



**P9**

P12

**Dharmapuri Arvind, BJP's Nizamabad MP**

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami also ordered a high-level inquiry and suspension of helicopter operations on the Chardham Yatra route for two days.



# People expect dignified governance, not arrogance

Forty-eight years ago, in 1977, India was much poorer and illiterate than it is now. But in the general elections that year, the people of India revolted against the emergency imposed by the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, on June 25, 1975, and its excesses that continued for around two years, that led to the formation of the first ever non-Congress Central Government after almost 30 years of Independence. But Indira Gandhi did not call the voters 'backstabbers'.

After the assassination of Indira Gandhi, her son Rajiv Gandhi was elected Prime Minister in 1984 with a never-before-and-never-after majority of over 400 seats in the Lok Sabha. But he lost control over the ship of governance and lost badly in the 1989 elections. He did not call voters who defeated him backstabbers.

After having been Chief Minister twice in 1995 and 1999, Nara Chandrababu Naidu lost the elections in 2004, but he did not blame the

people. The late Dr NTR also lost the third election he contested in 1989.

But YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is different. Having become the Chief Minister with a huge people's mandate with 153 Assembly seats in 2019, he was decimated and reduced to just 11 seats in 2024. Like no other leader before, Jagan dared to call the people who defeated him backstabbers. What could be the reasons for this?

**People do not live by bread alone**

Jagan's case study warrants a close examination in the context of his oft-repeated claims and their messages. Endlessly, while in office and later, he left no opportunity to stress the Rs 2.70 lakh crore that he claimed to have placed in the hands of the people through DBT during 2019-24. He firmly believed that this largesse would return him to power by all means. So he built a palace for his family at the Rishikonda Beach in Visakhapatnam, spending Rs

*The message that came out of the 1977 and 2024 verdicts is that the people have needs beyond bread. They want to live with dignity, free speech, freedom of political action and free association. They look at social welfare schemes as their right and entitlement*

500 crore of tax money. But the people had different plans for him. So, Jagan now stays in his Bengaluru palace.

The point of this analysis is what do people want from the governments they vote for and defeat after five years? Why did Jagan get so disoriented after his 2024 defeat? Why is he seeking to hold the people by their collars and ask why he was backstabbed by them even after giving them Rs 2.70 lakh crore? What do the people want?

The 1977 verdict against Indira Gandhi and the one against Jagan in 2024 are the closest comparable case stud-

ies for drawing logical inferences. Mrs Gandhi thought she was the darling of the poor and the masses, and so did Jagan. The events that led to the imposition of the emergency and its two-year-long excesses draw a parallel with the rule of former CM Jagan and his ultimate decimation.

Both Mrs Gandhi and Jagan brazenly subverted the Constitution. They both ruled as they liked and misused the official machinery to cling to power, come what may. In doing so Jagan thought that the public money he dispensed through DBT would act as a shield against the unchecked



Y SATYA KUMAR  
Health Minister Govt of AP

corruption through the devious liquor sale and even in the housing scheme for the poor and the Tirupati laddoo, the looting of precious natural resources like mines, sand and public lands across the state, the targeting and victimisation of political opponents by mis-using the police machinery for the imprisonment of former CM, Chandrababu Naidu, fleeing businesses and forcing them to run away from the state etc.

In a nutshell, the public message that Jagan sent during those dark five years is that he is above the Constitution, beyond the rule of law, that he was born to rule, the poor would be happy with some regular free doles, the future of the people and their children do not matter and only that of his family matters, the people do not expect and need to live with dignity and that people do not deserve and care for their fundamental rights like the right to free speech and also right governance does not interest people and they don't bother about it. It's an echo of Indira Gandhi's style during the events that led to the 1975 emergency.

The message that came out of the 1977 and 2024 verdicts is that the people have needs beyond bread. They want to live with dignity, free speech, freedom of political action and free association. They look at social welfare schemes as their right and entitlement. Another important message of these two electoral verdicts is that

the people expect dignified governance, conduct and public messaging from the governments of the day. People don't like the arrogance and self-centeredness of the individuals they voted to power.

Jagan suffers from this 'deficit of understanding of democracy and the public mind. This deficit made him call the people who did not vote for him backstabbers, digging his own grave.

**Health sector case study**

Another folly of Jagan was that he believed that people could be misled by grand announcements without follow-up actions. Public health is a case study in that. He announced 17 new Government Medical Colleges, but spent only 14% of the sanctioned cost during his tenure. Likewise, only 17% was spent on the hyped Nandu programme meant for the development of healthcare infrastructure. He claimed 'zero vacancy' recruitment, but there was a shortage of

doctors and other medical staff. Arogyasri was turned into a den of corruption. Recruitment lists came from the homes of YSRCP leaders instead of the offices of Collectors. Indiscipline ruled the roost during those five years. Doctors going on unauthorised absence for years was the order of the day. Those at work simply mark attendance and go. Political interference severely dented accountability. Government hospitals were marked by the stink of corruption of all kinds. This is not the way a Chief Minister should have handled the public health sector, which matters the most to the poor. The NDA government inherited such a legacy a year ago and has endeavoured to address such legacy issues. Change has begun, and we still need to do more and are committed to delivering a 'Happy, Wealthy, Healthy' Andhra Pradesh as per the vision of Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu.

## Monday Mirchi

**WHISPERS IN THE WOODS: SUREKHA VS NADEEM RIFT REACHES CM'S DESK**

All is not green in Telangana's Forest Department. Forest Minister Konda Surekha is fuming — and not without reason. Files aren't moving, decisions are being delayed, and bureaucratic hurdles seem to be growing thicker by the day. The buzz is that Forest Secretary Ahmad Nadeem is at the centre of this standoff. A little bird told said that the minister has finally put pen to paper — a strongly worded three-page letter to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, detailing how the secretary's actions are hampering the department's work. And it's not just about official matters. Within her circles, there's growing chatter that this is a deeper issue — an attempt, some say deliberate, to sideline a Backward Class Woman minister by wielding bureaucratic power. Whether the CM intervenes or lets the trees rustle for a while longer, the friction is no longer behind closed doors. The tension is out in the open, and insiders suggest this is only the beginning.

**CM'S MISS WORLD QUIP TRIGGERS IPS EXIT FROM TOURISM**

The transfer of Sangareddy Collector Valluru Kranthi as the new MD of Telangana Tourism Development Corporation raised some eyebrows — but it's what led to the exit of outgoing MD N Prakash Reddy IPS that has bureaucratic circles buzzing. On the surface, it looked like a routine reshuffle. But those in the know say this transfer had been brewing ever since the run-up to the Miss World event. The friction between the Tourism Secretary and Prakash Reddy, a 2010 batch IPS officer, had been evident from the start with the past and present secretaries sidelining him. But The turning point? A closed-door meeting where Prakash Reddy suggested inviting common citizens in Miss World celebrations, which was met with resistance. What followed was a cheeky jibe from the Chief Minister, aimed squarely at the Tourism Secretary: "Not everyone has travelled the world like an IAS officer." That one-liner changed the tone in the room — and possibly sealed the IPS officer's fate. Insiders say the moment that joke landed, it became clear that IPS officers were no longer welcome in tourism's inner circle. To avoid drawing media attention, the transfer was tucked neatly into a wider reshuffle. But let's be honest — nothing slips past gossip radar. For now, the message has gone out loud and clear: Tourism is an IAS-only lane.

**COLLECTOR HOPES CRASH AS 'MASSIVE' REJIG YIELDS JUST FIVE CHANGES**

After all the hype around a major shake-up in the Telangana bureaucracy, the final list has left many officers underwhelmed — and some outright disappointed. A large-scale overhaul of district collectors was widely anticipated, but when the orders dropped, only five districts saw new appointments: Hyderabad, Sangareddy, Khammam, Hanamkonda, and Siddipet. Whispers had been growing louder, with hopefuls polishing CVs and lobbying through the right channels. But as the dust settles, it's clear that the so-called 'massive rejig' was more of a teaser. Still, all hope isn't lost. Another round of reshuffling could be on the cards once a few more political pieces fall into place. Until then, it's a game of wait and watch.

**AROGYASRI'S REVOLVING DOOR SPINS AGAIN WITH SEVENTH CEO APPOINTMENT**

The Rajiv Arogyasri Trust has a new name at the top — again. P Uday Kumar, a 2016 batch IAS officer, has been posted as the new CEO, formally relieving S Sangeetha Satyanarayana from her additional charge. With this, Uday Kumar becomes the seventh officer to occupy the post in just 17 months, cementing Arogyasri's reputation as one of

the most unstable bureaucratic postings in Telangana. What was once a prestigious role tied to the State's flagship healthcare scheme is now widely seen as a thankless assignment riddled with pressure, ambiguity, and constant churn. Meanwhile, the consequences of this instability are starting to show. Hospital payments under the scheme have hit delays, operational issues are mounting, and murmurs are growing louder about the scheme's long-term credibility. Unless the government steps in with clarity and continuity, the only thing consistent about Arogyasri might be the exit door.

**CONGRESS PRO CHAOS: JOURNALISTS REGRET TAKING THE JOB**

It's official — the CM's new PRO, G Malsur, hasn't impressed the media fraternity. The moment his appointment was out, the grumbling began. Journalists are openly saying what many have been whispering for months — that being a PRO in the Congress government is more punishment than privilege. Almost everyone, including CM Revanth Reddy, Ministers Sridhar Babu, Komatireddy and Konda Surekha, have changed their PROs already. Only Seethakka's PRO seems to be holding up better. The rest? Disappointed, sidelined, and calling it quits — some say they were more powerful as journalists than they ever felt as PROs. Inside buzz from the Secretariat suggests ministers and bureaucrats don't want PROs getting too close to the action — and the journalists-turned-PROs aren't okay being treated like clerks. On the other side, the government thinks these PROs are lobbying too much and acting like power brokers. In all this, there's one thing everyone agrees on — things were way smoother under BRS. Most BRS PROs were in the post for years, enjoyed clear authority, and weren't shuffled like furniture. In short, what looked like a great career jump is now leaving many wishing they'd never left the newsroom.

**FLOATING YOGA TO KONDAPALLI FORT: NTR COLLECTOR STEALS THE SHOW IN YOGANDHRA 2025**

As Andhra Pradesh gears up for the 11th International Yoga Day on June 21, one district has already taken a flexible lead — quite literally. NTR District Collector Dr G Lakshminsha is setting the tone for the statewide YogAndhra 2025 campaign, not just by following instructions, but by becoming the face of the daily yoga movement in his district.

While the Health Department has directed all collectors to conduct daily yoga sessions through the month, Lakshminsha has turned it into something far more vibrant. From leading groups of police officers and sanitation workers, to healthcare professionals, differently abled participants, and government staff — the collector has made inclusivity the core of his yoga narrative.

What's catching attention is not just the consistency, but the creativity. A yoga session atop Kondapalli Fort blended heritage with health, while a visually stunning floating yoga session — conducted on a watercraft — has become the talk of the town. Social media can't get enough of the pictures, and even other districts are beginning to take notes.

These daily sessions are far from symbolic; they've triggered real public interest, turning yoga into a community ritual rather than a one-day photo-op. Officials say even morning office routines now include a dose of stretching and mindfulness in several departments — a ripple effect that few anticipated.

With International Yoga Day around the corner, it's safe to say NTR district has already taken a deep breath — and a bold lead.

--Yours truly

## 'Telangana Jagruthi to launch political training for youth, women, students'



MLC Kavitha unveils poster of 'LEADER', a leadership training initiative on Sunday

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Kavitha said. Unveiling a poster of the political training programme by Telangana Jagruthi, 'LEADER', at her residence on Sunday, MLC Kavitha emphasised the importance of youth participation in politics to clean

### Resolve land issues ...

**Continued from >> P1** but to go to court," he said.

He said that he had attended around 50 revenue meetings organised as part of the Bhu Bharati Act in the last two months and that he was deeply saddened by farmers expressing their grievances at these meetings. "Determined to provide a permanent solution to land problems, we introduced the Bhu Bharati Act. It is the responsibility of officials to strictly implement this law and help farmers," he said.

Ponguleti said the land survey conducted under the pilot project in five Naksha villages in the state, which have not been surveyed for generations or do not have survey records, is progressing rapidly.

He said the Congress government undertook the survey to find a solution as the BRS government had abandoned Naksha villages. The survey was started in five of the 413 villages in the state on a pilot basis from the third week of May. He said the survey has been completed in 337 acres of the 422 acres in Salar Nagar in the Gandhid Mandal of Mahbubnagar district. The survey has been completed in 269 acres of the 626 acres in Kommanapalli (new) village of Bheerpur Mandal of Jagtial district, 445 acres out of 845 acres in Mulugumada of Yerrupalem Mandal of Khammam district, 232 acres out of 502 acres in Nooguru of Venkatapuram Mandal of Mulugu district, and 308 acres out of 593 acres in Shahidnagar of Vatlalli Mandal of Sangareddy district.

### Hundreds reported ...

**Continued from >> P1** heavily sanctioned energy industry that could affect global markets. The Israeli military, in a social media post, warned Iranians to evacuate arms factories, signalling a further widening of the campaign.

Israel, the sole though undeclared nuclear-armed state in the Middle East, said it launched the attack to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon. The two countries have been adversaries for decades.

Explosions shook Iran's capital, Tehran, around noon and again around 3:30 p.m. Semiofficial news agencies close to Iran's Revolutionary Guard reported one strike in the area of Vali-e Asr Square downtown and another in a neighborhood named for the air force, which is headquartered there.

Sirens went off across much of Israel again around 4 p.m., warning of what would be Iran's first daytime assault since the fighting began. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

US President Donald Trump has expressed full support for Israel's actions while warning Iran that it can avoid further

destruction only by agreeing to a new nuclear deal.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Sunday that if Israel's strikes on Iran stop, then "our responses will also stop." He said the United States "is a partner in these attacks and must take responsibility."

Mosques as bomb shelters

Israel said 14 people there have been killed and 390 wounded. Iran has fired over 270 missiles, 22 of which got through the country's sophisticated multi-tiered air defences to make impact, according to Israeli figures. The country's main international airport and airspace remained closed for a third day.

Israeli strikes targeted Iran's Defence Ministry early Sunday after hitting air defences, military bases and sites associated with its nuclear programme. The killing of several top generals and nuclear scientists in targeted strikes indicated that Israeli intelligence has penetrated Iran at the highest levels.

Araghchi said Israel targeted an oil refinery near Tehran and another in a province near the Persian Gulf. He said Iran targeted "economic" sites in Israel, without elaborating.

up politics.

Speaking on the occasion, Kavitha said that Telangana is known for its questioning spirit and stressed the need to instil this trait in future generations.

She said that Telangana Jagruthi will conduct three-day political training sessions every month across the state. The first session will begin in July in Hyderabad, followed by monthly sessions in various districts starting in August.

Encouraging students, youth and women to participate in the training programme, Kavitha said that the sessions would cover key topics like the roles and responsibilities of elected representatives, from sarpanches to MPs, identifying public issues, resolving them and mobilising development funds.

### Sonia Gandhi ...

**Continued from >> P1** around 9 pm, the hospital sources said.

They said Gandhi's condition is stable and she is under the observation of a team of doctors. On June 9, the former Congress president underwent a medical check-up at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital. Two days before the check-up, she underwent some tests at Indira Gandhi Medical College Hospital in Shimla after she complained of high blood pressure.

### Skills rule ...

**Continued from >> P1** interaction with Jayant Chaudhary @jayanttrld ji, the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. After we met at the inauguration of the #TelanganaRising pavilion at the World Economic Forum in #Davos, Mr Chaudhary has become a big supporter of our state's mission in skill development.



## Pune Indrayani river bridge collapse: Four dead, 18 injured; NDRF leads rescue efforts

**PNS ■ PUNE**

Four persons died and 18 were seriously injured after an old iron bridge on Indrayani river collapsed on Sunday afternoon in Pune's Maval tehsil, officials said.

While two persons succumbed to injuries during treatment after being rescued, the bodies of two persons were recovered from underneath the collapsed portion of the bridge, officials said.

"While two bodies were recovered from beneath the structure, we suspect one person is trapped there. Efforts are underway to locate and rescue the person," Talegaon Dabhade police station senior inspector Pradeep Rayannanwar said late evening.

The incident took place at 3:30pm in Kundamala area, which has been seeing heavy rains over the past few days, giving the river a steady flow, another official said. It was not raining when the bridge collapsed in the presence of at least 100 picnickers, he added.

"In the mishap, so far 38 people have been rescued of which 18 sustained serious injuries and they are currently under treatment in three different

**The incident took place at 3:30pm in Kundamala area, which has been seeing heavy rains over the past few days, giving the river a steady flow, another official said. It was not raining when the bridge collapsed in the presence of at least 100 picnickers, he added**

hospitals. During treatment, two people succumbed to injuries," a statement from the district administration informed.

Teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), a specialised unit to tackle such emergencies, as well as personnel from the fire brigade, police and local rescue organizations are involved in rescue and relief efforts, it added.

Maharashtra Minister of Disaster Management Girish Mahajan, who was at the site monitoring rescue efforts, said the bridge collapsed under the weight of a large number of tourists.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:	Krishna Paksha
Tithi:	
Panchami:	Jun 15 03:51 PM to Jun 16 03:31 PM
Shashthi:	Jun 16 03:31 PM to Jun 17 02:46 PM
Nakshatram:	
Nakshatram Dhanishta:	Jun 16 12:59 AM to Jun 17 01:13 AM
Shatabhisha:	Jun 17 01:13 AM to Jun 18 01:01 AM
Rahukalam:	7:23 AM to 9:01 AM
Yamagandam:	10:39 AM to 12:16 PM
Varjyam:	08:22 AM to 09:57 AM
Gulika:	1:54 PM to 3:32 PM
Amritakalam:	02:43 PM to 04:20 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham:	11:50 AM to 12:42 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Rain

Temp: 29°

Humidity: 73%

Sunrise: 5:42 AM

Sunset: 6:52 PM

Updated: June 15, 2025 5:00 PM





## CITY EVENTS

**Rangapravesam**  
By Jyothi Kalakshetram  
**Venue**  
Ravindra Bharathi  
June 16, 6 pm.

**Kashmir Jalakanya**  
Exhibition  
**Venue**  
PVR Nexus Mall (Kukatpally)  
Till June 18, 10 am.

**Personality Development Course**  
By Vivekananda Institute  
**Venue**  
Ramakrishna Math  
Till June 20, 5:30 pm.

## TGNAB crack down on Nigerian drug cartel links

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a development in the war against narco-financing, the Telangana Anti-Narcotics Bureau (TGNAB) has intensified its crack down on international drug cartels by uncovering a financial trail linked to Nigerian drug syndicates operating across India.

The Bureau has reportedly lodged detailed complaints with central investigative agencies, including the Enforcement Directorate (ED), Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) and the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO). The complaints are backed by crucial evidence obtained from a recent month-long covert operation conducted in Goa.

According to TGNAB sources, the focus has now shifted to dismantling the financial infrastructure supporting drug networks. During the operation, officials arrested Uttam Singh, a hawala agent suspected of transferring large sums of money to Nigerian bank accounts on behalf of drug syndicates in return for a 2 percent commission.

Interrogation revealed that within just two days, Singh managed to process Rs 52 lakh, with an estimated Rs 2.10 crore moved in just one week. The agency unearthed 150 Nigerian bank transactions, detailed collection patterns, and even WhatsApp chats featuring torn currency notes used to confirm illicit payments.

TGNAB has urged Central agencies to investigate financial transactions from the past two years linked to Singh and his network, hinting at a wider hawala-drug cartel conspiracy.

## 2 lakh cases settled across TG in National Lok Adalat

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a massive State-wide legal drive, the National Lok Adalat held on June 14, 2025 resolved 1,93,439 cases in Telangana, including criminal cases, cyber fraud incidents and violations under the Motor Vehicle Act.

The effort, driven by the Supreme Court's directive, aimed to settle cases amicably and reduce court burden. Among the settled cases: 22,095 FIR cases were compounded, 8,922 cases related to Disaster Management were resolved, 84,601 E-petty cases were closed and 71,527 Motor Vehicle Act violations were addressed.

This edition of the National Lok Adalat also prioritised cybercrime victims, resulting in significant financial restitution. A total of 6,294 cyber fraud cases were handled, with over Rs 45.33 crore refunded to victims.



## STUDENTS TO UNDERGO TRAINING TO CRACK COMPETITIVE EXAMS

# TG govt signs MoU with six prominent NGOs

## NGOs offer state-of-the-art tech to improve edu standards

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a significant step to improve teaching facilities in all government schools, Telangana State Education Department has signed MoUs with prominent NGOs in the presence of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Sunday. As part of the MoU, the NGOs will provide state-of-the-art technology teaching services free of cost to the students in government schools.

The government partnered with six reputed organisations at national and international level to offer advanced educational tech facilities in government schools.

Nandan Nilekani-led EkStep Foundation, Prajwala Foundation run by Dr Sunita Krishnan, Alak Pandey's Physics Wala, Khan Academy, Shoaib Dar-led Pi Jam Foundation and Safina Hussain's Educate Girls are the prominent organisations which will offer their expertise in providing quality education by leveraging technology to government schools.

Enchanted by the welfare and development programmes implemented by the people's government, these organisations joined



hands with the government.

The decision to seek the help of noted organisations was taken in line with the Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's idea of improving educational standards in the State.

The EkStep Foundation, run by Nandan Nilekani, will offer services in more than 5,000 primary schools in 33 districts. It provides Telugu and English languages as well as

Maths basics from Class 3 to 5th standard.

Physics Wala will provide coaching to Inter students for NEET, JEE and CLAT exams. It also provides free training to students from the school level for competitive exams.

Khan Academy will offer video-based STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) training in accordance with the curriculum to

students from class 6 to 10th standard in the State.

Prajwala Foundation, led by Dr Sunitha Krishnan, will launch child safety and protection programmes for students from class 6 to class 12 across the State.

Pi Jam Foundation will provide training in coding and computational thinking to students from class 1 to class 10.

Educate Girls will take up the enrollment of over 16,000 out-of-school children to improve literacy for girls.

Government Advisor K Kesava Rao, Education Secretary Yogitharana, CM Special Secretary Ajith Reddy, School Education Director Narasimha Reddy, Director of School Education Naveen Nicholas, Education Department Special Secretary Haritha, Xstep Foundation CEO Jagadish Babu, Prajwala Foundation Chief Dr Sunitha Krishnan, Physics Wala Co-Founder Prateek Maheshwari, Khan Academy India MD Swati Vasudevan, Pi Jam Foundation Founder Shoaib Dar, Educate Girls CEO Gayatri Nair Lobo and others are present.

## 283 caught for drunk driving during weekend drive

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Cyberabad Traffic Police conducted a special drunk driving enforcement drive over the weekend in June, during which 283 people were caught for driving under the influence of alcohol.

The breakdown of vehicles involved includes 219 two-wheelers, 11 three-wheelers, 50 four-wheelers and three heavy vehicles.

Based on Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) levels, 265 offenders had BAC levels between 35 mg/100 ml and 200 mg/100 ml.

Twelve offenders had BAC between 201 mg/100 ml and 300 mg/100 ml, while six offenders had very high levels



between 301 mg/100 ml and 500 mg/100 ml. All those caught will be produced before the court.

Cyberabad Police reminded citizens that drunk driving is a serious crime. If a person is found to be driving under the influence and causes a fatal accident, they will be booked

under Section 105 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (Culpable Homicide not amounting to murder), which carries a maximum punishment of 10 years in jail along with a fine.

The police urged everyone to drive safely and responsibly to protect lives on the road.

## Osmania Hospital marks World Blood Donor Day with awareness walk

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

On the occasion of World Blood Donor Day, Osmania General Hospital (OGH) reaffirmed its leadership in blood donation and public health outreach by organising an awareness walk and a felicitation event to highlight the importance of voluntary blood donation.

OGH's Blood Centre, one of Telangana's largest and most reputed, collects nearly 10,000 units annually, supporting critical departments such as plastic surgery, surgical gastroenterology and nephrology, especially for transplant patients. During emergencies, the blood centre also extends support to the Government Maternity Hospital, MNJ Cancer Hospital



and Chest Hospital.

In 2024, OGH conducted 40 blood donation camps, followed by 27 more in 2025.

Many of these camps were held in association with Nirmaan Organisation, DRDL and the Medicos Blood Donor Club, especially under the banner of Operation Sindhoor, which focused on combating

seasonal blood shortages during summer.

It was led by Dr Rakesh Sahay, Superintendent, OGH, and supported by a dedicated team including Dr Jaya Krishna, Dr Anusha, Dr Srikanth, Dr Pravalika and Dr Jahnavi, the hospital conducted the World Blood Donor Day event to inspire youth partici-

pation and celebrate regular donors.

The programme concluded with a felicitation ceremony honouring the efforts of supporting organizations - Nirmaan, DRDL, Medicos Blood Donor Club and State Street Corporate - for their vital role in sustaining blood supply and promoting awareness.

## Admissions for degree colleges for women

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (TGSWREIS) has announced admissions for the academic year 2025-2026 in its 28 women's residential degree colleges across the State.

The degree colleges offer undergraduate courses in BSc

B.Com and B.A along with skill training and employment-linked certificate courses. Students will also benefit from on-job training and internship tie-ups, supported by qualified faculty.

Interested candidates must physically submit their applications at the respective colleges by the last date, June 23, 2025.

## TGSRTC gets first woman driver for an electric bus

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a significant step towards women empowerment in public transport, V Saritha from Narayanapur mmandal, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, has made history by becoming the first woman driver in Telangana State Road

Transport Corporation (TGSRTC).

She has officially joined duty at the Miryalaguda depot as an electric bus driver under the JBM partnership.

Saritha, who previously worked for 10 years as a driver in Delhi's transport sector, expressed gratitude to



Transport Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar for promptly responding to her request for a driver position closer home. The Minister coordinated with TGSRTC officials and representatives of JBM to facilitate her appointment. Saritha is currently driving the Hyderabad to Miryalaguda

electric bus, and her appointment marks a milestone in the inclusion of women in TSRTC's driving department.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar congratulated Saritha and stated, "TGSRTC is committed to promoting gender equality.

## TG GOVT FIRST TO LAUNCH DEDICATED FINTECH POLICY

# Hyd's AI-powered Fintech startups reshaping investment strategies

**SAMUEL JOSHUA**  
samuelmjoshuamjmc@gmail.com  
■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad's new generation of fintech startups is changing how people invest by making access easier and more inclusive.

From robo-advisors that use algorithms to AI-based risk assessment platforms and blockchain-based asset tokenisation, technology is now the foundation of the investment experience.

City-based startups like Fisdrom, CredRight and Jai Kisan say they are breaking traditional financial models. These companies are reaching underbanked sectors and using alternative data to assess creditworthiness, creating smarter and more inclusive ways of investing and lending.

Meanwhile, Dario Schiraldi,



CEO of Vida Holding, said that their fintech strategy matches Hyderabad's growth. He pointed out that the city is gaining global attention due to its strong tech innovation, low operating costs and supportive regulations. Global investors, including those linked with Vida Holding, are now explor-

ing partnerships with city-based local startups to tap into this fast-growing ecosystem.

Hyderabad is now becoming a fintech innovation hub, with strong support from institutions like Telangana State Innovation Cell (TSIC), T-Hub and AIC T-Hub that are helping startups test ideas and

scale up.

The Telangana government has played a major role by being one of the first to launch a dedicated fintech policy. Its blockchain district is already supporting the development of secure and scalable financial platforms. Dario said this progressive environment is helping startups quickly test and launch new investment ideas like micro-investment apps and fractional ownership platforms.

Technologies like artificial intelligence, machine learning, and data analytics are now essential for smart investing. Hyderabad-based AI startups are helping investors with real-time risk analysis, portfolio optimization, and even analyzing public sentiment from social media. This is giving both individual and institutional investors deeper insights.

Dario Schiraldi also noted

that fintech is not just targeting the wealthy. Many platforms now focus on financial inclusion, helping first-time investors, rural business owners and gig workers enter the investment market often for the first time.

Fintech innovators in Hyderabad are building tools for a wide range of users. They are using local languages, easy-to-use interfaces and offering real-time support. This is leading to better financial literacy and a rise in savings and investments across the country.

The gap between traditional banks and fintech companies is narrowing. Banks are teaming up with agile startups to build the next generation of investment tools.

Hyderabad is set to become more than just a back-office hub, it is emerging as a global leader in financial innovation.

## Health Museum at Public Garden needs immediate renovation

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad's historic Health Museum at Public Garden, Nampally, once a popular place for health education, is now in a neglected state.

Heritage activist Mohammed Abid Ali pointed out that the ceiling needs urgent repairs, the iconic jhumar is rusted and several exhibits, including human body models, preserved snakes and skeletons, are either missing or damaged. He added that, shockingly, there is no electricity in the

museum.

Abid Ali, who remembers visiting the museum during school days, expressed sadness over its current condition. He appealed to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and Health Minister Damodar Rajanarasimha to release funds for its restoration.

He also urged that both the Health Museum and Jawahar Bal Bhavan be kept open regularly, so that students, families, tourists and future generations can benefit from these educational and cultural spaces.



Hyderabad's historic Health Museum at Public Garden with rusted iconic jhumar



## Inter supplementary exam results to be out today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Board of Intermediate Education (TGBIE) has announced that the results for the 1st and 2nd year Intermediate Public Advanced Supplementary Examinations - conducted in May/June 2025 - will be declared online on June 16 at 12pm. The results will be available for both general and vocational streams. To make access easier for students, parents, and the general public, the marks secured by candidates can be viewed on the following official websites of Telangana Board of Intermediate Education. In addition, the result link will also be shared via WhatsApp to all students who registered their mobile numbers with the Board.







ACROSS THE STATES



Woman constable shot at by male colleague in Bihar

A woman constable was allegedly shot at by a male colleague in Bihar's Kaimur district on Sunday, officials said. The victim has been identified as Sarita Kumari (28). The accused Ajay Paswan, also a constable, is absconding. Both are relatives also and posted as constables in Supaul district. According to a statement issued by the Police headquarters in Patna, "The incident took place at 4.30 am on Sunday in the Kudra locality. The victim was riding pillion on a motorcycle with her husband when she was shot at by Ajay Pasawn. The accused fled away from the spot. Immediately after receiving the information, police reached the spot and took the victim to the nearest hospital." On the basis of her statement, a case has been registered against Ajay Paswan. The injured constable has been referred to Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh for better treatment, Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO), Mohania, Pradeep Kumar told PTI. "Prime facie it appears a money dispute might be the reason behind the incident. Further investigation is on and a manhunt has been launched to nab Ajay Paswan," he said.



UP's Dussehri mango goes global

Uttar Pradesh's push towards boosting farm exports has achieved a key breakthrough, with 1,200 kg of Dussehri mangoes (400 boxes, each weighing 3 kg) airlifted to Dubai, an official statement said on Sunday. Dispatched from Lucknow's Mango Pack House to Dubai-based importer Vergo Trading LLC, the USD-2,992 consignment signals a new global opportunity for the state's mango growers, it said. The consignment was flagged off by Dinesh Pratap Singh, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Horticulture, Agricultural Marketing, and Agricultural Foreign Trade. Under the Indo-German AMD Project, three Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) from the Lucknow region were trained and empowered for agricultural export. Among them, Irrada Farmers Producer Company Limited and Malihabad Farmer Producer Company Limited have secured direct export orders for Dussehri mangoes from Dubai. For the first time both the FPOs are independently exporting mangoes, making it a historic milestone for the state's mango growers.



Assets of smugglers bulldozed in Punjab

Illegally acquired properties of two notorious drug smugglers were demolished by the authorities in Punjab's Ludhiana on Sunday, as part of the state's crackdown on the narcotics network, officials said. The operation was carried out by the Municipal Corporation Ludhiana with the support of Ludhiana Commissionerate Police. According to an official statement, Punjab's Special Director General of Police (law and order) Arpit Shukla said the action was part of the intensified drive to ensure drug smugglers not only face arrest but also lose assets acquired through illegal means. With demolition of these two properties, a total of 126 properties such illegal construction linked to drug smugglers have been razed since March 1, 2025, he said. In the first operation, a bulldozer was used to demolish the house of a notorious drug smuggler, identified as Gurpal, at street number 2 in Amarpura, Ludhiana, the statement said.

AAP corners BJP govt over water crisis in Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Sunday hit out at the BJP government over water crisis in Delhi and questioned the ruling dispensation over the steps taken to address the situation. There was no immediate reaction from the ruling BJP to the AAP's claims. "There is water shortage across the national capital. There is water crisis in Deoli, Ambekar Nagar, Model Town, Hari Nagar. People have also protested over the situation, but the government is sleeping," AAP Delhi state convener Saurabh Bharadwaj told a press conference. Questioning the government over the steps being taken to address the issue, Bharadwaj said, "There is four

engine government in the BJP. I want to ask -- how many tubewells have been installed by the government. I am not talking about the tubewells installed by the MLAs using their funds, but the ones installed by the government." The AAP leaders use the "four-engine" term to refer to the BJP, which is at the helm at the Centre, in Delhi, in the MCD and also "controlling" the lieutenant governor's office. "When we were in power, the LG and the BJP used to say that there is a problem in water management. Is the LG not able to reach the government water management?" he asked. Echoing similar views, former party MLA Akhilesh Pati Tripathi said the "four-engine" government had completely failed.

3-nation tour chance to thank partner countries for support: PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday that the upcoming G7 Summit in Canada will provide space for exchanging views on pressing global issues and the priorities of the Global South, as he left for a three-nation tour.

In his departure statement ahead of his three-nation tour, Modi said he looks forward to engaging with leaders from partner countries during the summit at Kananaskis, which he is attending at the invitation of Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney.

The three-nation tour is also an opportunity to thank partner countries for their steadfast support to India in its fight against cross-border terrorism and to galvanise global understanding on tackling terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, he added.

The prime minister said he will visit Cyprus on June 15-16 at the invitation of President Nikos Christodoulides.

"Cyprus is a close friend and an important partner in the Mediterranean region and the EU. The visit provides an opportunity to build upon the historical bonds and expand our ties in the areas of trade, investment, security, technology and promote people-to-people



exchanges," he said. Modi said following the G7

Summit, he will visit Croatia and hold meetings with President

Zoran Milanovic and Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic.

MODI ARRIVES IN CYPRUS

PNS ■ NICOSIA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Cyprus on Sunday for a two-day visit during which he will hold talks with President Nikos Christodoulides to strengthen bilateral ties.

In a special gesture, President Christodoulides welcomed PM Modi on his arrival at the Larnaca International Airport. Modi is the first Indian prime minister to visit Cyprus in over two decades.

"Landed in Cyprus. My gratitude to the President of Cyprus, Mr. Nikos Christodoulides for the

special gesture of welcoming me at the airport. This visit will add significant momentum to India-Cyprus relations, especially in areas like trade, investment and more," Modi posted on X.

Modi arrived here on the first leg of his three-nation tour.

"A trusted partnership underpinned by shared values & aspirations. PM @narendramodi has landed in Cyprus. As a special gesture, reflecting deep-rooted historic ties, President

@Christodoulides and FM @ckombos received PM on arrival at the airport," Ministry of External

Affairs spokesman Randhir Jaiswal said in a post on X.

"Extensive discussions to further deepen bilateral ties lie ahead," he added.

The Cypriot president, welcoming PM Modi, said it is a "historic visit" and a "new chapter in a strategic partnership that knows no limits".

"Welcome to Cyprus Prime Minister @narendramodi! Here, at the EU's southeast frontier and gateway of the Mediterranean. A historic visit. A new chapter in a strategic partnership that knows no limits.

PLANE CRASH

DNA tests identify 47 victims, including Rupani

24 bodies handed over to kin

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

Three days after the tragic crash of Air India flight AI-171 in Ahmedabad, which has so far claimed 270 lives, hospital authorities confirmed on Sunday the identification of 47 victims through DNA matching, including that of former Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani.

Authorities have handed over 24 bodies to the victims' families, officials said on Sunday.

Rupani was among the 242 passengers and crew members on board the London-bound Air India flight AI-171 that crashed on Thursday.

The Gujarat government has announced a state mourning for Rupani on Monday.

A funeral procession will be held in Rajkot in the evening. The Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner crashed into a medical college complex moments after taking off from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport at 1:39 PM on Thursday.

So far 29 people are reported to have died in the disaster on the ground which includes five MBBS students. Only one person from the aircraft miraculously survived.

Due to the severe condition of many bodies—burnt or dis-

figured—authorities are relying on DNA matching for identification.

"A total of 47 plane crash victims have been identified so far through DNA matching. Of these, the bodies of 24 victims have been handed over to their respective families.

These deceased were from Rajasthan and different parts of Gujarat," Additional Civil Superintendent Dr. Rajnish Patel told reporters.



He added that 14 of the identified victims were from Udaipur, Vadodara, Kheda, Mehsana, Ahmedabad, and Botad districts.

Of the 51 people injured in the incident, 38 have been discharged, while 13 are still

undergoing treatment, said Dr. Patel, a professor of surgery at the government-run B J Medical College.

According to Dr. Dhaval Gameti, president of the BJ Medical College Junior Doctors' Association, around 270 bodies were brought to Ahmedabad Civil Hospital from the crash site.

State Relief Commissioner Alok Kumar Pandey told reporters that families of all 230 passengers who perished on the flight have been contacted.

"Members of only three deceased passengers are yet to give their DNA samples as they live abroad.

All Indians safe, monitoring situation closely: Indian mission

PNS ■ JERUSALEM

All Indians in Israel are safe and the embassy is constantly monitoring the situation and the safety of its nationals amid a conflict with Iran, the Indian mission said on Sunday.

Embassy sources said that it has set up a 24\*7 helpline and is maintaining contact with members of the community.

Emphasising that the "safety and security of Indian nationals is paramount to us", the mission in a fresh advisory issued on Sunday advised its nationals to "stay vigilant, strictly avoid any unnecessary movement and adhere to safety protocols as advised by the Israeli authorities and home front command".



"The Embassy of India in Tel Aviv is in touch with members of the Indian community in Israel, including caregivers, workers, students, businessmen and tourist groups," the mission said in a release. "The embassy continues to monitor the situation closely and is in regular touch with the

Israeli authorities," it said.

Given that the Israeli government has announced a national emergency and the airspace is closed, the mission advised Indian nationals to strictly abide by safety protocols.

The mission said that the round-the-clock helpline estab-

lished by it on Tuesday is "functional" for "any assistance regarding the present situation".

It also listed contact numbers (+972547520711 and +972543278392) and email (cons1.telaviv@mea.gov.in) to reach out to those in need.

Official sources in Israel said that 270 missiles have been fired by Iran over Israel since Friday, in which 13 people, including three minors, have been killed and 390 others injured.

Among the injured, nine are in serious condition, 30 in moderate condition and 351 with minor injuries, they said.

Iran has also fired more than a hundred drones since Israel launched Operation Rising Lion on June 13.

Teen witness who filmed tragic plane crash grapples with trauma

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD



What began as a simple curiosity to see an aeroplane up close turned into a trauma for 17-year-old Aryan Asari, whose mobile phone video of the ill-fated Air India flight AI-171 became a viral sensation.

Shaken and deeply disturbed, Aryan spoke to reporters before returning to his home village in Gujarat's Aravalli district, 130 km from Ahmedabad, and expressed hope that he would escape the images of the crash he accidentally recorded.

After reaching his father's rented house in Meghaninagar around 12:30 pm on Thursday, located between the airport and the crash site, he learned that aircraft often flew low overhead. Intrigued, he headed to the terrace, eager for a never-before-seen perspective.

Aryan, a Class 12 student from Shamlaji taluka, arrived in Ahmedabad on June 12 to buy textbooks for the upcoming school year.

"I had just reached my father's house around 12:30 p.m. and went up to the rooftop after learning that planes fly low," Aryan, who spoke in broken Hindi and Gujarati, said.

"I was recording a video of a plane flying low out of curiosity because I had never seen one from such a close distance," he added.

His recording turned into a horrifying eyewitness account.

"When the plane started descending, I

thought it was going to land on the other side of the airport.

Then it crashed and burst into flames right in front of my eyes. It was terrifying," he told reporters, the memory clearly affecting him.

The tragic incident saw 241 of the 242 lives on board the London-bound Boeing 787-8 perish, along with 29 people on the ground as the aircraft plunged into a medical college campus shortly after takeoff.

Aryan's father, who retired from the Army, had recently taken up a security guard job with the Ahmedabad Metro, which led him to this rented accommodation in Meghaninagar -- a location where the tragedy took place.

House owner Kailashba confirmed Aryan's account, adding, "He had come to Ahmedabad for the first time and within hours of his arrival, he ended up witnessing such a horrific event. The video he captured was initially sent to his father and later went viral".

TACKLING PENDING CASES

Despite SC nod, HCs not keen on appointing retired judges

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Despite the Supreme Court clearing the idea nearly five months ago, the high courts seem not to be keen on appointing ad-hoc judges to tackle pending criminal cases, details available with the government showed.

According to people aware of the procedure to appoint Supreme Court and high court judges, none of the high court collegiums have so far recommended names of retired judges to be appointed as ad-hoc judges.

There are 25 high courts in the country. Till June 11, no high court collegium sent any such proposal to the Union Law Ministry.

Considering a backlog of over 18 lakh criminal cases, the



Supreme Court on January 30 allowed the high courts to appoint ad-hoc judges, not exceeding 10 per cent of the court's total sanctioned strength.

Article 224A of the Constitution allows the appointment of retired judges as ad-hoc judges in high courts to help deal with pendency.

According to the laid down

procedure, the respective high court collegiums send recommendations or names of candidates to be appointed as HC judges to the Department of Justice in the law ministry.

The department then adds inputs and details of the candidates before forwarding the same to the Supreme Court Collegium.

The SC Collegium then takes a final call and recommends to the government to appoint the selected persons as judges.

The president signs the 'warrant of appointment' of the newly-appointed judge.

The procedure to appoint ad-hoc judges will be the same except that the president will not sign the warrant of appointment. But the assent of the president will be sought for appointing ad-hoc judges.

Except in one case, there is no precedence of appointing retired judges as ad-hoc HC judges, officials had earlier pointed out.

In a judgement dated April 20, 2021, on the appointment of

ad-hoc judges in the high courts, the top court imposed certain conditions.

However, later a special Supreme Court bench comprising then Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna, Justices B R Gavai (incumbent CJI) and Surya Kant relaxed certain conditions and kept some in abeyance.

The verdict, which was authored by former chief justice S A Bobde, directed retired high court judges to be appointed as ad-hoc ones for a period of two to three years to clear the backlog.

While one condition said that ad-hoc judges cannot be appointed if a high court was working with 80 per cent of its sanctioned strength, the other said ad-hoc judges could sit separately on benches to deal with cases.



Editor's  
TAKE

## Middle East on the brink of war

Israel's attack on Iran's nuclear installations and Iran's retaliation could be detrimental to the world peace

In a dramatic escalation of long-standing tensions, Israel launched two massive waves of airstrikes on Iran, targeting key military and nuclear installations. In retaliation, Iran unleashed a barrage of ballistic missiles, marking the most intense direct military confrontation between the two nations in modern history. As both countries trade blows with unprecedented ferocity, fears are mounting of a full-scale war that could engulf the entire Middle East and destabilise the global geopolitical balance. The Israeli strikes — reportedly involving over 200 aircraft — targeted more than 200 Iranian sites, including major nuclear facilities in Isfahan and Fordow, as well as military command centres.

At least two high-ranking military officers and six nuclear scientists of Iran were killed, including Gen Hossein Salami, head of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and Gen Mohammad Bagheri, Iran's chief of staff.

Iran responded by launching hundreds of ballistic missiles, with explosions reported over Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Israeli air defences intercepted many of the projectiles, but the scale of the attack shook the nation. The risk of the conflict spiralling into a broader regional war is high. Iran's allies, including Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Assad regime in Syria, and various armed groups in Iraq and Yemen, are likely to jump into the fray. If they do, Israel could be forced to open multiple fronts, dragging other regional powers such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Turkey into a widening conflict. In such a scenario, oil shipping routes in the Strait of Hormuz could be jeopardised, sending global energy markets into turmoil. Moreover, any direct or indirect involvement by the United States or NATO members could trigger a wider confrontation involving Russia and China, both of which maintain strategic ties with Tehran. The Middle East, already a fragile and volatile region, could become the epicentre of a new and devastating global conflict. US President Donald Trump has openly supporting Israel's actions, though he declined to comment on US actively participating in the conflict — fuelling speculation about behind-the-scenes American support. Trump's statements could embolden Israeli leadership while further alienating Iran, complicating any prospects for de-escalation.

This escalation occurs against the backdrop of ongoing Israeli military operations in Gaza. With global attention now shifting to the Iran-Israel crisis, humanitarian issues in Gaza may receive less international scrutiny, potentially allowing Israel to intensify its campaign there with reduced diplomatic pressure. The Israel-Iran conflict has shifted from proxy skirmishes to direct confrontation, shaking the foundations of Middle Eastern stability. With powerful militaries on both sides and no signs of de-escalation, the potential for a regional or even global war looms large. World leaders must act swiftly and decisively to prevent a catastrophic war. Diplomatic channels must be reopened, ceasefires negotiated, and a broader vision for regional peace revisited. The world cannot afford to let the flames of war spread unchecked — too much is at stake, not just for the Middle East, but for humanity at large.

## Odia cuisine: Steeped in history, legacy and flavour!

From the humble kitchens of agrarian homes to the grand Mahaprasad served in the Jagannath Temple, Odisha's culinary heritage is a gentle yet powerful testament to balance, subtlety, and soulful nourishment

Odisha, formerly known as Kalinga and Utkal, has a rich history dating back to ancient times. It begins in the Lower Palaeolithic era, also called Early Stone Age, as Acheulian tools dating to the period have been discovered in various places in the region. The state also finds mention in writings found in ancient texts like the Mahabharata, Maha Govinda Sutta, and some Puranas. The Kalinga War (261 BCE), a conflict between the Mauryan Empire (led by Ashoka) and the independent kingdom of Kalinga, was a pivotal event in ancient Indian history — it led to Ashoka's conversion to Buddhism and the subsequent shift in his policy toward peace and Dharma. The Ashoka Chakra, also known as the Dharma Chakra, which is found in the centre of our national flag, was introduced by Emperor Ashoka after the Kalinga War. The war had a deep impact on the emperor, leading him to embrace Buddhism and pursue a policy of peace and non-violence called Dhamma.

Therefore, the history and heritage of the state is indeed a testimony to India's historical depth — it is immense, significant, and second to no other! This spectacular range of the state completes a full circle through its most impressive culinary repertoire. Kalinga was famous for its prosperous trade routes and cultural exchanges, and as a result, the food is a treasure trove of flavours, a symphony of simplicity, centuries of outstanding traditions, and a most exquisite deployment of aromatic flavours. It is the balance of the cuisine that stands out full of flavour, and yet, no overpowering ingredients — it's subtle, it's nuanced, and it is this innate feature that makes the Odia cuisine — one of a kind! It's now time to dive into the food offerings from the state — after all, the proof of the pudding is in the eating!

The state's cooking uses the Pancha Phutana — a five-spice blend consisting of cumin, fenugreek, mustard, aniseed, and onion seeds — in this, the level of spice and oil is on the lower side. Interestingly, the snacks have higher spice levels, and this is seen in the very popular Gupchup — semolina or wheat-fried balls filled with sweet and tangy water and known in many parts of India as Pani Puri. An ode to simplicity and mild flavours can be found in Santula — vegetable curry or stew cooked with minimal spices — it can be prepared in two ways, fried (bhaja santula) or boiled (sijha santula). The versatility of the cuisine is exhibited through Pitha — rice pancakes or dumplings — filled



with sweet or savoury mixtures, they can be pan-fried, deep-fried, steamed or baked and have numerous variations that include Kakara Pitha, Chakuli Pitha, Manda Pitha, Poda Pitha and so on, and then there is Besara — a tangy vegetable of fish curry that is thickened using a distinctive mustard paste or masala. The vegetable Besara (a popular variant) is often included in the Chhappan Bhog, or 56 dishes, offered as Mahaprasad at the Puri Jagannath Temple. Odisha's deep connection with the agrarian communities is showcased through Pakhala Bhata, a culturally significant dish made from cooked rice soaked in water and is often fermented; it is the state's answer to the scorching summer months. Dalma — considered the heart and soul of Odisha's everyday meal (eaten for breakfast and/or dinner) is made using lentils and vegetables, mildly seasoned with spices and topped with grated coconut.

The eastern coastal state's splendid contrast of textures is displayed through Badi Chura — a crunchy delight made from crushed dried lentil dumplings (badi) mixed with spices, and

often served with plain rice or Pakhala (fermented rice). The humble Khichdi (rice cooked with lentils), is called Khechudi in Odia cuisine — the state has several variations of it, like Ada Hengu Khichdi, Nabagraha Khichdi, Nikura Khichdi, Dala Khichdi — these are wholesome and nourishing and are common in households across the state. Fish is one of the undisputed stars of Odia cuisine, and dishes like Machha Ghanta — fried fish head in an onion, potato, and garlic curry — is a household favourite and a Durga Puja delicacy. Another variety is the Mahura Fry — a fried fish preparation, specifically using hilsa or Indian herring, and then there is Machha Mahura, a traditional Odia fish curry made with steamed, deboned, and then fried fish, along with vegetables.

Prawns too are consumed generously and recipes like Chingudi Kasa, a dried version of the jhol or prawn curry made with prawns fresh from Chilika Lake, is a regional gem and a good example of the state's unique culinary identity. A cuisine being spoken of and the sweet element missing? Inconceivable! And in the case of Odia cuisine, a formidable line-up is visible — it is reflected through dishes like Chhenna Poda, made from fresh paneer (Indian cottage cheese) and baked until it develops a caramelised crust and a soft and sweet interior. It is known for its distinctive burnt appearance and bold taste. Another delight is Kanika (an aromatic sweet rice

dish), prepared during festivals and pujas and a staple in the 56 dishes (Mahaprasadas) offered at the Jagannath temple in Puri. It is known for its mild sweetness and flavourful aroma and incorporates basmati rice, ghee, dry fruits, turmeric, sugar, and whole spices.

Khiri Payesh is Odisha's comfort dessert and is made using jaggery or sugar, roasted dry fruits, and cow ghee, all of which undergo a boiling process. Some of its variations also use saffron, cardamom, and nuts to add flavour. A sweet that looks similar to the iconic Malpua is called Rasabali; however, its main ingredient is only chhenna (fresh curd cheese). It is a thin, doughnut-shaped fresh chhenna patty that is deep-fried in rice bran oil — an important source of unsaturated fats, vitamin E, and other beneficial compounds like oryzanol. Another flavour bomb from the state is Khasta Gaja — a dish exhibiting a crispy texture on the outside and a soft and juicy texture on the inside, it is made by frying diced pieces of dough in oil and soaking them in sugar syrup; the dish is often prepared during marriages, festivals, and various other celebrations. Odisha's twist to the famous Rasamalai is found in Khira Sagara — tiny semi-flat marble balls of chhena boiled in sugar syrup, then soaked in thick skimmed milk, and seasoned with sugar, saffron, and cardamom.

And finally! There is one, the most famous and divine offering (literally) from the state — the Rasagola. In fact, it is Odisha where it originated and travelled to different parts of the country. The journey began in the 11th century and is associated with a story of Lord Jagannath pacifying an angry goddess Laxmi with a sweet — any guesses? Yes — the Rasagola, whose delicious versions are found in different parts of the state like Salepur, Pahalala, and Behrampur. Today, there is a trend among the youth to consume fad foods — it is therefore critical that our regional chefs take the mantle of converting their cuisines, along with their prolific art forms. They have to be mindful of keeping the original ingredients and their nutritional values intact, but at the same time, modernising their cuisines to attract our youth. I believe this will nudge them to consume, and increasingly benefit from, the rich heritage of our interminable regional cuisine powerhouses.

(The writer is a Secretary, Cuisine India Society. Views are personal)



ANIL  
RAJPUT

## Why India's forest investments need carbon MRV

### SECOND Opinion

India is witnessing an unprecedented scale of investment in ecological restoration, particularly through Government programmes like the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) and the Green India Mission (GIM). These initiatives aim to restore millions of hectares of degraded forests and increase forest and tree cover as a part of India's commitments under the Paris Agreement and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). However, while financial allocations under these programmes have been substantial — amounting to over ₹30,000 crore in CAMPA alone — the real question is: Are these investments delivering measurable outcomes in terms of forest health, biodiversity conservation, and climate resilience?

Conventionally, the success of afforestation projects has been assessed through basic indicators such as the number of trees planted or hectares covered. These metrics, though easy to report, often fail to reflect the actual ecological quality of restored forests. Ground truthing remains inconsistent, and survival rates are poorly tracked. This disconnect highlights the urgent need for modern, science-based monitoring systems that can accurately measure the impact of forest investments. Enter the Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) systems designed for carbon credit pro-

jects under ARR (Afforestation, Reforestation, and Revegetation) methodologies. These systems, adopted by international standards such as Verra and Gold Standard, provide a rigorous framework for tracking forest growth, carbon sequestration, and co-benefits.

What makes these MRV systems particularly useful for public forest programmes is their ability to combine remote sensing technologies, GIS mapping, and permanent sample plots (PSPs) for accurate field measurements. In addition, socioeconomic indicators — such as employment generated, participation of women, and income from non-timber forest produce — can also be embedded into the monitoring framework.

Beyond providing transparent and verifiable data, carbon MRV systems also enable participation in carbon markets. The data generated can be used to quantify the amount of carbon sequestered, which in turn can be converted into tradable carbon credits. These credits can be sold on voluntary or compliance markets, attracting corporate ESG investments and climate finance. This creates a unique opportunity: the same system used to monitor ecological performance can also unlock financial value, ensuring the sustainability of operations and long-term maintenance of restored forests. To explore the applicability of this approach, a pilot deployment of carbon MRV is proposed in selected CAMPA and GIM sites. The pilot would begin by establishing ecological baselines through a combination of satellite imagery and field sampling. This would be followed by



RAJ KUMAR  
SRIVASTAVA

selected CAMPA and GIM sites. The pilot would begin by establishing ecological baselines through a combination of satellite imagery and field sampling. This would be followed by

periodic assessments to track tree growth, canopy recovery, and increases in biomass. Additionally, the project would involve monitoring carbon sequestration along with the associated socioeconomic benefits. To ensure transparency, publicly accessible dashboards would be developed and maintained. The costs of Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) would be funded through a share of the carbon credits generated. Overall, this pilot could serve as a proof of concept for integrating MRV into mainstream forest governance.

For successful integration, policy guidelines must evolve to formally recognise MRV as a standard component of afforestation projects. Capacity building at the forest division level, investment in digital tools, and partnerships with technical agencies will be key enablers. States like Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha — where large tracts of afforestation have been undertaken — can emerge as leaders in deploying MRV-based impact monitoring.

Moreover, convergence with CSR programmes and international climate funds like GCF can amplify resources. India has both the ambition and the ecological necessity to scale up forest restoration. However, ambition without accountability risks inefficiency. By adopting Carbon MRV systems, India can transition from input-based to impact-based forestry. The dual benefit of accurate monitoring and carbon finance makes MRV a game-changing tool for forest governance.

(The author is Former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Karnataka. Views are personal)

## Letters to the Editor

### Finding hope after Air India crash

The recent Air India crash in Ahmedabad, which tragically claimed many lives, has shattered countless dreams and hopes. While life's only certainty is its uncertainty, whether we travel by foot, cycle, bus, train, ship, or aeroplane, every journey begins with the expectation of reaching our destination safely.

Sometimes, tragedy pulls us back, yet it is hope that drives us forward. As the Dalai Lama wisely stated, "Tragedy should be utilised as a source of strength. No matter what sort of difficulties, how painful the experience is, if we lose our hope, that's our real disaster." This recent air accident, involving close to three hundred fatalities, has left us all numb, whether or not our near and dear ones were involved.

Yet, one hopes that the families of those affected will find the moral strength and courage to cope with their loss — a loss shared by the entire nation. Airlines, in turn, will do everything in their power and hope that such a devastating crash never recurs. Pilots, aircrew, and ground staff will similarly learn their lessons and hope that people's faith in flying is restored.

So, let us hold onto hope, because, as Charles F Raymond so wisely puts it, "Hope is our friend when every other friend has fled." May the souls of the departed rest in peace. Amen.

AVINASH GODBOLEY | MADHYA PRADESH

### A leap towards fairer train bookings

The e-ticketing system of IRCTC for Tatkal booking will have some changes from July 1. Under the new system, one has to book Tatkal train tickets using Aadhaar authentication along with OTP-based authentication. This is a step in the right direction and a passenger-friendly decision. This will eliminate the despair of the general public from not booking tickets, who would otherwise switch to other modes of transportation.

The decision to not permit authorised agents to book tickets for the first 30 minutes will further enhance the chances for passengers to book their tickets. Railway authorities also need to ensure train facilities like providing quality food, maintaining the cleanliness of toilets in all categories of train travel, providing an adequate number of battery-operated transport vehicles which run from one compartment to another, providing lifts/escalators and maintaining them properly at all prominent railway stations, standardising porter charges, etc. These facilities will attract passengers towards train travel and, at the same time, enhance the reputation of Indian Railways. These proactive measures are crucial for building greater public trust and ensuring a more efficient railway experience. Ultimately, a truly passenger-centric approach will solidify the railways as the preferred mode of transport for millions.

NAGENDRA VEMPALLI | BENGALURU

### The Unsung Hero of ICC Finals

Mitchell Starc's staggering all-round performance in ICC finals — outsourcing even legends like Sachin Tendulkar and outshining bowlers like Bumrah — deserves more than applause. It reflects not just individual brilliance but the fading memory of Test-style endurance in modern cricket. Yet, in a cricketing world obsessed with flashy T20 stats, are we recognising true match-winners enough? Starc's performance forces us to revisit what we value in a cricketer: glamour or grit? As fans cheer his feat, one wonders — how many other unsung warriors are lost in the noise of social media highlights?

Yet, in a contemporary cricketing world seemingly obsessed with flashy T20 statistics and fleeting moments, are we genuinely recognising and adequately valuing the profound impact of true, impactful match-winners who deliver under immense pressure? Starc's exceptional performance consequently forces us to critically revisit and re-evaluate what we truly cherish and value in a cricketer: is it merely superficial glamour and individual spectacle. As fans rightly cheer his remarkable feat, one cannot help but wonder, how many other dedicated, unsung warriors of the game are inadvertently lost, overlooked, and their contributions diminished amidst the incessant noise and rapid-fire consumption of social media highlights and instant gratification?

HASNAIN RABBANI | MUMBAI

## ISRAEL AND IRAN IN FULL-SCALE CONFRONTATION

The most dangerous and very serious war has broken out as Israel launched blistering attacks on the heart of Iran's nuclear and military structure on Friday, June 13, deploying warplanes and drones previously smuggled into the country to assault key facilities and kill top generals and scientists — a barrage it said was necessary before its adversary got any closer to building an atomic weapon. Iran retaliated late on Friday with full force by unleashing scores of ballistic missiles on Israel, where explosions flared in the skies over Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

A hospital in Tel Aviv treated many people wounded in the second Iranian barrage; Israel's Fire and Rescue Services said they were injured when a projectile hit a building in the city. Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in a recorded message on Friday: "We will not allow them to escape safely from this great crime they committed." Iran's UN ambassador said 78 people were killed

and more than 320 wounded in Israeli attacks. Israel's paramedic services said 34 people were wounded in the barrage on the Tel Aviv area, including a woman who was critically injured after being trapped under rubble.

In Ramat Gan, east of Tel Aviv, an Associated Press journalist saw burned-out cars and at least three damaged houses, including one where the front was nearly entirely torn away. US ground-based air-defence systems in the region were helping to shoot down Iranian missiles, said a US official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the measures. Israel's ongoing airstrikes and intelligence operation and Iran's retaliation raised concerns about an all-out war between the countries and propelled the region, already on edge, into even greater upheaval. With this, the world is heading for World War III with destruction and heavy casualties.

BHAGWAN THADANI | MUMBAI

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



# Eleven Years of Modi Government: ‘Sankalp Se Siddhi’

The BJP has launched the nationwide ‘Sankalp Se Siddhi’ campaign to celebrate its historic achievements. The campaign highlights the sweeping progress Bharat has made in areas such as poverty alleviation, infrastructure, national security, economic growth and global diplomacy

FIRST  
Column

On the occasion of the completion of 11 years of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's Government, the Bharatiya Janata Party is running the 'Sankalp Se Siddhi' campaign. Press conferences, exhibitions, seminars, public meetings, and village-level 'Chaupal' programs are being organised across the country to highlight the success of the Modi Government. Social media is being used to disseminate information about the Government's schemes and to conduct various competitions.

In the past 11 years, historic achievements have been made in areas such as the welfare of the poor, infrastructure development, internal security, economic progress, cultural upliftment, and the growing respect for Bharat abroad. These accomplishments are a testament to the progress made by Bharat. Various institutions and prominent individuals worldwide, including Bharat, have praised these historic successes. The defence sector has also witnessed similar historic achievements.

In Chanakya's policy, it is said that 'In a nation protected by weapons, the discussion of scriptures begins.' Discussions of scriptures are possible only when the nation is secure in all aspects. No matter how superior a principle is, its success depends on the strength of those who follow it. For this reason, scholars have considered strength to be the foundation of peace.

The Bharatiya Jan Sangh had passed a resolution during its 1964 Patna session, demanding that Bharat should make all efforts to develop an atomic bomb. The document titled "Siddhant aur Neetiyan" also discussed about the development of nuclear weapons. While presenting the resolution, it was stated that our revered deities are armed with weapons for the establishment of dharma, therefore, Bharat Mata should also possess nuclear weapons. Following this policy, the NDA Government led by Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee conducted the Pokhran nuclear tests in 1999, enhancing Bharat's global stature.

After the formation of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's Government in 2014, the country adopted a policy that enabled it to safeguard its interests. The zero-tolerance policy towards terrorism is an example of this approach. While the Congress Government used respectable terms like "ji" for terrorists and engaged in activities like offering biryani, the Modi Government provided the military and security forces with the freedom to combat terrorism and ensured the availability of necessary security equipment.



SHIV PRAKASH



essary security equipment.

The defence sector's budget was ₹2.53 lakh crore in 2013-14. Now, for 2025-26, it has increased to ₹6.81 lakh crore, more than triple the previous amount. According to the 2015 CAG report, the Indian Army had only 20 days' worth of ammunition available.

At the micro level, troops are now equipped with domestically produced high-quality bullet-proof jackets, advanced helmets, new Battle Dress Uniforms (NBDU), Night Vision Devices (NVDs), and thermal imagers. After the Modi Government took office, the long-pending demand for the appointment of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) was fulfilled. In Operation Sindoor, we experienced the role of this decision in coordinating the three armed forces.

We have also witnessed the swift resolution of long-pending decisions regarding weapon procurement. The acquisition of Rafale aircraft from France is a result of this process. The availability of S-400 systems, Sukhoi-30 aircraft, drones from Israel, Hammer missiles, Chinook helicopters, Light Combat Helicopters (LCH) Prachand, Tejas fighter jets (fully indigenous aircraft), Pinaka rocket systems (Multi Barrel Rocket Launchers), and Varunastra (Anti-Submarine Missile) has made the Bharat's Army one of the world's best. In Operation Sindoor, we have been able to strike designated targets and destroy enemy drones and missiles.

In the most successful 11-year period, we have not only purchased weapons from abroad but have also embraced the mantra of Atmanirbharta. Now, we are also manufacturing advanced and modern indigenous weapons in Bharat. The construction of the indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant, the Akash air defence system, the Rustom UAV drones being manufactured by DRDO in Lucknow, the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile with Russia, and the collaboration with Tata-Dassault to manufacture the main fuselage of the Rafale aircraft in Hyderabad are all part of this initiative. In the past 10 years, defence production has increased by 174 per cent. Defence production has risen from ₹46,529 crore in 2014-15 to ₹1,27,265 crore in 2023-24. This remarkable growth underscores India's commitment to becoming self-reliant in defence manufacturing.

The successful development and deployment of these indigenous systems have significantly enhanced Bharat's defence capabilities, making it one of the leading nations in defence technology. This transformation reflects the Government's vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (Self-Reliant India) and its dedication to strengthening national security through indigenous innovation and production. The achievements in defence production not only bolster national security but also contribute to the nation's economic growth by creating jobs and fostering technological advancements.

Bharat's defence sector is now poised to play a crucial role in the global defence industry, exporting advanced technologies and systems to ally nations. The continuous investment in research and development, along with strategic collaborations, ensures that Bharat remains at the forefront of defence innovation and self-reliance. This journey towards self-reliance in defence is a testament to Bharat's resilience, ingenuity, and unwavering commitment to safeguarding its sovereignty and interests. As Bharat progresses towards its centenary of independence in 2047, the defence sector stands as a pillar of strength, contributing to a secure and prosperous future for the nation.

Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh Ji — In his address on November 17, 2021, at the "Rashtra Raksha Samarpan Parv" in Jhansi, stated: "Bharat cannot fulfill its strategic and security requirements by depending on other countries... The Government is continuously striving towards 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'."

Due to the policy of self-reliance in the defence sector, we have now become a country that makes exports, not just imports. From 2004 to 2014, in 10 years, we exported ₹4,312 crore. From 2014 to 2024, we exported ₹88,319 crore. In 2024-25 alone, we exported ₹23,622 crore. By reducing imports by 21 per cent, we have achieved a 34 per cent increase in exports over 11 years. Today, we are exporting defence products to over 80 countries.

In Operation Sindoor, seeing the success of our indigenous weapons, the demand for our weapons has increased globally.

The Modi Government's resolve to make the country free from Naxalism has instilled confidence among the common citizens towards the Government. Terrorists involved in Naxal violence are counting their last breaths. In 2014, the number of districts affected by Naxal terrorism was 126. After 11 years, in 2025, that number has reduced to just 6.

Major Naxal terrorists with huge bounties on their heads have been killed in encounters. With the Government's commitment to a Naxal-free nation, it seems that future generations will forget the very name of Naxalism. This transformation is a testament to the Government's unwavering dedication and strategic approach to combating Left-Wing Extremism (LWE).

The significant reduction in the number of affected districts and the neutralisation of top Naxal leaders underscore the success of these efforts. As the nation progresses towards a more secure and prosperous future, the legacy of eliminating Naxalism will be remembered as a pivotal achievement.

Presenting an example of liberation from every form of colonial mindset, on September 2, 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled the new flag of the Indian Navy in Kochi, removing the colonial 'St. George's Cross' and replacing it with an octagonal symbol inspired by the royal seal of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

This new ensign features the Ashoka Chakra, an anchor, and the Navy's motto 'Sam No Varuna' inscribed, symbolising India's maritime heritage and self-pride.

The resolve of New Bharat — 'We will enter and eliminate terrorists' — is not just a statement, through surgical strikes, airstrikes, and Operation Sindoor, we have demonstrated this commitment. By cancelling the Indus Water Treaty, we have made our stance against terrorism clear to the world. Programs like the welfare of ex-servicemen, the Agni Veer scheme, worship of weapons like Rafale on Vijayadashami, the Prime Minister's presence among soldiers during Diwali, and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's visits to border posts all reflect our commitment to a secure India. The post-Operation Sindoor scenario, exposing Pakistan's terrorist face, and the all-party delegation's diplomatic efforts to showcase Bharat's stance against terrorism to the world, manifest the nation's unity and resolve.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's efforts to provide a security shield to the nation, have been successful in instilling confidence among the people that under Modi's leadership, the country is in safe hands.

(The writer is National Joint General Secretary of BJP. Views expressed are personal)

## Empowering State Public Universities to Power the Vision of Viksit Bharat

BY VK PAUL, SHASHANK SHAH AND OSHIN DHARAP

India is home to the second largest higher education ecosystem in the world, with 4.33 crore students and nearly 15 lakh faculty across 1,168 Universities, 45,473 Colleges and 12,002 Standalone Institutions. While 'Institutions of National Importance' and 'Central Universities' have made their mark in frontier areas of knowledge and dominate national priorities, it is the nearly 500 'State Public Universities (SPUs)' and their over 46,000 affiliated institutions that are the backbone of its higher education system. They currently cater to over 80 per cent of students. Technically, SPUs are established or incorporated by a Provincial or State Act, funded by the State Governments, and under their realm of control. However, given their phenomenal reach and hence their vital role in grooming talent across the country, their transformation is a collective national responsibility.

By 2035, the NEP 2020 target is to achieve a GER in higher education of 50 per cent. This implies doubling enrolment in our higher education institutions to nearly 9 crores over the next decade, with almost the same proportion of students continuing to study in SPUs. There are several outstanding SPUs, but the quality of higher education being imparted in many SPUs is hampered by a plethora of challenges. The primary one is the lack of high-quality physical and digital infrastructure. Limited funding negatively impacts the quality of research. Shortage of faculty adversely affects the pupil-teacher ratio. Above all, students' employability is a major concern.

Published research has also observed that increased devolution of funds to States under the 14th and 15th Finance Commission cycles has not led to a consequent increase in several State Governments' funding of social sectors, especially higher education. A fall in average growth rates in higher education expenditure in States during 2015-20 is evident, with median value coming down to 6.6 per cent compared to 10 per cent during 2005-10 and 2010-15. There are States with negative growth rates in spending on higher education.

While India's higher education sector has witnessed remarkable growth over the last seven decades, the pressing challenge now lies in ensuring high quality. NITI Aayog's recent report on 'Expanding Quality Higher Education through States and State Public Universities' focuses on this and attempts to bring higher education to the centre of India's development and policy discourse. An outcome of extensive consultations across 20 States and UTs and with over 50 SPUs, it makes nearly 80 policy recommendations across 12 sub-themes to address major systemic and institutional challenges. Many interventions around internationalisation, governance and financial autonomy are geared towards 'Leading' SPUs, those that feature in the top 50 SPUs in NIRF 2024 Rankings, given that they



are likely to possess in-house technical, managerial, and financial capacities to implement the suggested reforms. We provide a snapshot of policy recommendations and action pathways across four key themes.

The establishment of Research Hubs and Centres of Excellence in clusters of SPUs to leverage their core competencies and provide solutions to regional challenges can be a transformative step. Institutionalising holistic education including environment, human values and global citizenship education in the curricular and co-curricular domains of SPUs is a much-needed reform to create students with high levels of intelligence, and emotional and spiritual quotients. Handholding 'Leading' SPUs in each State to transition to MERUs (Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities), creating career pathways in research, and encouraging student and faculty-led research commercialisation and start-ups can bring research centre stage in SPUs. 'Leading' SPUs can also promote internationalisation through long-term partnerships for joint research projects, and faculty and student exchange programmes.

State Higher Education Councils and State-level NITI Aayogs can play an important role in preparing State-level Higher Education Vision and Implementation Roadmaps for 2047 by identifying priority areas. At the institutional level, a shift towards a 'regulator-facilitator' model for SPUs and granting greater autonomy to 'Leading' SPUs in areas like governance, curriculum development, and faculty recruitment is crucial. This must be combined with capacity building of faculty and administrators to ensure that academic and research standards are upheld. Given the scale of students that need to be provided higher education over the next decade, an all-hands-on-deck strategy is essential to mobilise funding and financing from all quarters including Governments, industry, and civil society. 'Leading' SPUs must be empowered to devise

internal revenue generation strategies by expanding self-financed programmes in high-demand areas, establishing consultancy units, leveraging CSR funds, encouraging alumni and philanthropic contributions, and exploring innovative PPP models for infrastructure development and research. Enhancing autonomy to 'Leading' SPUs in financial decision-making including inflation-adjusted fee setting must be balanced with a robust system of merit-cum-means scholarships such that no deserving student is deprived of access to higher education.

Faculty must be encouraged to design and deliver industry-relevant courses to align with national needs. Promoting internships, apprenticeship-embedded degree programmes, and work-based learning opportunities is of equal importance to ensure employability. This requires strengthening collaborations with Sector Skill Councils, industry partners and trade associations to bridge the education-employability gap. It is equally essential that SPUs transition from a job-seeking to a job-creation mindset. Impetus must also be provided to physical education and wellness courses, language proficiency and lifelong learning programmes, to contribute to holistic and continuous student development. Many SPUs possess spare infrastructural facilities. In evening hours, these may be utilised to deliver short-term skilling programmes and generate additional revenues.

Given the prime importance of SPUs in India's higher education ecosystem, their transformation into becoming institutions of excellence providing high-quality education is a sine qua non for reinforcing our position as a global hub of knowledge and talent. Above all, this transformation of SPUs is vital for our endeavour to emerge as a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

(Dr VK Paul is Member, NITI Aayog; Dr Shashank Shah is Senior Specialist and Oshin Dharap is Consultant at NITI Aayog. Views expressed are personal)

## From Anxiety to Action: The Inner Journey of Motivation and Mastery

At the cusp of the epic battle of Kurukshetra, the formidable warrior Arjuna, armed with a lethal arsenal and guided by none other than Lord Krishna himself, was gripped by paralysis. Despite his prowess, Arjuna faltered. The overwhelming sight of his kin arrayed against him blurred his ability to discern righteousness from malevolence. In that moment of inner turmoil, he laid down his weapons, unable to act. What ultimately restored his clarity and conviction was the divine revelation—Lord Krishna's Vishwarupa Darshan and the timeless wisdom of the Bhagavad Gita.

This ancient episode serves as a profound reminder that even the most capable among us can be brought to a standstill by mental conflict and anxiety. Yet, it is often this very anxiety that serves as the catalyst for greatness. A touch of tension, when channelled wisely, can ignite a flame of determination and push one to achieve the extraordinary.

Modern psychology recognises this dual nature of anxiety. Experts suggest a two-pronged strategy to manage such mental states: monitoring and blunting. Monitoring involves conscious awareness and proactive action, while blunting refers to tactical distraction or redirection of energy. Monitoring begins with preparation—a form of tapasya or dedicated effort. One must cultivate a disciplined, resilient mind through regular practice. Just as Arjuna honed his archery, we must rehearse for the challenges life presents. Visualisation, too, plays a crucial role—mentally enacting success helps clear mental clutter and dispel fear.

Another useful approach is the inoculation technique, which involves repeated exposure to stressors in a controlled environment, thereby building resilience. Alongside this, it is wise to conduct a self-inventory: What are my weaknesses? How can I overcome them? What resources—internal and external—can I rely on? Support from family, friends, peer groups, and motivational reading can reinforce this internal effort, nurturing a positive and constructive mindset.

On the other hand, blunting strategies help in decompressing the mind. Immersing oneself in physical activity—be it walking, swimming, gym workouts, sports, or yoga—releases endorphins and alleviates mental stress. Programs like the Art of Living's Happiness Program, with techniques such as Sudarshan Kriya, teach breathing patterns that synchronise body and mind, ushering in calm and clarity. But let us not forget the value of focused micro-management. Detail-orientation is often the hallmark of high performers, whether they are spiritual seekers, relentless politicians, meticulous writers, creative artists, or legendary athletes. Take for example, Aamir Khan, an actor known for his perfectionism and innovative approach to every role. His dedication to craft isn't accidental; it is the product of relentless

effort and conscious refinement.

Consider also the political strategist whose calculating gaze is both feared and admired. With a mind steeped in Kautilya's Arthashastra, and a passion for chess, such a figure exemplifies mental preparedness and strategic foresight.

Or think of Sunita, a modest young woman from a remote town in Bihar. Raised in turbulent surroundings, she carved her path into India's esteemed Civil Services through sheer determination and hard work—motivated by the reverence accorded to bureaucrats in her region.

Then there's Hemant Sharma, a soldier who lost his limbs in a terrorist attack while serving in Kashmir. Refusing to be confined by tragedy, he trained to embark on a spiritual expedition to Mount Kailasa. His radiant smile masks his pain, embodying the triumph of the human spirit. What drives such individuals? Motivation. Psychologists describe a motivation cycle: a perceived need triggers a drive, which leads to arousal, goal-directed behavior, achievement, and finally, a reduction in arousal. This cycle repeats, sustaining human activity. Our motives are broadly categorised into physiological and psychological. Physiological motives arise from our biology—hunger, thirst, and sex—all regulated by neural and hormonal signals. Hunger may be stimulated by glucose levels or stomach contractions. Thirst is triggered by cell dehydration and reduced blood volume. Sexual desire, influenced by hormones, is shaped by both biology and cultural conditioning.

Psychological motives, on the other hand, stem from our environment, relationships, and aspirations. These include the desire for achievement, recognition, affiliation, power, and the pursuit of knowledge or self-actualisation. Such motives often transcend survival—they shape the very meaning of our existence. Can one transcend the endless loop of motivation and desire? Ancient wisdom points the way. Sage Ashtavakra spoke of the stillness of the human mind as the ultimate goal. He taught that everything—every act, every emotion—arises and fades, and none of it should disturb our inner peace. Liberation lies in mindfulness and detachment—not as indifference, but as awareness without entanglement. Thus, the human mind is both the battlefield and the charioteer. It can be overwhelmed, like Arjuna's, or it can rise, illuminated by awareness and anchored in inner steadiness. Motivation, then, is not just a drive—it is a sacred responsibility. When channelled mindfully, it enables us not just to achieve—but to evolve. Let us strive, not merely to act, but to act with clarity, awareness, and purpose.

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





ACROSS THE STATES



Hero FinCorp garners Rs 260 cr from investors

Hero FinCorp, the financial services division of two-wheeler manufacturer Hero MotoCorp, has raised Rs 260 crore in a pre-IPO placement round. This fund mobilisation led to a reduction in fresh issue size to Rs 1,840 crore from the earlier planned Rs 2,100 crore. The total IPO size now stands at Rs 3,408 crore, which includes a Rs 1,568 crore offer-for-sale (OFS) by existing investors. This marks a reduction from the earlier planned Rs 3,668 crore. Those selling shares in the OFS are -- AHVF II Holdings Singapore II Pte. Ltd, Apis Growth II (Hibiscus) Pte. Ltd, Link Investment Trust (through Vikas Srivastava) and Otter Ltd. In the pre-IPO round executed on June 5, Hero FinCorp entered into investment agreements with 12 investors, allotting 18.57 lakh shares at Rs 1,400 per share on June 13, raising Rs 259.99 crore, according to a public announcement by the company. Under this, the company allotted shares worth Rs 69 crore to Shahi Exports, RVG Jatopha Plantation (Rs 50 crore), Mohan Exports (Rs 25 crore), and AP Properties (Rs 22 crore).



Madhvani Group plans Rs 10,000 cr investment

Madhvani Group, a large Ugandan conglomerate with diversified investments spanning several sectors across Africa, the Middle East, and North America, has said it plans to invest Rs 10,000 crore in India over the next five years. Madhvani Group's promoter Shrai Madhvani called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday and during the meeting he apprised the prime minister about the Group's various initiatives including its acquisition bid of Hindustan National Glass & Industries Ltd (HNGIL), a leading container glass manufacturer. He informed that the Group is exploring investments of up to Rs 10,000 crore over the next five years, which is expected to generate substantial employment and contribute to industrial growth. Madhvani Group said in a statement on Sunday. Commending Prime Minister Modi's visionary policies such as Ease of Doing Business, Make in India, and the government's pro-business outlook, Madhvani acknowledged that these initiatives played a vital role in the Group's decision to invest in India.



Kolkata port records strong cargo growth

Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port (SMP), Kolkata, on Sunday said it began FY26 on a strong note, recording a 27.56 per cent year-on-year growth in cargo handling during April-May 2025, despite global geopolitical tensions. The port handled 11.252 million metric tonnes (MMT) of cargo in the two-month period, up from 8.821 MMT during the same time last year, officials said. Of the total cargo handled, Haldia Dock Complex (HDC) accounted for 8.139 MMT, while Kolkata Dock System (KDS) handled 3.113 MMT. This represents a 27.45 per cent increase at HDC and 27.84 per cent at KDS over April-May 2024, the port said in a statement. The Kolkata-based riverine port had a robust growth across multiple cargo segments, officials added. HDC saw higher volumes of petroleum products, other liquids, vegetable oil, various categories of coal, fly ash, and containers. KDS also posted increased handling of finished fertilizers, pulses, foodgrains, timber, and container cargo, it added.

Adani Green Energy tops ESG ratings in power sector

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL) has been ranked first in the ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) ratings in utilities/ power sector by NSE Sustainability Ratings & Analytics Ltd, an entity of the National Stock Exchange (NSE). Additionally, AGEL is also among the top five entities in ESG ratings assessed from the top 100 listed companies by revenue across the NSE. NSE recently launched its ESG ratings for listed companies. NSE's Rating Rationale states

AGEL performs well across environment, social and governance parameters. Environmental initiatives are well-integrated, supported by socially responsible practices and effective governance. It demonstrates a mature sustainability approach. According to NSE Sustainability Ratings & Analytics Ltd, AGEL received an impressive ESG score of 74, the highest within the utilities and power sector. This underscores AGEL's commitment to sustainable practices and its continuous efforts to uphold environmental, social, and governance standards.

G7 leaders gather in Canada amid Middle East crisis, Trump's tariffs

PNS ■ RANFF (CANADA)

Leaders of some of the world's biggest economic powers will arrive in the Canadian Rockies on Sunday for a Group of Seven summit overshadowed by a widening war across the Middle East and US President Donald Trump's unresolved trade war with allies and rivals alike. Israel's strikes on Iran and Tehran's retaliation, which appeared to catch many world leaders unawares, is the latest sign of a more volatile world as Trump seeks to withdraw the US from its role as world policeman.

Speaking on a flight to Canada to attend the summit, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said he had discussed efforts to de-escalate the situation with Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, as well as other world leaders. Britain is sending Royal Air Force jets and other military reinforcements to the Middle East. "We do have longstanding concerns about the nuclear program Iran has. We do recognise Israel's right to self-defense, but I'm absolutely clear that this needs to de-escalate. There is a huge risk of escalation for the region and more widely," Starmer said,



adding he expected "intense discussions" would continue at the summit. Trump is summit's wild card. As summit host, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney has decided to abandon the annual practice of issuing a joint statement, or communique, at the end of the meeting. With other leaders wanting to talk to Trump in an effort to talk him out of imposing tariffs, the summit risks being a series of bilateral conversations rather than a show of unity. Trump is the summit wild card. Looming over the meeting are Trump's inflammatory

threats to make Canada the 51st state and take over Greenland. French President Emmanuel Macron is making a highly symbolic stop in Greenland on his way to Canada, meeting the Arctic territory's leader and Denmark's prime minister aboard a Danish helicopter carrier. Macron, who is one of the very few leaders to have known Trump during his first term, was the first European leader to visit the White House after Trump took office, emerging unscathed from the Oval Office encounter. But despite the two leaders' sporadic bromance, Macron's approach to Trump

has failed to bear major results, with France caught up in the president's planned tariffs on the European Union. Nor did it bring any US security guarantees for Ukraine despite Macron's efforts, together with Starmer, to build a coalition of nations that could deploy forces after any ceasefire with Russia, with the hope it would convince the Trump administration to provide backup. Trump is scheduled to arrive late Sunday in Kananaskis, Alberta. Bilateral meetings between other leaders are possible Sunday, but the summit program does not get underway until Monday.

Govt must urgently review energy risk scenarios due to Iran-Israel war: GTRI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the Israel-Iran conflict intensifying, the government must urgently review energy risk scenarios, diversify crude sourcing, and ensure strategic reserves are sufficient, think tank GTRI said on Sunday. Due to the war, India is increasingly at risk of collateral economic fallout, with energy security, trade routes, and key commercial interests facing growing uncertainty, the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said. "The escalating hostilities and rising regional tensions are posing direct threats to India's strategic and economic links with West Asia," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said, adding India has significant trade exposure to both warring nations. In 2024-25, India exported goods worth USD 1.24 billion to Iran and imported USD 441.9 million in return. Trade with Israel was even more substantial, with USD 2.15 billion in exports and USD 1.61 billion in imports.



Markets to track Iran-Israel conflict, crude oil, US rate decision : Analysts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Stock investors will track the ongoing conflict between Iran and Israel, Brent crude oil prices, inflation data and the US Fed interest rate decision for further cues this week, analysts said. Tariff-related news would also dictate trends in the equity market, experts noted. Stock markets faced heightened volatility last week and ended in the red amid escalating geopolitical tensions, which sparked a risk-off sentiment. Investor sentiment was hit hard on surging oil prices as fears of supply disruptions resurfaced. "Indian stock markets are likely to follow the global trend, following rising tension in the

Middle East amid the Israel-Iran conflict, which could fuel further pessimism and prompt investors to flee riskier assets. Also, traders will exercise caution ahead of the US Federal Reserve interest rate decision on Wednesday, coupled with other central banks of Japan and the UK announcing their interest rates separately. Ketan Vikam, Head of Sales at financial services provider Almondz Institutional Equities, said. Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled nearly 1 per cent on Friday last week as weak global markets and a spike in Brent crude oil prices weighed on investor sentiment. "Looking ahead, investors are expected to remain cautious amid premium valuations and geopolitical risks.



Iran-Israel war could hurt exports; increase freight rates: Exporters

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Iran-Israel conflict has further increased global economic uncertainties, impacting world trade, including India's exports, as it is expected to drive up both air and sea freight rates, exporters say. They said that India's exports to Europe and counters like Russia may get impacted due to this war. If the conflict continues for long, the movement of merchant ships through routes such as Strait of Hormuz between Iran and UAE, and Red Sea would be affected. "The war will further hurt global trade. The situation was gradually improving but now again the trade will be impacted. Our exports to Europe and countries like Russia may get hurt. Freight rates and insurance are expected to increase," Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO)

President S C Ralhan said. Indian export consignments gradually started moving through the Red Sea route but now again it would get impacted, he said. The immediate fallout of the conflict that started on early Friday or June 13 will be freight and insurance charges going up after a period of calm as Red Sea routes were slowly coming back to normal, Mumbai-based exporter and Technocraft Industries Ltd Founder Chairman S K Saraf said. If Iran-Israel war would continue for a week then the situation will be difficult for global trade, Saraf said, adding, "Iran and Israel too are our big trading partners". Cargo ships had gradually returned on Red Sea routes, saving them 15-20 days while moving to US and Europe from India and other parts of Asia.

AC makers lower sales projection to 10-15%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Unrelenting heatwave across north and east regions has spiked sales of room air-conditioners (RAC) in June, but intermittent rains in several part of the country amid peak demand season have forced the industry players to lower sales projections to 10-15 per cent for this year. The summer, which is the peak season for sales of room air-conditioners, has disappointed AC makers this time, though there are some silver lining in June with impulse purchases happening due to the heatwave. RAC makers said after having an encouraging numbers in February and March, helped by an early arrival of summer, they were expecting a high double-digit volume growth of around 25 per cent from the last year, and had also built up inventory. "We all had planned for a 25 to 30 per cent growth, which is not going to take place. This is a disappointing summer; that is the truth. It is part and parcel of the game," Blue Star Managing



Director B Thiagarajan said. "We have to manage the situation and move forward," he said, adding that now the RAC industry will end up with 10 to 15 per cent growth this year, despite a good start in February and March. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) had last week said that temperatures are likely to have a gradual drop from the mid of June as a western disturbance is expected to move in, bringing cooler winds, rain, and thunderstorms. According to Thiagarajan, the current June quarter will be

bad for the RAC industry. However, he expects a bounce back in the September quarter. He expects some recovery in the festive season and also in the quarter when the energy label changes, as makers offer discounts to liquidate the old inventory. "A lot of pre-buying takes place whenever energy label changes are there. People will end up buying in that quarter," he said. Voltas MD & CEO Pradeep Bakshi said in the last two months, there has been hardly any growth for the industry in comparison to 2024 sales.

Continental looks to scale up PV business

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Tyre maker Continental is looking to expand its passenger vehicle and light truck tyres business in India, as it aims to focus on products catering to the robustly growing utility vehicle segment, according to a top company official. The company expects strong growth potential in larger-inch and ultra-high-performance tyres designed for SUVs, 4x4s, and sporty vehicles, aligning seamlessly with current market trends. The tyre maker has lined up a Rs 100 crore investment to expand production capacity at its Modipuram plant in Uttar



Pradesh by 'double digits' and to roll out bigger tyres for utility vehicles, which now account for over 60 per cent of the overall annual domestic passenger vehicle segment in India. In an interaction with PTI, Continental Tires India MD Samir

Gupta said that with the earmarked capital, the company aims to enhance its overall capabilities to align its portfolio to reflect the evolving lifestyle needs of Indian drivers. "Currently, we can produce up to 20-inch tyres at the plant, but

with this new investment, we would be able to produce up to 23-inch tyres," he noted. "I guess the future lies in the UV-SUV segment...I believe the future lies there. We want to emphasise this entire investment in that direction," he added. Gupta noted that the company's shift in the country towards the passenger vehicle segment reflects the changing needs of Indian consumers. "Currently, consumers are using cars for commuting and long drives because of the infrastructure boost, without compromising on their safety and comfort, for sure, so, that will remain our focus in terms of our product," he stated.

Sebi resolves over 4,400 complaints via SCORES portal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi resolved 4,493 investor complaints through its online grievance redressal platform SCORES in the month of May. The regulator received 4,793 fresh complaints in the month and a total of 4,563 complaints remained unresolved at the end of May, slightly higher than the 4,263 complaints that were pending as of April 30, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a public notice on Friday. The regulator also highlighted that the aver-

age resolution time taken by the entities to submit the Action Taken Reports (ATRs) in May was eight days, while the average time taken for complaints under First Level Review was five days. SCORES, or Sebi Complaint Redressal System, is an online platform which facilitates investors in lodging and tracking complaints against listed companies and registered intermediaries. Under the SCORES 2.0 mechanism, complaints are automatically forwarded to the respective entities, which are required to respond within 21 days.

Upcoming pharma park to position UP as bulk drug mfg hub

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government is betting big on the upcoming pharma park in Lalitpur, which is expected to position the state alongside Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh as one of India's leading bulk drug manufacturing hubs. The project in the Bundelkhand region is expected to attract investments exceeding Rs 12,000 crore, according to the Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA). Mayur Maheshwari, Chief Executive Officer of UPSIDA, said, "The pharma park project in Lalitpur is one of the state government's landmark initia-

tives. It is entirely state-sponsored, aimed at achieving self-reliance in bulk drug and API manufacturing. The idea is for Uttar Pradesh to take the lead." Spread over 1,472 acres, the project has entered its first phase with 353 acres already under development. "We have secured environmental clearances and allotments for the first phase have begun," Maheshwari added. The project also lays thrust on having Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD), an advanced wastewater management strategy that ensures no industrial liquid waste is discharged into the environment. Instead, all wastewater generated during manufacturing is

treated, purified, and either reused within the facility or converted into solid waste for safe disposal. Following a successful road-

show in Ahmedabad last week, where several companies signed key investment proposals, UPSIDA is now planning similar outreach in



Mumbai to tap into a wider pool of pharma players. "We recently held roadshows in Gujarat, and previously in Chandigarh, and Hyderabad. "Next, we plan to target Mumbai and other locations to attract major pharma players," he said. Maheshwari described the Lalitpur pharma park as a state-of-the-art facility offering plug-and-play infrastructure. "All utilities will be underground. The park will have climate-controlled warehouses, multiple logistics chains, and steam and solvent recovery systems...all available to manufacturers based on their needs. The entire facility will operate on a zero liquid discharge

basis," he explained. He further noted that the site is equipped with CCTV surveillance, accommodation units, in-house skilling centres, and other support infrastructure to ensure it becomes the best bulk drug park in the country. Highlighting the changing dynamics of the pharma industry, Maheshwari said, "Himachal Pradesh was a major manufacturing hub for years, but once subsidies and tax holidays ended, manufacturers shifted to Gujarat and Hyderabad. Uttar Pradesh is well-positioned to fill that gap." "Our units in Lalitpur will be operational within two to two-and-a-half years.



‘REPRESENTING CRAFT ISN’T LIMITED TO A SPECIFIC EVENT’—IT’S SIMPLY PART OF WHO I AM’

TEJAL SINHA  
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Shalini Passi didn’t just walk the red carpet at the 77th Cannes Film Festival—she carried a story, a legacy, and a vision stitched into every thread of her ensemble. Representing Longitude 77, her debut on the iconic steps wasn’t about spectacle; it was about substance. A longtime patron of Indian art and design, Shalini arrived not merely as a guest but as a cultural envoy—gracefully merging India’s rich heritage with a modern, global sensibility. In a space known for glamour, she stood out for her intention, turning fashion into a narrative and the red carpet into a canvas for storytelling rooted in identity, artistry and pride.

“It felt surreal but, in all honesty, my first reaction wasn’t the typical jump-for-joy moment. I had so much going on at the time that my mind immediately went into planning mode. I started thinking: What date is it? How do I make this work? What needs to be done next?” Though she later realised the moment deserved more celebration, that initial response speaks volumes about the artist, collector and philanthropist she is—someone deeply grounded, organised and thoughtful about her presence and purpose.

Known for standing at the unique intersection of fashion and art, Shalini’s look for Cannes wasn’t just about glamour—it was a carefully curated statement. “Design and architecture have always been deep passions—sometimes even more so than traditional art,” she shares. Her Cannes ensemble, designed in collaboration with the celebrated couturier Manish Malhotra, was conceived as a story rather than just a garment.

Rooted in the concept of Longitude 77, the meridian that runs through the heart of India, the gown was symbolic of geographical identity and cultural richness. Indigo, a historically significant color associated with India’s colonial past and creative legacy, took center stage in her ensemble, complemented by earthy camel tones representing Indian soil and roots.

“I could have chosen a Western silhouette off the rack,” she explains, “but I felt strongly about wearing something that was created just for me—something that reflected my personality, my aesthetic, and most importantly, my intention.” For Shalini, this red carpet moment was a celebration of India’s artistic soul, interpreted through fashion, and shared on one of the world’s most international stages.

Having walked high-fashion carpets before, Shalini is no stranger to the grandeur of such events. But Cannes was different. “It’s a truly international stage where art, cinema and creativity from around the world come together,”

she says. For her, it was about more than just looking good—it was about honouring and showcasing Indian culture and art with authenticity and pride. “That intention of representing my roots with authenticity and pride—is what will stay with me forever.”

Surprisingly, her meticulously crafted look required just one fitting. “He [Manish Malhotra] is a perfectionist,” she smiles.

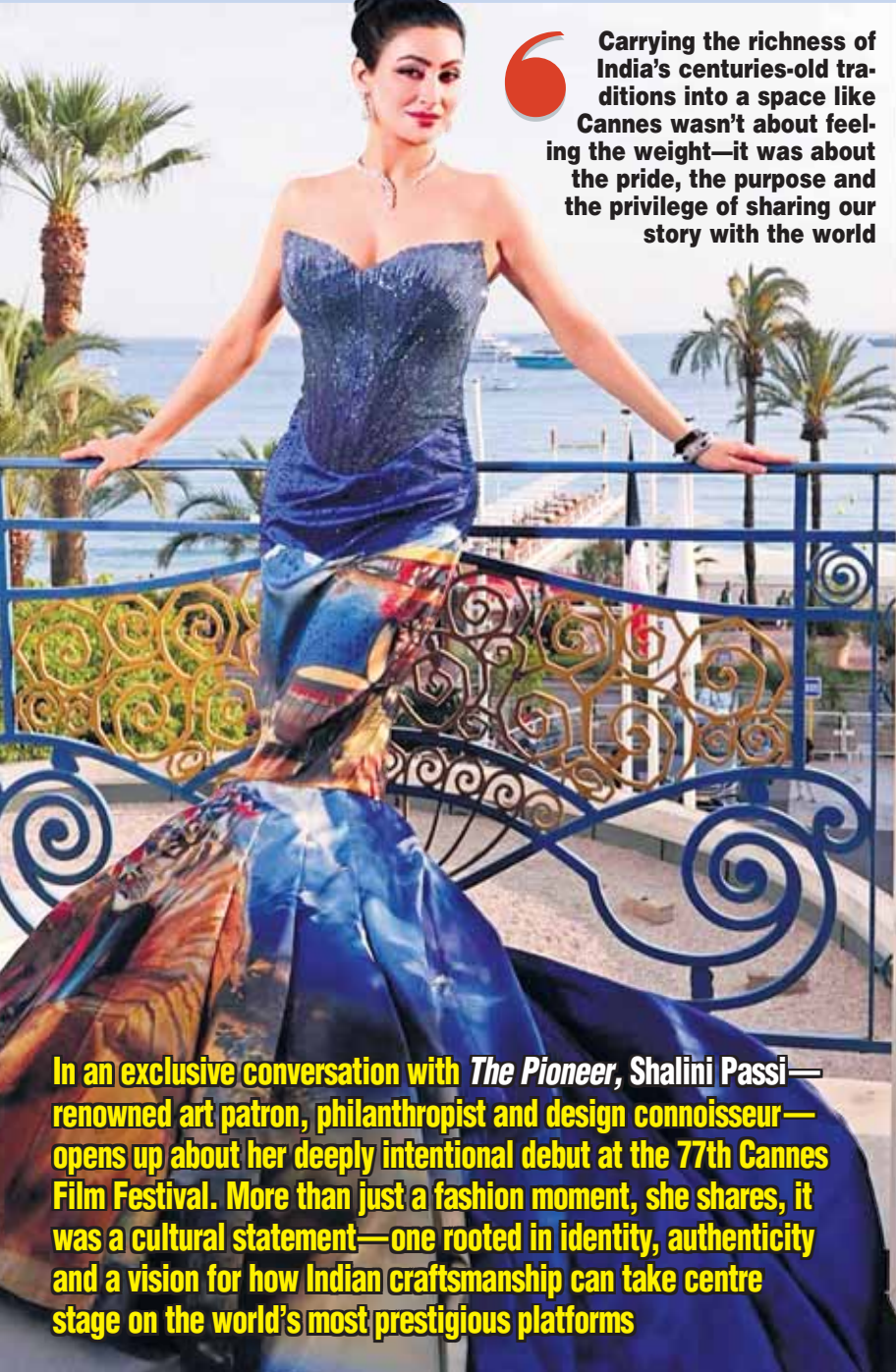
While most might rework their wardrobes for a global event like Cannes, Shalini packed the way she always does—with her love for Indian textiles woven into her choices. “Representing craft isn’t limited to a specific event; it’s simply part of who I am,” she says. Whether attending Cannes or heading to Ladakh during the pandemic for a shoot, she always carries sarees and Indian textiles that she genuinely enjoys wearing.

This time was no exception. “For this trip, I packed a mix: beautifully crafted Indian sarees alongside couture gowns from some of the best designers. It’s a blend of tradition and modernity, and that balance really reflects who I am.” Her longstanding creative relationship with Manish Malhotra made him the natural collaborator for Cannes. “He truly understands my sensibilities, how I like a garment to fit, and the kind of impact I want it to create,” she says. The designer’s shared love for art made the process even more seamless and meaningful. Their goal was clear: to create a look that was steeped in heritage but expressed in a contemporary way—“rich in heritage, yet contemporary in its expression,” as she puts it.

Indian textiles were not just included—they were highlighted. “We showcased unique Indian crafts and textiles, blending traditional techniques with contemporary styling,” she says. Her efforts didn’t go unnoticed. The international press responded with appreciation, acknowledging the authenticity and depth of the narrative behind her look.

“It was rewarding to see Indian craftsmanship being recognised and celebrated on such a prestigious platform,” she shares. And in a world where organic, non-sponsored press is becoming rare, this recognition felt especially validating. As someone who merges luxury with tradition, Shalini is vocal about reshaping global understanding of Indian design. “Absolutely, and I believe the narrative needs to shift in a big way,” she says when asked if international audiences are beginning to see Indian fashion as more than just “ethnic wear.”

For too long, global fashion has seen Western audiences as the default consumers. “But that’s no longer the case. We are consumers now, and international brands need to recognize and cater to our tastes, not the other way around.” Whether it’s a saree, a tex-



In an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer*, Shalini Passi—renowned art patron, philanthropist and design connoisseur—opens up about her deeply intentional debut at the 77th Cannes Film Festival. More than just a fashion moment, she shares, it was a cultural statement—one rooted in identity, authenticity and a vision for how Indian craftsmanship can take centre stage on the world’s most prestigious platforms

Carrying the richness of India’s centuries-old traditions into a space like Cannes wasn’t about feeling the weight—it was about the pride, the purpose and the privilege of sharing our story with the world

World who’s been representing us so beautifully!” she says with warmth. “I felt like I was just walking under the trail of her gown, so to speak.”

For Shalini, it was never about the weight of expectation—it was about purpose and pride. “Carrying the richness of India’s centuries-old traditions into a space like Cannes wasn’t about feeling the weight—it was about the pride, the purpose, and the privilege of sharing our story with the world.”

From the vibrant art scene of Bengal to biennales around the world and now to Cannes, Shalini’s journey has been rooted in creativity and cultural sensitivity. “Art has always been in my blood,” she shares. Her father, though unable to pursue his love for painting and architecture, passed on those passions to her. She trained at Triveni Kala Sangam and began collecting art at a young age, drawn to artists like Raza, Ram Kumar and Hussain.

“Each piece spoke to me,” she says and it was through these visual dialogues that she grew—not just as a collector, but as a storyteller. Many view Shalini as a bridge between classical Indian sensibilities and modern aesthetics—a role she approaches with humility. “I wouldn’t say I’ve fully achieved that balance though I deeply admire it,” she admits. Her mother, who wore exquisite textile sarees from across India, remains a style icon for her. “But I find myself leaning toward more contemporary versions of traditional attire, as that’s what feels more natural to me.” Her values, however, remain deeply rooted in Indian culture. She shares how she avoids collecting antiques like broken temple sculptures due to the discomfort around their origins. “It’s a journey, and while the intention is very much there, some things just take time.”

Shalini’s love for travel is driven not by luxury, but by cultural curiosity. “It’s less about the food or wine and more about observing culture—the clothing, the way people live, how they express themselves,” she says. Her trip to Cannes wasn’t just about fashion—it was about representation. “I went as an Indian who belongs to one of the world’s largest and most dynamic economies. I carried with me a sense of pride and responsibility.”

Her hope is to inspire a shift in perspective. “I want international filmmakers and creatives to see India for what it truly is today—a modern, diverse and progressive nation.” Through this presence, she aims to open doors to more respectful storytelling and meaningful cross-cultural collaborations. In walking the red carpet at Cannes, Shalini Passi wasn’t just showcasing a gown—she was presenting a powerful, artistic narrative of India’s past, present, and future. And in doing so, she reminded the world of the enduring beauty of authenticity, heritage and intention.

tile, or even the backline of a dress, Indian preferences carry weight—and she’s glad that brands are finally taking note. “It’s luxurious, contemporary and globally relevant—and yes, the industry is beginning to

acknowledge that, which is a promising shift.” Walking the red carpet at Cannes was more than a personal milestone for Shalini—it was a moment to reflect on those who came before her. “We already have our forever Miss

Soundarya Sharma hits back at claims of female objectification in *Housefull 5*



Actor Soundarya Sharma, who stars in the latest released *Housefull 5*, has addressed ongoing criticism about the portrayal of female characters in the film. In a latest interview, the actress expressed surprise at concerns regarding objectification and the emphasis on appearance over substance in the comedy franchise’s latest installment.

When asked about the backlash from some viewers and critics regarding the film’s representation of women, Soundarya

responded, “I don’t see that. I don’t see any of it. I don’t know, maybe since you’re saying it. Honestly, I haven’t gotten time to sit and read all of these because I’ve been busy, counting numbers and excited.” She added that the criticism is best addressed by the filmmakers, not actors. “I think makers would be the right people to answer this because an actor is just subjective to someone’s vision. It’s made in a very light way and with heart. I don’t know who these people are who are talking like this.” The actor also responded to comments about the costumes worn by female actors in the film. She defended the styling choices, stating they reflect contemporary society rather than impose anything inappropriate. “I feel this isn’t the first time anyone has worn such outfits. It’s also a reflection of society—not like something has been forced or plugged in. There have been actors who’ve worn bikinis as well as sarees for their roles. I’m not able to understand this fuss. People have been wearing all sorts of sarees for songs and everything,” she added.

While *Housefull 5* continues to draw audiences with its signature mix of slapstick comedy and over-the-top antics, the film has also reignited conversations about how women are portrayed in mainstream commercial cinema. However, Soundarya maintains that her experience was lighthearted and positive, and that she remains focused on celebrating the film’s success.

Male infertility matters too!

When couples begin the journey of parenthood, attention typically falls on the health of the woman first. As healthy and natural as it is, the other side of the fertility picture needs the same attention: the health of the male reproductive system. Male infertility testing is pivotal in getting everyone on the same page in learning and coping with conception problems. This isn’t a matter of guilt; it’s a matter of coming together with a complete understanding of both partners’ fertility. Given the advancement of reproductive science to date, even male fertility testing has become simple, revealing and at times, necessary.

FACTORS AFFECTING MALE FERTILITY

Infertility strikes millions of couples worldwide, and in almost half of these cases, male factors are involved. Male fertility, however, is too often not assessed until after the course of evaluation. This represents a delay in diagnosis and reduces the prospects of effective treatment on time. The recognition of their respective contributions to conception represents the start of more balanced and potent treatments for fertility. Laying the base as a concern over male fertility first enables couples to avoid exaggerated stress and find solutions sooner.

KNOWING HOW VALUABLE TESTING IS

Male fertility testing is essential as it will detect potential problems like low sperm count, impaired motility, abnormal morphology, hormonal imbalance, or underlying medical conditions like varicocele, infections, or genetic issues causing infertility. Knowing the underlying cause enables physicians to formulate a specific treatment plan, rather than simply trying and failing. With a clear diagnosis, couples can make informed choices about the future, whether that is through lifestyle changes, drugs, or assisted reproductive technology like in vitro fertilization, leading to more focused, effective and evidence-led care.

TYPES OF MALE FERTILITY TESTS

◆ Physical examination

A urologist will perform a physical check-up of some

anatomical issues that might be complicating the fertility process. This can also involve a varicocele, swelling of veins in the scrotum and this will disrupt sperm production. Solutions for these can, at times, be re-established by treating these problems through surgery or any other form of intervention.

◆ Hormonal testing

Another indispensable element in the reproductive cycle of sperm is hormones, such as testosterone, FSH and LH; their imbalances can signal conditions such as hypogonadism that may affect fertility as well as general health. Assessment of hormones will thus guide whether medical intervention would be worthwhile.

◆ Genetic testing

Some instances call for genetic testing, especially when the sperm count is low or even absent. Genetic testing could result in the detection of chromosomal abnormalities and gene mutations that may compromise fertility and possibly inherited conditions.

◆ Semen Analysis

This often forms the first and most critical test in assessing male fertility. It shows key aspects of sperm, such as count, motility and morphology. These provide a complete picture of sperm health and are considered critical in determining the chances of natural conception. Additionally, the semen analysis should be at least done twice within a span of two weeks; only then is it considered to be a problematic test, as it cannot be determined in a single test.

ADVANTAGES OF EARLY DIAGNOSIS

Early treatment

If the fertility problems are detected at an early age, then relevant treatment may be initiated and time would not be wasted. In some cases, small adjustments such as an improved diet, reduced intake of liquor, smoking cessation and stress management can enhance sperm quality to a significant extent.

ALLOWING GOOD MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Emotional problems with infertility can cause anxiety.

Without definite answers, the couple can become confused, anxious, or even place the blame. Early evaluation of both individuals promotes partnership, better communication and less emotional stress. Including both partners in the decision-making process builds a more understanding and supportive relationship.

BUILDING A STRONGER FERTILITY PLAN

◆ Confident choices

No matter whether a person is striving for natural conception, seeking assisted reproductive techniques, or looking for sperm preservation, knowledge of the male status of fertility can assist in directing decisions. This is particularly useful with couples making plans for future conception or extended family planning.

◆ Planning for the future

Fertility is not only a concern nowadays, but it can also affect long-term plans for a family. More knowledge about male fertility empowers couples to make wise decisions, especially when considering spacing children or postponing parenting. It also informs men whether they should bank their sperm since certain treatments or occurrences in life could later have an effect on their fertility.

◆ Team approach to parenthood

Fertility is a shared journey and addressing it together leads to the best outcomes. Testing only one partner may leave important questions unanswered. A comprehensive approach, where both partners are evaluated from the outset, creates a fuller understanding of reproductive health and allows for a more effective treatment plan. And to also know that this thing called male fertility is just like female fertility; it’s easier for a couple to roam their path towards parenthood. This line of thought only heightens the chances of conception but also builds upon a stronger platform of trust, collaboration and resilience in the long run.

Male fertility testing is no add-on; it’s part and parcel of the reproductive process. Evaluating both the male and the female partners in the assessment will not only add insight, enhance results and improve emotional support throughout this journey, but also better equip couples with taking charge of dealing with infertility issues, owing to choice. Ultimately, it’s not about whether it’s “his” or “hers”; it’s about working together to build a family.

(The author, Dr Kaberi Banerjee, is an Infertility & IVF expert and founder & medical director of Advance Fertility & Gynecology Centre.)





The Indian Icon Awards 2025, organized by Pride India Awards, was held at The Park, Somajiguda, Hyderabad, celebrating excellence across entrepreneurship, education, healthcare, and culture. The prestigious event honoured individuals and organizations making impactful contributions to Indian society. The ceremony was graced by South Indian actress Kavya Thapar, Nari Puraskar awardee K. Radha Devi and renowned geologist Dr. Vasudev V.N., founder of Sacred Trust, who felicitated the winners

Mahila Dakshata Samiti Educational Institutions officially launched their Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) course at Chandanagar, Hyderabad. The institutions — including Suman Junior College for Girls, Shri V.D. Bajaj Degree College for Women, Mahila Dakshata Samiti, and Bansilal Malani College of Nursing — hosted an inspiring event attended by students, faculty, dignitaries, and community leaders. The occasion was marked by the presence of the First Lady of Telangana, Sudha Devi Varma, who delivered a motivating keynote address as the Chief Guest.



ANANNTHA Law College is gearing up to host its 4th Intra College Moot Court Competition on July 4 and 5, 2025, providing an engaging platform for its budding legal minds to demonstrate their advocacy skills, legal acumen and courtroom decorum. A flagship event in the institution's academic calendar, the competition replicates real-life legal proceedings, encouraging students to present well-reasoned arguments, conduct rigorous legal research and sharpen their public speaking under pressure.

Dubai-based renowned perfumer Yusuf Bhai visited Hyderabad and shared his excitement about bringing his exclusive range of perfumes to the Indian market. Speaking at a press conference at the Taj Krishna hotel, he emphasized the deep cultural connection Hyderabadis have with perfumes. He also announced a special exhibition showcasing globally celebrated perfumes, scheduled to take place on June 22nd at Banjara Hills.

Dhanuka Agritech Limited has launched its latest innovation — "DINKAR," a next-generation herbicide tailored for transplanted paddy crops. The launch event saw the participation of prominent guests from India and Japan, including Chief Guest Kohichi OgitaSan, Manager of the International Sales Division at Hokko Chemical Industry Co. Ltd., Japan — Dhanuka's global innovation partner. Key executives from Dhanuka Agritech Ltd. such as Pawan Saraogi (National Sales Head), Anupam Pal (National Marketing Head), Ramesh Reddy (Sr. General Manager) and S.H. Vali (General Manager).



Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL) announced that 15 of its students from Hyderabad have emerged as top scorers in the NEET UG 2025 examination. Among the notable achievers are K. Nikhi Sai (AIR 297), Kunal Mandhana (AIR 479), Rutvik Joshi (AIR 557), Tejeshwar Krishnamoorthy (AIR 620), and Hamza Nisar Basha (AIR 686), among others.



Resonance Hyderabad has once again showcased its academic excellence with an impressive performance in NEET 2025. Harini Sriram secured an outstanding All India Rank of 72, and notably, one out of every three students from the Hyderabad campuses earned a medical seat.



Oasis Fertility launched its "Happy Father's-To-Be Day", initiative on the occasion of Father's Day to celebrate the spirit of fatherhood. With the theme "Healthy Man, Father", the campaign aims to spotlight male reproductive health and encourage timely diagnosis and treatment. The event was inaugurated by Chief Guest Sri A. Ramulu, Additional DCP, Hyderabad Traffic Police. He was joined by Dr. Krishna Chaitanya M, Scientific Head and Clinical Embryologist at Oasis Fertility, along with other dignitaries and medical professionals.

## FUN

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



### NANCY



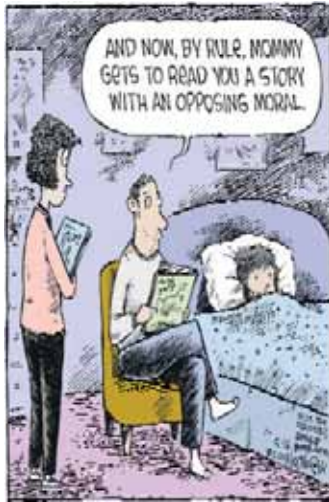
### GINGER MEGGS



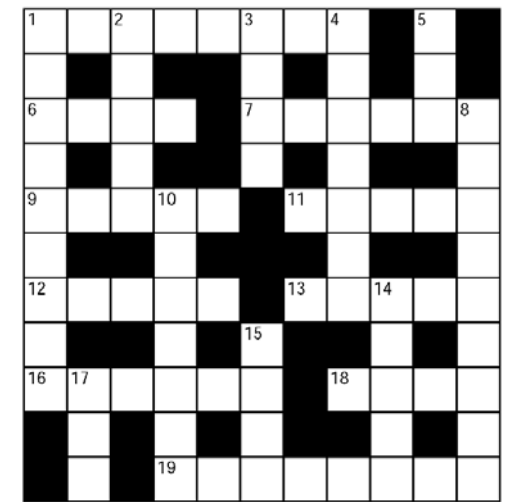
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### SUDOKU



**Yesterday's solution**

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

**Rules**

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

### ACROSS

- Gigantic
- The organs of sight
- Cardboard box
- Move on hands and knees
- Hurt by a bee
- Three times twenty
- Yell
- Gave out a long deep breath to show sadness or happiness
- A sheet-like garment worn in ancient Rome
- Think differently to someone else

### DOWN

- Do these to strengthen your muscles and keep fit
- A sung musical drama
- One time
- Make longer by pulling
- A place to see animals
- A frightening dream
- Observed
- A smell
- Counts up
- Unwell





CM'S WARM HUGS & SUBTLE DYNAMICS

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's interactions offered glimpses of camaraderie and intrigue. He warmly hugged Balakrishna and Vijay Deverakonda but shared a less emotive greeting with Allu Arjun. Later, however, the CM seemed to bond well with Allu Arjun on stage. His affectionate hug to SS Rajamouli also stood out, affirming his admiration for the director's global achievements.

SURESH KAVIRAYANI  
sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

After nearly a decade-long gap, the Telangana State Government reinstated the prestigious Gaddar Film Awards, celebrating excellence in the Telugu film industry. The grand ceremony took place on Saturday evening and was graced by several prominent Bollywood celebrities. From emotional tributes and entertaining performances to unexpected moments, here are the sidelights from the memorable event:



SOUL-STIRRING OPENING

The highlight of the evening was the stirring rendition of the Telangana anthem *Jaya Jayahe Telangana*, sung live by music director MM Keeravani and his team. As the performance echoed through the auditorium, the crowd enthusiastically chanted "Jai Telangana". Interestingly, many observed Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's visible emotional response as the anthem played.



RAJAMOULI'S HUMBLE PRESENCE

Despite being one of India's most celebrated directors, SS Rajamouli maintained a quiet and humble demeanor throughout the event. Seated silently, he reminded everyone why he remains grounded despite achieving global fame and accolades, including an Oscar.



MANGLI'S CONTROVERSIAL APPEARANCE

Playback singer Mangli's performance raised eyebrows due to its unfortunate timing. She sang a few songs, including one penned by revolutionary poet Gaddar. However, the performance came just days after a controversy where police booked her for allegedly consuming foreign liquor at her birthday party. Her presence on stage drew mixed reactions from the audience.



ALLU ARJUN'S MOMENT OF REDEMPTION

Allu Arjun received the Best Lead Actor award for *Pushpa 2* (2024). When host Suma Kanakala invited him to speak, the crowd burst into laughter as he mentioned Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. The moment was laced with humour, recalling a past incident where the actor forgot the CM's name during a previous event. It seems that moment continues to follow him.



DIL RAJU'S ALL-HANDS-ON-DECK ROLE

Producer and Telangana Film Development Corporation Chairman Dil Raju was seen coordinating the entire event. He ensured smooth proceedings from the moment the CM arrived till the end. He also had his family members—including his daughter, son-in-law, grandson, and brother Shirish—seated in the front row.

SURESH BABU'S SILENT EXIT

Veteran producer Daggubati Suresh Babu quietly exited the event just an hour after it began, reportedly due to the unavailability of a proper seat. Despite looking around, he couldn't find one and decided to leave early.

STANDING OVATIONS & LEGACY MOMENTS

The crowd rose to its feet when Balakrishna received the NTR National Award and Mani Ratnam was honored with the Paldi Jairaj Award. These moments celebrated legacy and excellence, deeply resonating with the audience.

NAG ASHWIN & PRIYANKA DUTT'S SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Director Nag Ashwin received the Best Director award and shared a warm exchange with CM Revanth Reddy. The CM also mentioned him to Deputy CM Bhatti in a brief but cordial conversation. Notably, Ashwin's wife, producer Priyanka Dutt, received an award for Mahanati. Initially receiving the award alone, she was called back by the CM when Ashwin arrived, so the couple could be honored together.



AKKINENI FAMILY'S ABSENCE FELT

A notable absence at the awards was the Akkineni family. None of the actors from the prominent film lineage attended, even though both CM Revanth Reddy and Balakrishna fondly mentioned the late Akkineni Nageswara Rao in their speeches.



NIHARIKA KONIDELA'S HEARTFELT GESTURE

Dressed elegantly in a saree, Niharika Konidela was the center of attention as she walked up to receive the award for her film Committee Kurullu. She received a thunderous round of applause and moved hearts when she respectfully touched the feet of Jayasudha, Jayaprada, and Suhasini—earning warm hugs from the legends.

SCOOTY STUNT STEALS THE SHOW

Perhaps the most thrilling part of the evening was the daring Scooty stunt performance. A team of young performers balanced atop each other, forming human pillars, with one member even standing on the shoulders of a rider on a moving Scooty. It was breathtaking and received loud applause from the CM, Balayya, Allu Arjun, Vijay Deverakonda, and others. The act, set to energetic background music including *Naatu Naatu*, drew a camera pan to Rajamouli once again.



A PICTURE-PERFECT FRAME OF YESTERYEAR STARS

One of the evening's most nostalgic highlights was seeing Jayasudha (Jury Chairperson), Jayaprada and Suhasini (attending with husband Mani Ratnam) together on stage. These iconic actresses presented awards and represented a golden era of Telugu cinema, creating a frame that delighted fans and photographers alike.



GUNASEKHAR'S FAMILY AFFAIR

Director Gunasekhar attended the ceremony with his wife and daughters to accept an award for *Rudhradevi*. Their proud family moment added to the warmth of the evening.

Rishab Shetty & crew narrowly escapes boat accident on *Kantara Chapter 1* sets

Rishab Shetty's much-anticipated film *Kantara Chapter 1*—a prequel to his critically acclaimed and award-winning *Kantara*—has once again encountered a serious setback. The latest incident, involving a near-fatal accident during the shoot, forced a sudden halt in production activities. According to multiple reports, a boat carrying Rishab Shetty and nearly 30 members of the crew capsized during a shoot sequence in the Mani reservoir, located in Karnataka. The vessel reportedly overturned in a shallow section of the reservoir, leading to a brief moment of panic among the team. Fortunately, all individuals onboard, including Shetty, escaped uninjured.

A crew member, speaking to the press, shared that the situation

turned chaotic after the boat unexpectedly flipped. "Everyone was scared when the boat toppled in the middle of the reservoir. But the water was shallow enough for everyone to get out quickly and safely reach the shore," the source revealed.

While no human injuries were reported, the mishap caused significant damage to the production's filming equipment. Key gear, including high-end cameras, is believed to have been lost underwater. The full extent of the damage is still being assessed.

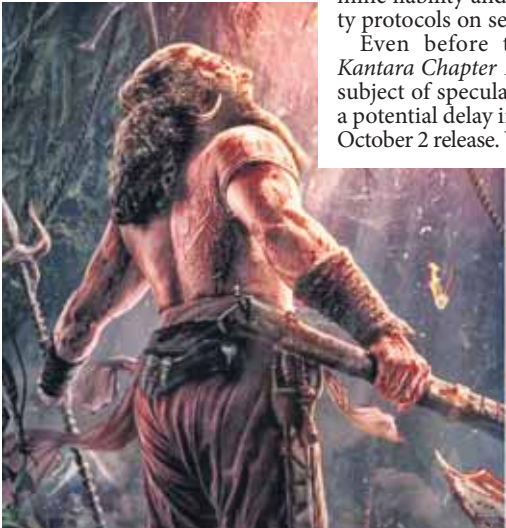
Following the accident, the local police from Thirthahalli were promptly informed. Officials reached the location to conduct an initial inquiry and evaluate the circumstances that led to the mishap. A formal investigation has since been initiated to determine liability and examine safety protocols on set.

Even before this incident, *Kantara Chapter 1* had been the subject of speculation regarding a potential delay in its scheduled October 2 release. While rumours

of postponement gained momentum due to the lack of recent updates from the production team, the filmmakers had reiterated on multiple occasions that the project remained on track for its planned theatrical debut.

This latest disruption has once again raised concerns about possible delays, though there has been no official word from the production team regarding a change in schedule following the accident.

This is not the first time the production has faced turbulence. Previous reports have noted a series of unfortunate incidents during the shoot, making *Kantara Chapter 1* a film that's been in the spotlight not just for its cinematic promise but also for the series of challenges it's facing behind the scenes.



'I almost wanted to quit acting—it was then 8 *Vasanthalu* came to me'

After charming audiences in the youthful college drama *Mad*, actress Ananthika Sanilkumar is set to return with a bold and emotionally charged woman-centric film titled *8 Vasanthalu*. Showcasing her versatility, the actress promises to deliver a deeply layered performance in a narrative that spans a decade of her character's life—from age 17 to 27—blending action, romance, and emotional intensity. "Though the story revolves around me, all other characters too have important layers, depth, and intensity," said Ananthika about the film. She shared that after completing *Mad*, she was waiting for the right script and this project came to her at the perfect time. "Whatever I wanted to act, all those ingredients are there in this film. I love to do action and a beautiful love story, so both are there in this script," she added. Calling it an ideal role to showcase her acting skills, she noted, "I have to perform a lot in this film."

Not many know that Ananthika is a black belt holder in Karate. "Yes, I know Karate and I am also a classical dancer. For this film, I learned the Chinese martial art Wing Chun for three months and also trained in the Kalari fight," she revealed. Recalling her emotional connection with the story, she shared, "When the director narrated the story to me, I really cried. I felt it connected well to me. It's a pure love story and it's like a proper real-life story when you watch it on the screen." The film, she said, is not aimed at any particular audience. "It is related to all ages. My character's name is Shruti Ayodhya, who comes from a martial arts background," she explained. At one point, Ananthika even considered quitting acting due to being typecast. "At that time, this offer came and I decided to continue," she said.

While she was working on the Telugu film *Rajahmundry Rose Milk* in 2022,

Ananthika received a call for *8 Vasanthalu*. "The director saw my interview in a magazine, connected to it, and called me for this film," she recounted. Speaking about the director, Phanindra, she said, "He is like my guru. I learnt a lot from him and he is a passionate filmmaker. It's a great experience for me working with him."

Ananthika did not take part in the promotions of *Mad* due to her academic commitments. "I had to prepare for my biometric practical and theory exams, so I couldn't do it at that time," she shared. She is currently studying law in her first year. "If I were not an actress, I would be a politician. Maybe when I enter my 40s, I want to be a politician—that's why I am studying Law," she revealed.

Speaking about the lasting impact of *8 Vasanthalu*, Ananthika said, "Sometimes it carries with me. After the shoot, when I go home and look at myself in the mirror, I feel something is missing. The impact of this role is still there a bit. It's a very memorable character for me."

Looking ahead, the actress is seeking powerful, performance-oriented roles. "Whether it's small or big, I want to portray strong roles," she concluded.



In *8 Vasanthalu*, Ananthika Sanilkumar steps into a deeply layered, performance-heavy role that marks a significant departure from her earlier college-romance outing *Mad*. Ahead of the film's release, she discusses the film, her character and more



