the violations. **The AIU reviewed the AAF and notified the athlete of the adverse result. On Monday, Munjal admitted to the anti-doping rule violation and accepted the consequences** "The Athlete has failed to establish that he did not knowingly commit the Anti-Doping Rule Violations. Therefore, the

period of Ineligibility to be imposed is a period of six (6) years," the AIU said in its ruling. "However, Rule 10.8.1 ADR provides that an athlete potentially subject to an asserted period of Ineligibility of four (4) years or more may benefit from a one (1)-year reduction in the period of Ineligibility based on an early admission and acceptance of sanction.. Since, Munjal promptly admitted to the anti-doping rule violation, his ban period was reduced by one year, from six to five. His ban period began from April 14, 2025 (the date of provisional suspension), and his results disqualified from December 8, 2024 onwards.

Women's Tri-Series: Pratika Rawal fifty helps India beat South Africa by 15 runs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Colombo

Spinner Sneh Rana grabbed three wickets in a single over for her maiden five-wicket haul in WODIs while Pratika Rawal excelled with a well-crafted fifty to shape India's 15-run win over South Africa in the Women's Tri-series here on Tuesday. Rawal continued her rich vein of form with a measured 78 off 91 balls, helping India post a competitive 276 for six after skipper Harmanpreet Kaur elected to bat first under sunny skies. Rana then snared five wickets as South Africa were bowled out for 261 in 49.2 overs despite Tazmin Brits 109. South Africa lost their last five wickets for 21 runs, giving India their second consecutive victory in the tournament. The seasoned off-spinner ended with figures of 5/43. She bowled a crucial 48th over, picking three wickets while giving away just three runs. Chasing a challenging total, South Africa came out all guns blazing, putting India on the backfoot early in the chase. Brits weathered adverse conditions and cramps to score a gritty 108 off 105 balls.

She and captain Laura Wolvaardt stitched together a commanding 140-run opening stand, threatening to take the game away. But just when the momentum seemed to have shifted decisively in South Africa's favour, India's spinners turned the tide. Seasoned off Deepti Sharma (1/40) broke the stand in the 28th over, trapping Wolvaardt leg-before with one pitched outside off. Soon Rana struck, bowling Lara Goodall (9) to further tilt the game in India's favour. Brits went on to register her third ODI century and followed it up with back-to-back boundaries. However, she retired hurt as she was cramping up, leaving South Africa with two new batters at the crease. Sensing an opening, skipper Kaur brought on Arundhati Reddy (1/59) and the right-arm pacer delivered immediately, removing debutant Karabo Meso. Left-arm spinner Shree Charani (1/51) then dismissed the experienced Sune Luus, caught at deep midwicket, as India tightened their grip on the match. With the required run rate touching nine, Chloe Tryon and Annerie Dercksen tried to accelerate but Rana accounted for



both of them and Nadine de Klerk and Brits, who returned in the 48th over, to complete a memorable five-wicket-haul. Earlier, having scored a fluent fifty in the opening game, Rawal struck seven boundaries and a six during her composed knock. She and Smriti Mandhana (36) gave India a solid start, putting on 83 runs in 18.3 overs for the opening wicket. Smriti Mandhana played the supporting role, allowing the younger Rawal to take the lead. The partnership was eventually broken in the 19th over when Mandhana was caught down the leg side by wicketkeeper Karabo Meso off Annerie Dercksen's bowling. Harleen Deol then contributed a steady 29 off 47 deliveries and added 68 runs with Rawal for the second wicket, before being bowled by left-arm spinner Nonkululeko Mlaba. Rawal, who had brought up her fifth ODI fifty, looked set for a second hundred before Mlaba cleaned her up as well. Despite the setback, the middle order fired with Harmanpreet Kaur (41), Jemimah Rodrigues (41), and Richa Ghosh (24) all making valuable contributions, pushing India towards a challenging total.

NTR-PRASHANTH NEEL'S ACTION DRAMA GETS RELEASE DATE

After completing his debut Hindi film *War 2*, NTR is now focusing on his pan-Indian film directed by Prashanth Neel. This is an exciting collaboration, as Prashanth, who previously delivered hits like *KGF* and *Salaar*, is now teaming up with a mass actor like NTR. The film, tentatively titled *NTRNeel*, was

launched a while ago, but shooting commenced only a few weeks back. The filming of this highly anticipated project is progressing at a brisk pace. The makers have finally revealed the much-anticipated release date for *NTRNeel*. This action-packed epic is set to hit theatres on June 25, 2026. Fans are eagerly awaiting its arrival, as it will be released in multiple languages including Telugu,

Tamil, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam and others, ensuring a wide reach across audiences. *NTRNeel* promises a thrilling combination of intense action and a captivating storyline, making it one of the most exciting releases of the year. The team has carefully chosen a perfect release date to unleash this action-packed storm in cinemas. Prashanth Neel, renowned for

his blockbuster hits, is expected to bring his unique mass vision to this project, elevating NTR's on-screen persona to new heights. The film is bankrolled by Kalyan Ram Nandamuri, Naveen Yerneni, Ravi Shankar Yalamanchili and Hari Krishna Kosaraju under the Mythri Movie Makers and NTR Arts banners. Ravi Basrur will compose the music.

Mohanlal's *Thudarum* becomes second biggest Malayalam opener

Many film lovers are talking about the Malayalam film *Thudarum*, starring Malayalam superstar Mohanlal, which has scored another hit. It was declared an instant success upon its release on April 25. Directed by Tharun Moorthy, this thriller with a family drama backdrop was released without much publicity or buzz. However, it created history by registering the second biggest weekend ever for Malayalam cinema. After its release, strong word-of-mouth boosted the film's collections. *Thudarum* collected Rs 20 crore gross in Kerala, Rs 7.1 crore in other regions like Telugu, Tamil, and Kannada markets, and Rs 42 crore overseas, taking the total to Rs 69 crore gross in three days. Mohanlal, a senior actor and one of Malayalam cinema's biggest stars, once again proved he is a major crowd-puller. Critics have also praised his performance. Some say the film is made along the lines of *Drishyam* and *Thudarum* has now become a certified superhit.



Padma Bhushan for Balakrishna: Actor says timing is right

Nandamuri Balakrishna received the Padma Bhushan, India's third-highest civilian award, on Monday in New Delhi. President Droupadi Murmu presented the award to Balakrishna. Along with him, Tamil actor Ajith also received the award. Balakrishna attended the event with his family, including his two daughters, sons-in-law, son Mokshagna, sister and Chandrababu Naidu's wife Nara Bhuvaneshwari.

After receiving the award, Balakrishna expressed his joy: "I am overjoyed. I thank my fans and the Government of India for this

award. I completed 50 years as an actor and was elected as an MLA from Hindupur constituency three times. Basavatarakam Hospital is among the top five hospitals in the country and I am very happy to receive this recognition."

He added, "Many told me I should have received the award long ago. But I told them the timing is right now. I gave four consecutive hit films, served as chairman of Basavatarakam Cancer Hospital for the last 15 years and completed 50 years in cinema. So yes, the timing is perfect."



Sree Vishnu's *Single* trailer takes a dig at Manchu Vishnu?

Sree Vishnu's latest film *Single* is gearing up for release soon. Ahead of the release, the makers unveiled the trailer on Monday. The trailer indicates that the film will be a hilarious ride. Sree Vishnu, along with comedian Vennela Kishore, delivers strong comic timing and punch lines. The film is directed by Caarthik Raju.

Once the trailer was released, a few lines caught attention for seemingly taking a dig at Manchu Vishnu and his film *Kannappa*. In *Kannappa* trailer, Manchu Vishnu shouts "Sivayya," which became a meme. In *Single*, Sree Vishnu mimics this shout, which many believe is a deliberate spoof.

Additionally, at the end of the *Single* trailer, Sree Vishnu says, "Manchu kurisi pothundani..." which many netizens feel targets the Manchu family. This has become a trending topic on social media, fueling discussions about *Single* trolling the Manchus amid their family controversies.

So far, neither the director nor the producer of *Single* has responded. These days, some filmmakers include such elements in trailers for publicity, but they don't always make it into the final cut. Whether these scenes will be retained in the film remains to be seen.



Naga Chaitanya-Sobhita pregnancy rumours are false, says source

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

Rumours have been circulating on social media claiming that Naga Chaitanya and Sobhita Dhulipala are expecting their first child. According to these reports, the couple is set to become parents soon. Naga Chaitanya and Sobhita tied the knot on December 4, 2024 and are both busy with their respective projects. Chaitanya scored a hit with *Thandel*, released in February.

However, according to a source close to the couple, these rumours are completely false. A few days ago, Sobhita and Chaitanya shared photos of their Sunday routine, after which the internet speculated about a pregnancy. Despite the buzz, neither the couple nor the Akkineni family has commented on it. It appears to be pure speculation that went viral online.

Naga Chaitanya was earlier married to Samantha in 2017 and the couple announced their separation in 2021. Since then, Chaitanya focused on his career and later began dating Sobhita Dhulipala. Although they kept their relationship private initially, they later confirmed their engagement and eventually got married. The current rumours about them expecting a child are untrue, according to a reliable source.



INDIE MUSICAL NILAVE PROMISES VISUAL AND MUSICAL RICHNESS

With sheer love and passion for the art of filmmaking, a group of passionate newcomers is bringing the musical drama *Nilave*. Sowmith Rao and Shreyasi Sen play the lead roles, while the film is directed by Sowmith Rao and Sai Vennam. Sai Vennam and Giridhar Rao Poladi have bankrolled this project in association with Taher Cine Tecq.

The team has unveiled the heart-touching teaser of *Nilave*, which gives us a glimpse into the film's world. The teaser introduces Arjun (Sowmith Rao), a man navigating a dry and lonely life, desperately searching for love. Like a ray of hope piercing through the darkness, his lady love (Shreyasi Sen) enters his life. The teaser hints that Arjun would go to any lengths and cross any borders for her love.

Lead actors Sowmith Rao and Shreyasi Sen's soulful chemistry stands out as one of the film's major highlights, according to the makers. The rich and beautiful visuals are brought to life by cinematographer Dileep K Kumar, while Kalyan Nayak's soulful and varied musical score ensures the film earns its place as a notable musical drama in Telugu cinema.

