



# The Pioneer

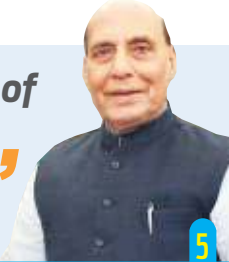
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**'BrahMos is a message of our armed forces' strength'**



**SPICE MEETS**  
STORYTELLING WITH  
FORGOTTEN FLAVOURS OF  
ANDHRA BACK ON TABLE



Mahesh Babu's Nephew Jayakrishna  
to Debut Under Ajay Bhupathi's

**DIRECTION**



## QUOTE OF THE DAY

The Pioneer

Eatala Rajender didn't get the post he wanted in the BJP, and so he is behaving like a psycho. Eatala should ask questions in decent language. Then Congress leaders will answer him. If you use offensive language, we will answer in the same language. The CM seems to be ignoring you, thinking that you are talking due to disappointment, as you did not get the post you wanted. But we will not leave you



— T. Jagga Reddy, TPCC Working President

P4

## DON'T MISS...

### 6 types of services for new rice cards

A total of six services have been made available for the issuance of new rice cards. So far, 72,519 people have availed themselves of these services. From 15 May, these services can also be accessed from home through WhatsApp Governance by sending "Hello" to 95523 00009. Addressing the media on Sunday, Civil Supplies Minister Narendla Manohar said that from 8 May, six services have been offered — issuance of new rice cards, card division, change of address, addition of members, deletion of members...

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### 'Nehru convened special session'

Congress leader Digvijaya Singh on Sunday reminded the Union government of the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru convening a special session of Parliament during the war with China following a request by Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Singh wondered whether India had accepted a third-party mediation as he questioned the 'silence' of PM Narendra Modi over the understanding reached between India and Pakistan after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes...

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### India, EU to hold FTA talks from today

India and the European Union (EU) chief negotiators will begin the next round of talks on the proposed free trade agreement (FTA) here from Monday, with an aim to conclude the first phase of the pact as early as possible, according to an official. The two sides have agreed to conclude the agreement in two phases on account of the uncertain global trade environment, particularly due to the US tariff actions under President Donald Trump. "The EU team will be here for the 11th round of..."

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### India wins Women's Tri-Nation ODI series

India displayed absolute dominance to crush Sri Lanka by 97 runs and earn a well-deserved title triumph in the Women's Tri-Nation ODI series after vice-captain Smriti Mandhana's sublime century and the bowlers' collective effort in the title clash here on Sunday. After Mandhana rose to the occasion to power India to a commanding 342 for seven, the bowlers completed the task by bundling out Sri Lanka for 245, with Sneha Rana (4/38) and Amanjot Kaur (3/54) doing the bulk of the damage...

-SPORTS

# 'If Pak attacks, we will retaliate harder'



## India inflicted heavy losses on Pak military: Armed Forces

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Sunday said it inflicted tremendous losses to the Pakistan military, including downing its fighter jets featuring latest technologies and damaging key military installations close to even capital Islamabad, during the three-day confrontation between the two sides.

Director General of Military Operations (DGM) Lt Gen Rajiv Ghai said 35-40 Pakistani military personnel were killed in the combat and New Delhi achieved its desired objectives and that Pakistan will have to pay a very heavy price if it

resorts to any misadventure.

At a media briefing, senior military officials of the Army, Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy provided details of Operation Sindoor, including how India repelled Pakistani attempts to target Indian military installations and civilian areas. To a question, Air Marshal AK Bharti said India definitely downed a few Pakistani planes but refused to hazard a guess on the numbers.

"Their planes were prevented from coming inside our border. So we do not have the wreckage with us but definitely we have downed a few planes," he said.

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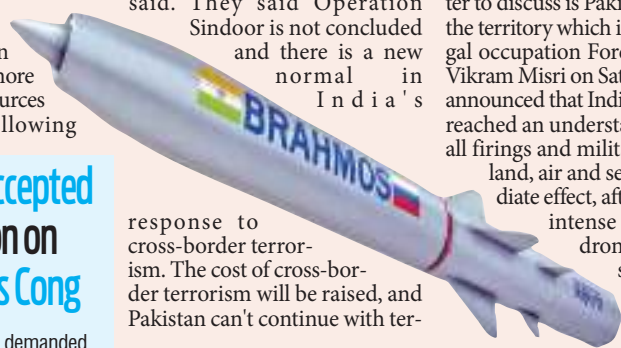
## Modi instructs Armed Forces that response should be more forceful: Govt sources

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

There is a new normal in India's response to cross-border terrorism, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi instructing the armed forces that the country's response to every action by Pakistan should be more forceful, government sources said on Sunday. Following

Operation Sindoor, Prime Minister Modi told the armed forces that bullets must be responded to by artillery (Wahan se goli chalegi, toh yahan se gola chalega), the sources said. They said Operation Sindoor is not concluded and there is a new normal in India's

response to cross-border terrorism. The cost of cross-border terrorism will be raised, and Pakistan can't continue with ter-



Continued on Page 2

## Trump praises 'strong, powerful' leadership of India, Pakistan

PNS ■ NEW YORK/WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Sunday praised the "strong and unwaveringly powerful" leadership of India and Pakistan for reaching a "ceasefire" and offered to work with them for a "solution" on the Kashmir issue. India has always maintained that the Kashmir issue is a bilateral matter and there is no space for any third party. India asserts that the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and the Union Territory of Ladakh are and always will be integral and inalienable parts of it.

Continued on Page 2



## Pakistan 'committed' to faithful implementation of ceasefire: Foreign Office

PNS ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan on Sunday said it was "committed" to faithful implementation of the ceasefire with India, asserting that its forces are handling the situation with "responsibility and restraint".

India and Pakistan on Saturday reached an understanding to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea, with immediate effect. Hours later, the arrangement came under severe pressure with New Delhi blaming Islamabad for breaching it.

In a media briefing close to midnight, India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri called upon Pakistan to take "appropriate steps" to address these violations and deal with the situation with "seriousness and responsibility".

Continued on Page 2

# Tearful farewell to fallen Agniveer Naik

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Education and IT Minister Nara Lokesh attended the funeral of Agniveer Veerjawaan Murali Naik, who sacrificed his life for the nation during Operation Sindoor. The soldier hailed from Kalitanda village in Gorantla mandal of Sri Sathya Sai district.

Minister Lokesh visited Murali Naik's residence to offer his final respects, laying a floral tribute and giving a solemn salute at the martyr's mortal remains. He consoled the grieving parents and interacted with relatives and friends, reviewing WhatsApp chats exchanged between Murali and his cousin Rajasekhar shortly before his deployment—messages that left the minister visibly moved.

Slogans of "Jai Veerjawaan Murali Naik," "Bharat Mata Ki Jai," and "Vande Mataram" echoed across the village as large crowds gathered to honour the fallen soldier. The funeral procession saw an outpouring of emotion, with many locals joining in a show of national pride and collective mourning.

In a gesture of deep respect, Minister Lokesh personally carried the martyr's mortal remains during the procession. The final rites were conducted with full state honours



The government has announced financial support of Rs 50 lakh to his family, along with five acres of agricultural land and a 300-square-yard residential plot. His father will be offered a government job. A memorial will be built at the funeral site, and a bronze statue will be erected at the district headquarters in honour of his sacrifice.

on the family's agricultural land. From early morning, Lokesh oversaw the arrangements, coordinating with officials and personally inspecting the site to ensure all was in order.

Speaking at a press conference following the funeral, Minister Lokesh assured that both the central and state governments would fully support Murali Naik's family. He praised the Indian armed forces for their decisive retaliation in destroying terrorist bases across the border, and stressed the importance of recognising the sacrifices made by soldiers like Murali, who serve the nation far from their families.

Murali Naik, the only son in the family, had long dreamt of joining the armed forces and had expressed his wish to be draped in the Indian flag upon his death. Brought up by his grandparents, his loss is particularly poignant for the family.

The government has announced financial support of Rs 50 lakh to his family, along with five acres of agricultural land and a 300-square-yard residential plot. His father will be offered a government job. A memorial will be built at the funeral site, and a bronze statue will be erected at the district headquarters in honour of his sacrifice.

Continued on Page 2

## Pawan slams Pak for ceasefire violation

PNS ■ KALLI THANDA

Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan visited Kalitanda village in Gorantla mandal on Saturday to pay homage to Agniveer Murali Naik, who was martyred during Operation Sindoor. "It is deeply painful that a young soldier, who rejected a railway job to serve the nation, had to lose his life at just 23. His sacrifice reflects the far-reaching consequences of terrorism and border conflict across the country," he said, extending condolences to Murali's parents, Jyothi Bai and Sriram Naik.

Condemning Pakistan's breach of ceasefire merely three hours after agreeing to a truce, Pawan Kalyan termed it a betrayal. He warned the nation not to trust Pakistan's "ceasefire theatrics".

Speaking to the media after paying his respects, the Deputy CM said, "India has never desired war, nor initiated one against any neighbour. But to protect ourselves, we are left with no other option."

Continued on Page 2

## 350 AP students safely reach Delhi from J & K

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Amid rising tensions in the border regions, Andhra Pradesh Bhavan in New Delhi has successfully coordinated the safe return of 350 students from the state who were studying in Jammu & Kashmir.



As of Sunday evening, an additional 100 students had reached the national capital,

bringing the total number of returnees to 350. Of these, 90 have already departed for their respective hometowns across Andhra Pradesh. The remaining 260 students are currently being accommodated at Andhra Pradesh Bhavan, where they are receiving free lodging, nutritious meals, and transport facilities.

The Bhavan is also arranging

confirmed train ticket bookings and providing local transport to ensure a smooth onward journey for the students to their native places.

In response to the escalating situation along the border, a 24x7 Control Room has been set up at the Bhavan to assist residents of Andhra Pradesh who are living in or passing through the border states.



Vellore Institute of Technology  
(Chartered by the University under section 3 of UGC Act, 1956)


## Hearty Congratulations

# Dr. G. Viswanathan

Founder & Chancellor - VIT

on being conferred Honorary Doctor of Pedagogy  
by the prestigious

**Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT),**  
Rochester, New York State, USA


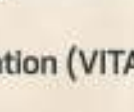
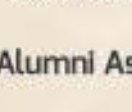



This momentous occasion of being conferred with your Honorary Doctorate marks a remarkable milestone, underscoring your unwavering dedication, profound impact on countless lives through selfless service and significant effort in nation building.

We salute your transformative work and inspiring journey.

Best Wishes from

**VIT Alumni Association (VITAA)**



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has announced a fresh round of appointments to several key nominated posts across various boards, development authorities, and welfare corporations. The appointments reflect the ruling Telugu Desam Party's (TDP) efforts to accommodate not only its members but also those from allied parties and civil society groups, including the Jana Sena Party (JSP), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the Amaravati Joint Action Committee (JAC).

Among those appointed are Dr Z Shiva Prasad from Nellore City to the AP Inland Waterways Authority Board and S Rajashekar from Kuppam to the AP Education & Welfare Infrastructure Development Corporation. Former MLA Sugunamma from Tirupati has been nominated to the AP Greening & Beautification Corporation, while

Venkata Sivudu Yadav from Guntakal will serve on the AP Labour Welfare Board.

Valavala Babji from Tadepalligudem has been appointed to the AP Buildings & Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board, and Burugupalli Seshu Rao from Nidadavolu to the AP Skill Development Corporation. Pithala Sujatha from Bhimavaram will head the AP Women's Cooperative Finance Corporation. Divakar Reddy of Tirupati has been placed in the Tirupati Urban Development Authority, and Vani Venkata Shiva Prasad Pennuboyina from Eluru in the Eluru Urban Development Authority.

Dr Ravi Vemuru of Tenali will lead the AP Non-Resident Telugu Society, while Malepati Subba Naidu from Kavali has been appointed to the AP Agro Industries Development Corporation Ltd. KS Jawahar, representing Kovvur (SC), will chair the AP State SC



Rayapati Sailaja  
named chief of AP  
Women's Commission



Alapati Suresh made  
Chairman of AP  
Press Academy

Commission. The AP Fishermen Cooperative Societies Federation will be headed by Peddiraju Kollu from Narasapuram.

Perepi Eeshwar of Vijayawada East has been selected for the AP Kummari Shalivahana Welfare & Development Corporation, and Mallela Eshwara Rao from Guntur West for the AP Vaddera Welfare & Development Corporation. Akasapu Swamy from Tadepalligudem

will serve in the AP Tailors Development Cooperative Federation.

From the Jana Sena Party, Leelakrishna of Mandapeta has been appointed to the AP Irrigation Development Cooperative Corporation (APSIDC), Riyaz from Ongole to the AP Livestock Development Agency, and Dr Pasupuleti Hari Prasad of Tirupati to the AP Handicrafts Development Corporation.

From the BJP, S Bojji Reddy from Rampachodavaram will head the AP Scheduled Tribes Commission. Dr Rayapati Sailaja, representing the Amaravati JAC has been appointed to the AP Women's Commission, and Alapati Suresh, also from the Amaravati JAC, will lead the AP Press Academy.

These appointments signal the government's attempt to ensure broad-based political participation and to bring diverse voices into institutional governance.







DEATH THREAT, ATTACK ON HOME

# Former MP Kesineni Nani files police complaint

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former Member of Parliament Kesineni Srinivas (Nani) has complained with the Vijayawada City Police Commissioner, alleging a death threat from one Chakravarthy Kadiyala and a separate attack on his residence, Kesineni Nilayam, following his recent complaint to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) regarding alleged financial irregularities in the Andhra Pradesh liquor trade.

In his letter dated 11 May 2025, Nani claimed that shortly after publicly disclosing his submission to the ED—reportedly naming a sitting MP in connection with the liquor scam—he received a threatening call from mobile number 8008969677. The caller, identifying himself as Chakravarthy Kadiyala,



allegedly used abusive language and issued a direct death threat, demanding that Nani withdraw his complaint. “This threat amounts to criminal intimidation of the most serious nature and cannot be taken lightly,” Nani wrote.

The former MP also linked the threat to an incident of

vandalism at around 1:00 AM on 10 May, when an unidentified person reportedly damaged property at his residence.

CCTV footage showed the intruder removing police-placed traffic barriers and damaging plants near the eastern pond area of Kesineni Nilayam. The intruder also

allegedly threatened a security guard before fleeing the scene. Patamata Police were alerted, and Assistant Sub-Inspector Kiran Kumar conducted a preliminary inspection.

Nani has sought immediate registration of a criminal case under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code, including criminal intimidation, conspiracy, and mischief causing damage. He demanded interrogation of Chakravarthy Kadiyala, analysis of call records, and thorough examination of CCTV footage to identify the culprits.

“These incidents are clear attempts to intimidate and silence me for pursuing a lawful complaint before the Enforcement Directorate,” he stated, urging swift police action in the interest of justice and public accountability.

## Durga Temple offers silk robes to Venkateswara Swamy

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On the occasion of the annual Brahmotsavams of Lord Venkateswara at Dwaraka Tirumala, famously known as Chinna Tirupati, the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam of Indrakeeladri, Vijayawada, presented silk robes (pattu vastrams) to the deity on Sunday.

The offering was made in the evening by the temple's Executive Officer and Deputy Collector VK Seena Naik along with his spouse, accompanied by Vedic scholars. They offered the robes to the deity as a traditional mark of reverence and goodwill between major temples.

Dwaraka Tirumala temple Executive Officer NVSN Murthy welcomed the visiting officials and honoured them with temple protocol. Chief Priest Lingambotla Durga Prasad, Assistant Chief Priest Shankara Shandilya and other Vedic scholars and priests were present.

# Fire safety awareness: Mock drill today

Public urged to attend and observe the exercise to understand emergency response protocols

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a bid to raise public awareness on how to respond effectively during fire accidents and natural disasters, a mock drill will be conducted at the District Collectorate on Monday, announced Collector Dr G Lakshmisha in an official statement on Sunday.

The mock drill, organised under the supervision of the Fire Department, will take place from 8:30 AM to 9 AM. Officials from various departments including Revenue, Police, and Transport at the district level will participate in the drill. The public is encouraged to attend and observe the exercise to understand emergency response protocols.

Dr Lakshmisha highlighted the importance of knowing how to protect oneself during emergencies like fire accidents,



building collapses during earthquakes or floods due to heavy rainfall. “In crisis situations, timely and smart responses can save precious lives,” he noted. The Collector added that mock drills play a vital role in enhancing preparedness and reviewing emergency response strategies as part of Disaster Management efforts. “The ini-

tiative aims to educate the public on how to act swiftly and responsibly during disasters. It is crucial for both authorities and citizens to be well-prepared.” The event serves as a practical demonstration of coordination among departments and helps in assessing the readiness to deal with real-life emergencies,” he said.

# Visakhapatnam faces new drug threat

## Alarming rise in injectable drug abuse calls for urgent, united action

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Once hailed as the City of Destiny, Visakhapatnam now grapples with a deepening drug crisis, as officials raise red flags over a sharp rise in the abuse of narcotic injections—a trend that marks a dangerous new phase in the city's battle against substance abuse.

While the use of marijuana and other illegal drugs has been on the rise over the past five years, recent seizures of over 760 injectable narcotics have spotlighted an especially alarming development.

These drugs—originally meant for clinical pain relief—are now being trafficked primarily from West Bengal and Odisha and misused for their prolonged psychoactive effects.

“Each injection, once priced at Rs 50, now fetches between Rs 200 and Rs 500

on the black market,” officials noted, describing the trade as both lucrative and highly dangerous. Young users, lured by the potent high that can last up to eight hours, are putting themselves at severe risk.

Medical professionals have issued urgent warnings. “These injections are not designed for recreational use,” said Dr. Sudhir Reddy, a neurologist. “Continued abuse may lead to irreversible neurological damage, severe infections, and even death due to overdose.” Adding to the problem is the widespread availability of cheaper intoxicants such as sedative pills and chemical whiteners—often serving as gateway substances for adolescents and young adults.

Law enforcement sources estimate that 5 to 10 individuals manage the city's core drug trafficking network.

However, the actual user base is believed to be far larger and deeply concealed. “We are not just dealing with drug use, but a well-organised network that preys on vulnerable youth,” said a senior Narcotics Control Bureau official.

In response, healthcare professionals, police authorities, and educators are calling for a coordinated strategy. Mental health experts advocate a balanced approach—combining strict law enforcement with community engagement, early education, and accessible rehabilitation.

“Punitive action alone won't resolve this crisis,” stressed Dr. Prathima Suresh, a psychiatrist.

“We need preventive education in schools, family-based interventions, and robust support systems for recovery,” she added.

# Vizag leads State in SHG loan monitoring app rollout

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a bid to curb financial irregularities among Self-Help Groups (SHGs), the Andhra Pradesh government is preparing to launch a mobile application to streamline loan repayments, with Visakhapatnam district taking the lead in its implementation.

The app, currently undergoing field-level testing, is expected to be launched across the State within the

next one to two months. It is designed to benefit nearly five lakh women linked to 45,000 SHGs operating under the Society for Rural Empowerment (SRE), Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC), and MEPA schemes in the joint Visakhapatnam district.

The initiative follows a surge in complaints regarding misuse of loan instalments by SHG leaders and Village Organisation Presidents

(VOPs), who were reportedly diverting funds or delaying deposits. “This app will remove middlemen, ensure timely payments, and bring accountability,” a government official said.

Modelled on popular digital wallet interfaces, the app will send SMS alerts for each transaction and link all repayments to a unique SHG ID. Biometric authentication will be mandatory, helping to prevent identity fraud.

Beneficiaries can access loans from Rs 10,000 to Rs 1 lakh, repayable in 24 to 38 instalments over two to three years.

Though a few members have used private platforms like Paytm, challenges in access and digital literacy have limited adoption. The State's app aims to offer a secure and SHG-focused alternative.

Visakhapatnam's successful pilot has laid the groundwork for wider deployment. In

neighbouring Anakapalle district, Rs 152 crore has already been sanctioned out of a Rs 221.84-crore target. Notably, loans are being disbursed without processing or documentation fees, reducing financial strain on women borrowers. District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) Project Director Sari Devi described the app as a “game-changer,” offering members complete financial visibility and eliminating misuse.

# Send ‘delusional’ Veerraju to Trump: CPI State secy

Ramakrishna flays Indian Govt's acceptance of US mediation in India-Pakistan issues

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Communist Party of India (CPI) State secretary K Ramakrishna has come down heavily on BJP MLC and senior leader Somu Veerraju for making irrational remarks against his party's national secretary Dr K Narayana. In a strongly worded statement, Ramakrishna said Veerraju's comments reflect a loss of mental balance and mockingly suggested that he be sent to live with US President Donald Trump.

“Dr K Narayana only echoed public sentiment when he said that global nations must unite against terrorism, and that war may become necessary if compelled. Veerraju's suggestion to send Narayana to Pakistan is outrageous and condemnable,” Ramakrishna said.

He questioned Veerraju's apparent admiration for Trump, pointing out that India allegedly halted mili-

tary action following Trump's intervention. “Does this mean India listens to Trump more than its own people? Should Somu Veerraju resign as MLC and live with his ‘guru’ Trump in the US,” he asked sarcastically.

Ramakrishna also criticised the Indian government's acceptance of US mediation in India-Pakistan issues, calling it a violation of the Simla Agreement, which mandates bilateral resolution of conflicts. He expressed concern that such foreign involvement risks internationalising the Kashmir issue.

He urged both India and Pakistan to uphold the ceasefire and resume bilateral dialogue based on the aspirations of their people. The CPI also demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi clarify to the public the extent of American involvement and convene a special session of Parliament to discuss the issue.

# Sailajanath slams CM over law and order

Condemns police behaviour towards Vidadala Rajini and Kalpana

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Senior YSRCP leader and former minister Sake Sailajanath has launched a scathing attack on Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, accusing his government of failing to uphold law and order and protect women's rights. Speaking to the media on Sunday, Sailajanath criticised the TDP-led coalition for allegedly using the police force as a political tool and silencing dissent through intimidation.

He condemned the police's behaviour towards former minister Vidadala Rajini and the midnight arrest of Dalit MPTC member Kalpana, who was taken from her home in a nightgown.

“These actions are unconstitutional and deeply disrespectful,” he said, also citing the illegal arrests of social media activists Peddireddy Sudharani and Paleti Krishnaveni.

Sailajanath said the government's first year has been marred by political vendettas

rather than welfare or development. He accused the administration of manipulating the media and suppressing opposition voices, demanding answers for rising violence and police misconduct.

“The Home Minister must act, and the CM must take responsibility,” he asserted. Reaffirming the YSRCP's commitment to justice, he said the party would continue to fight for the rights of women and marginalised communities. “The people of Andhra Pradesh deserve better,” he declared.

Meanwhile, YSRCP NTR district president Devineni Avinash strongly condemned the police action against former minister and senior YSRCP leader Vidadala Rajani, calling it inhumane and politically motivated.

Avinash criticised the State government, stating that while the nation faces rising external tensions, the Andhra Pradesh coalition government is focused on suppressing opposition voices and settling political scores. “Instead of ensur-

ing law and order, the police are acting like street rowdies. Their treatment of women, particularly a former minister, reflects the complete breakdown of governance and public safety,” he said.

He accused CM Chandrababu Naidu and DCM Pawan Kalyan of failing to deliver on any of their promises since assuming power. “They are running the government using a ‘Red Book’ dictatorship, not the Constitution,” Avinash alleged.

Highlighting the incident involving Rajani, Avinash stressed that the police did not hesitate to act with brutality against a woman and a former minister. “Their actions have exposed how far law enforcement has fallen in the State. What kind of administration disregards basic human rights so openly?”

He further warned that power is not permanent, stating, “Time is never on one side forever. Those responsible will eventually be held accountable and pay the price before the law.”



# Mothers have a vital role in nation-building: AMC Principal

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Emphasising the pivotal role of mothers in shaping the future of the nation, K.V.S.M. Sandhyadevi, Principal of Andhra Medical College, said that it is their responsibility to nurture and guide children into becoming responsible and ideal citizens. She was addressing a gathering at a Mother's Day celebration held at Nature Cure Hospital on Beach Road here on Sunday.

The programme was jointly organised by Sri Gayatri Welfare Cultural Youth Academy, Rupakula Vishalakshi Charitable Trust, and Prakriti Chikitsalayam. The event saw the participation of 97-year-old Chilukuri Shantamma, retired professor of Andhra University and a revered academician, as a guest of honour. Both Dr. Sandhyadevi and Prof. Shantamma paid floral tributes to the portrait of freedom fighter Rupakula Vishalakshi, in whose memory the event was organised.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Sandhyadevi lauded mothers as the torchbearers of values and wisdom in society. She described Prof. Shantamma as a living embodiment of Saraswati, the goddess of learning, and noted that she continues to mentor young scholars with unwavering dedication. Under Prof. Shantamma's guidance, 20 students have earned their doctoral degrees. Hailing her as a distinguished physicist and a philanthropist, Dr. Sandhyadevi said Prof. Shantamma epitomises the qualities of a karma yogi and spiritually devoted guide.

Prof. Shantamma, in her address, urged the younger generation to strive for excellence in both academics and sports and contribute meaningfully to the nation's progress. Others present at the event included Dr. S. Lakshminarayana, S. Srilakshmi, AVN College Vice-Principal Singaraju Krishnakumari, and BJP leader Rupakula Ravikumar.

## Applications invited for admissions into TTD junior colleges

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams has invited online applications from eligible students for admissions in its Sri Padmavathi Mahila Junior College and Sri Venkateswara Junior College in Tirupati for the academic year 2025-26.

Devasthanams Education Officer T Venkata Suneel, in a statement on Sunday, said that all online applications in English shall be made available from May 15-31. The user manual and the prospectus of the respective colleges have been uploaded in Telugu and English on the TTD portal.

The candidates can apply by visiting the official website, admission.tirumala.org, and select the groups in the two Junior colleges under TTD. The students should upload the correct information online before the deadline. Corrections are not allowed after the deadline.

The TTD has requested the students to carefully read the student user manual and college prospectus thoroughly and apply online carefully.

Students can clear their technical queries like various groups in the courses, hostels, regulations etc. through the helpline while filling the application provided on the website.

# Collector pushes for caravan tourism development

Suggests expanding home stay options in tribal villages

PNS ■ PADERU

District Collector A.S. Dinesh Kumar has called upon officials to fast-track the implementation of caravan tourism and identify suitable land for the project. This directive came during a recent video conference where key strategies to enhance tourism in the district were discussed.

The Collector pinpointed several ideal locations for the caravan tourism initiative, including Kothapalli Waterfall in G. Madugula mandal, S u j a n a k o t a , Rampachodavaram, and Maredumilli in Munchangiputtu mandal. Other potential sites include Anjoda in Dumbbriguda mandal and Cheruvulavenam in Chintapalli mandal. A total of one acre of land is to be



acquired across these areas for the project.

In addition to caravan tourism, the Collector stressed the need for expanding home stay options in tribal villages, with the aim of completing these facilities by September to accommodate the increasing demand from tourists.

Further proposals discussed during the meeting include the establishment of Araku coffee stalls at the Horticulture Training Centre in Kothavalasa and at the Madagada Sunrise Point in Araku Valley mandal.

The Collector also suggested the formation of a Tribal Tourism Council, a tribal development fund, and the creation of an art centre to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of the region.

To support the growth of

home stays, financial assistance will be provided — Rs 5 lakh for new constructions and Rs 3 lakh for renovation. Training programmes will also be organised for home stay managers, focusing on preparing traditional tribal dishes to offer visitors a truly immersive cultural experience.

Addressing environmental concerns, the Collector urged panchayat officials to enforce the plastic ban in tourist areas and impose fines for violations, in a bid to promote sustainable tourism practices.

The meeting, which saw the participation of Joint Collector Dr. MJ. Abhishek Gowda and District Tourism Officer G. Dasu, focused on actionable steps to implement these initiatives and uplift tourism in the district.

## Build memorial stupa to honour Amaravati farmers: Poet Nagna Muni

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Renowned Digambara poet Nagna Muni has appealed to Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu to construct a memorial stupa in recognition of the farmers who selflessly donated their lands for the development of Amaravati as the State capital. He proposed that the names of these farmers be inscribed on a commemorative plaque at the site as a mark of gratitude and remembrance.

Speaking at a poetry book release event held in Vijayawada on Sunday, Nagna Muni also suggested renaming the State to Andhra or Navyandhra to reflect its evolving identity and aspirations. The event saw the launch of two poetry collections, Bhumi Navvadam Chusanu by Amulya Chandu and Life Drama by Radhakrishna Karri. Presided over by noted writer and columnist Mukkamala Chakradhar, the function was attended by a wide circle of poets and literature enthusiasts.





# 6 types of services introduced for issuance of new rice cards

PNS ■ TENALI

A total of six services have been made available for the issuance of new rice cards. So far, 72,519 people have availed themselves of these services. From 15 May, these services can also be accessed from home through WhatsApp Governance by sending "Hello" to 95523 00009.

Addressing the media on Sunday, Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar said that from 8 May, six services have been offered — issuance of new rice cards, card division, change of address, addition of members, deletion of members, and surrender of cards.

"These services can be accessed at the nearest village and ward secretariats. From 15 May, citizens can also register for these services via WhatsApp Governance. In June, smart rice cards will be



issued free of cost to all eligible beneficiaries," the Minister stated. He noted that the Election Commission of India had directed the suspension of new card issuance in March last year due to the 2024 elections. Furthermore, in accor-

dance with the Supreme Court's directive making e-KYC registration mandatory, new card issuance had not been possible, he added.

The Minister clarified that the delay in issuing new rice cards was due to the e-KYC

process. However, with 95 per cent of the e-KYC process now completed, issuance has become feasible.

"There are currently 1,46,21,223 ration cards in the State, covering approximately 4,24,59,028 individuals. Due to exemptions from e-KYC for children below five years and those above 80 years of age, around 6,45,765 people have not completed e-KYC," he said.

Manohar reiterated that from 8 May, all six services, including registration for new rice cards, are being offered at village and ward secretariats. From 15 May, the same services can be accessed from home through WhatsApp Governance by sending a message saying "Hello" to 9552300009.

As part of this reform, smart ration cards will be issued free of charge to all who complete the e-KYC process, the Minister announced.

# Ganni Veeranjaneyulu appointed Chairman of APCOB & DCCB

PNS ■ ELURU

The State government on Sunday issued orders appointing Telugu Desam Party (TDP) district president and former Unguturu MLA, Ganni Veeranjaneyulu, as the chairman of the Andhra Pradesh State Co-operative Bank (APCOB) and the District Co-operative Central Bank (DCCB).

A large number of his followers and supporters celebrated the announcement by bursting crackers and distributing sweets at his office in Bhimadole. Speaking on the occasion, Veeranjaneyulu expressed his gratitude to Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu for entrusting him with a key responsibility. He also thanked TDP national general secretary Nara Lokesh and state president Palla Srinivasa Rao, and assured that he would strive to uphold the responsibilities of the post.

In a related development, the Government also appoint-



**Veeranjaneyulu expressed his gratitude to Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu for entrusting him with a key responsibility. He also thanked TDP national general secretary Nara Lokesh and state president Palla Srinivasa Rao, and assured that he would strive to uphold the responsibilities of the post.**

ed Chaganti Murali Krishna as chairman of the District Cooperative Marketing Society (DCMS). Murali Krishna, a native of Narasapuram, is the State General Secretary of the Jana Sena Party and has been

associated with the party since its formation in 2014. Jana Sena chief K. Pawan Kalyan personally handed over the appointment letter to Murali Krishna and conveyed his best wishes.

3,61,299 students apply for AP EAP CET

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Kakinada (JNTUK) Vice-Chancellor and Chairman of AP EAP CET-2025, Prof CSRK Prasad, has announced that a total of 3,61,299 students have applied for the AP EAP CET online examination as of Sunday.

He stated that 2,79,538 students had registered for the Engineering stream, 80,849 for the Agriculture and Pharmacy stream, and 912 for both streams. The Vice-Chancellor also informed that applicants could download their hall tickets from 12 May onwards.

The AP EAP CET-2025 hall tickets can be downloaded from the website <https://cets.apsche.ap.gov.in> and also via the Mana Mitra WhatsApp governance number 9552300009. A Google Map link is provided on the last page of the hall ticket to help candidates locate their examination centres, he added.

# Tarigonda Vengamamba Jayanti celebrated in Tirumala



PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The 295th birth anniversary of Matrusrī Tarigonda Vengamamba was observed on Sunday evening at the Narayanagiri Gardens in Tirumala.

Lord Malayappa Swamy, along with His consorts, arrived at the venue, where

artistes from the Annamacharya Project and SV College of Music and Dance rendered devotional compositions penned by the saint-poetess Vengamamba.

Suvidyendra Teertha Swamy, pontiff of the Raghavendra Mutt in Bengaluru, delivered a spiritual discourse, describing

Vengamamba as a divine soul who attained spiritual enlightenment without the guidance of a formal Guru.

TTD officials, descendants of Vengamamba, and devotees took part in the celebrations. Earlier in the day, floral tributes would be offered at the Tarigonda Brindavanam in Tirumala.



# Anti-social elements counselled by police

PNS ■ NANDYALA

The police on Sunday counselled rowdy-sheets and anti-social elements at various police stations across the district. Acting on the instructions of Superintendent of Police Adhiraj Singh Rana, officers summoned individuals with criminal backgrounds to their respective police stations. The officials counselled them, warning of stringent action should they persist in unlawful activities.

Police authorities stated that a strict vigil is being maintained

on these individuals, who are under constant surveillance. "If you continue with criminal behaviour, bind-over cases will be registered, and stern action will follow. This is a chance for you to change your mindset and refrain from crime," the officers reportedly told them.

The police further added that photographs of anti-social elements will be displayed at the police stations and uploaded onto the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS). They were also instructed to steer clear of criminal activities going forward.

# Vijaya Yatra taken out in support of Indian Army

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Jana Sena Party (JSP) activists, led by Tadepalligudem MLA Bolishetti Srinivas, organised a Vijaya Yatra in Tadepalligudem on Sunday.

The Yatra was held to express solidarity with the Indian Army. Speaking on the occasion, MLA Srinivas said the initiative aimed to support the armed forces and convey wishes for the continued safety and strength of the nation's borders.

He condemned Pakistan for sponsoring and encouraging terrorism, stating that such violence has claimed many innocent lives.

"Pakistan continues to fund, abet, and shelter terrorists on its soil," the MLA alleged.

MLA Srinivas announced that JSP MLAs and women leaders would soon visit six



renowned temples in Tamil Nadu to offer prayers for national peace and to seek divine strength for Indian soldiers.

"We firmly believe that India will overcome terror-

ism without resorting to war," he stated.

He further remarked that the international community must hold Pakistan accountable for any terror-related incidents occurring within India.



# Three killed as car collides with lorry

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

Three persons were killed and one critically injured when the car in which they were travelling collided with a lorry at Pedda Yellampalli village in Nallacheruvu mandal on National Highway 205 in Sri Satya Sai district on Sunday.

According to the police, the victims had travelled to Anantapur to attend the last rites of Venugopal's brother. While returning to their

hometown, Kadiri, their car rammed into a lorry.

The deceased were identified as Jayachandra, a retired Assistant Sub-Inspector of Police; Chalapathi, also a retired ASI; and Nagendra, a retired lecturer. All three died on the spot.

The injured person was shifted to the Government Hospital in Kadiri for treatment. Police have registered a case and sent the bodies to the Government General Hospital for post-mortem.

# Jagga Reddy warns Eatela Rajender

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC Working President T. Jagga Reddy warned the BJP's Malkajgiri MP, Eatela Rajender, that if he uses offensive language against Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, then Congress leaders would hit back with the same coin. He also asked Eatela to stop engaging in dirty politics.

Addressing the media at the Gandhi Bhavan on Sunday, Jagga Reddy said, "Eatela didn't get the posts he wanted in the BJP, and so he is behaving like a psycho. Eatela should ask questions in decent language. Then we will answer in the same language. If you use offensive language, we will answer appropriately. The CM seems to be ignoring you, thinking that you are talking offensively due to disappointment. But we will not leave you like that."

# 3 Bengaluru devotees donate 4 giant silver lamps to TTD

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Four giant silver lamps were donated to Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), the official custodian of Lord Venkateswara Swamy temple, here on Saturday, said an official press release.

Three devotees – Radha Krishna, Shyam Sundar Sharma and Shashidhar – from Bengaluru donated these lamps. "Four giant silver lamps were donated to TTD on Saturday evening," said the press release. The donors presented the lamps to temple official Ramakrishna at Mahadwaram (grand entrance), said the press release.

Earlier, TTD chairman BR Naidu distributed 555 helmets to the temple body employees for their safe commute between Tirumala and



Tirupati.

J Raghuram and Naveen from a helmet company in Delhi donated the helmets worth Rs 5 lakh. Naidu promised that another 500 helmets are expected to be donated within 15 days.

"If these are found satisfac-

tory in quality and usage, another 5,000 helmets will be provided," added Naidu.

The Tirupati temple is the world's richest Hindu shrine, which attracts between 70,000 and one lakh devotees per day, who offer up to over Rs 3 crore on an average.

# Citizens' group seeks change in ration card rules in Andhra

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Citizens Initiative, a local organisation, has urged the Andhra Pradesh government to revise the procedure for issuing ration cards, saying the current method does not reflect present-day family structures. The system is still based on the 2016 Praja Sadhikara Survey, which no longer matches ground realities, they said.

Duvvuri Subrahmanyam, secretary of Citizens Initiative, along with other members, met Joint Collector Rahul Meena and submitted a representation. They asked that it be forwarded to Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar and the Civil Supplies Commissioner.

Subrahmanyam pointed out that many eligible families are



**Duvvuri Subrahmanyam, secretary of Citizens Initiative, pointed out that many eligible families are missing out on ration cards due to outdated procedures. He explained that family dynamics have changed significantly over time. Many joint families have split into nuclear ones, with children moving out to live independently. Some couples live separately due to personal differences, but still need separate ration cards.**

missing out on ration cards due to outdated procedures. He explained that family dynamics have changed significantly over time. Many joint families have split into nuclear ones, with children moving out to live independently. Some couples live separately due to personal differences, but still need separate ration cards.

However, the current system

does not recognise these realities. Couples living apart are required to appear together at the local Grama Sachivalayam to provide thumb impressions, which is often not possible. As a result, they are issued only one card. Similarly, children who have moved out are still shown as part of their parents' households and are not able to get separate cards.

Subrahmanyam said this confusion is mainly because the government does not allow families to split based on an affidavit. He requested that the state government make this option available.

He also urged the government to raise the income limit for ration card eligibility from the current Rs 1.10 lakh to Rs 1.60 lakh.

# Vasanthotsavam begins at Padmavati temple

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The annual Vasanthotsavam began on a grand and devotional note at the Sri Padmavathi Ammavari Temple in Tiruchanoor on Sunday.

The Snapana Tirumanjanam (sacred bath) was performed to the utsava murti (processional deity) of Sri Padmavathi Ammavaru in the Friday Gardens between 2.30 pm and 3.30 pm.

As part of the festivities, Swarna Rathotsavam (golden chariot procession) will be held on the second day at 9.45 am.

Temple staff and several devotees took part in the celebrations.





ACROSS THE STATES



Conclave to commemorate 50 yrs of Sikkim's statehood

The Press Club of Sikkim in association with the state government will organise a conclave to commemorate 50 years of Sikkim's statehood, officials said on Sunday. The stage is set for 'Sikkim@50: Golden Jubilee Conclave 1975-2025' at Adampool here, which will be organised by the Information and Public Relations Department (IPR) and the press club, they said. The conclave will feature a host of distinguished personalities, who will reflect on Sikkim's journey over the past 50 years and offer perspectives on its future, Press Club of Sikkim president Bhim Rawat told reporters. He highlighted that the discussions will showcase the state's key achievements and explore emerging investment opportunities. Senior District Information Officer (Gangtok), Sarojini Subba, said the conclave is an initiative of the state government to showcase the development of the fourth pillar of democracy, marking the 50th year of Sikkim's statehood. This event comes at a crucial time, given the growing significance of geopolitics and Sikkim's strategic location, Subba added.



J-K Police raids 20 locations in UAPA case

The Jammu and Kashmir Police's State Investigation Agency (SIA) on Sunday conducted searches at 20 locations in the Valley and detained multiple suspects in connection with a UAPA case. "The SIA conducted searches at around 20 locations across all districts of South Kashmir in connection with the investigation of a case registered under UAPA," officials said. The officials said that substantial incriminating materials have been seized during the raids, and the suspects have been rounded up for further questioning. "Preliminary investigation has clearly brought out that these entities are actively engaged in terrorist conspiracy, propagating and furthering anti-India narratives aimed not only at challenging the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India but also at inciting disaffection, public disorder, and communal hatred," they said. The officials said J&K police is keeping surveillance on the terror associates and overground workers (OGW) working in Kashmir.



Bengal govt directs DMs, SPs to remain alert

West Bengal Chief Secretary Manoj Pant on Sunday directed the district magistrates and SPs to remain alert and keep a check on any attempt to disrupt law and order in the state. In the meeting, the district administrations were also ordered to stockpile essential food items for the next three months till August, a senior official said. Chairing a meeting at the state secretariat, Pant directed the DMs and SPs to maintain proper coordination, especially in the districts that have international or interstate borders. Speaking to PTI, Pant said the meeting was held to direct the DMs and SPs to remain alert in the backdrop of the India-Pakistan military conflict. India and Pakistan on Saturday reached an understanding to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea, with immediate effect, after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes. However, hours later, New Delhi accused Islamabad of breaching it. "The DMs, SPs and senior police officers have been asked to remain alert so that an evolving situation can be addressed," Pant said. The ICs (inspectors in-charge of police stations), civil defence bodies, and other officers were instructed to maintain proper coordination at this juncture," he added.

'BrahMos is a message of our armed forces' strength'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

BrahMos is not just a weapon but a "message of strength" of India's armed forces, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Sunday at the inauguration of the largest integration and testing facility of the supersonic cruise missile system.

"India is now one of the most powerful nations in the world. We are constantly increasing our strength, and I believe that the facility centre that is being inaugurated today will help in further strengthening India's power," he said while virtually addressing the event from Delhi.

"BrahMos is one of the world's fastest, supersonic cruise missiles. BrahMos is not just a weapon, but it is a message in itself. A message of the strength of our armed forces. A message of our deterrence towards the enemy. A message of our commitment to safeguarding our borders," Singh said.

The country's largest BrahMos integration and testing facility centre in Lucknow will strengthen India's efforts towards self-reliance in the defence sector, the Defence

Says Rajnath, inaugurates missile facility



"BrahMos is one of the world's fastest, supersonic cruise missiles. BrahMos is not just a weapon, but it is a message in itself. A message of the strength of our armed forces. A message of our deterrence towards the enemy. A message of our commitment to safeguarding our borders

Minister said, addressing the inaugural ceremony at the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor in his Lok Sabha constituency.

"A good thing is that in this defence corridor, we are seeing very important participation of

both public and private sectors," he said.

On the private sector, he noted that PTC Industries Limited is starting Titanium and super-alloy material plants. "Apart from this, the foundation of seven additional criti-

cal projects is also being laid. This will certainly accelerate the pace of India's self-reliance in the defence sector," the defence minister said.

Major investments have been made in aircraft manufacturing, UAVs, drones, ammunition, composite and critical materials, small arms, textiles and parachutes, he said.

"When our government moved forward with the vision of a defence corridor in Uttar Pradesh... one of our objectives was that we should once again develop Uttar Pradesh as the production centre of the country.

India Space Congress to discuss emerging trends



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Nearly 1,000 policymakers and experts from more than 30 nations will gather in Delhi in June for the three-day India Space Congress to deliberate on the new opportunities in the country's space sector.

India's space sector regulator Pawan Kumar Goenka and industry leaders will deliberate on issues such as satellite communications, geospatial applications, deep-space exploration, emerging technologies, Earth observation and strategic trade corridors.

The fourth India Space Congress,

organised by the Satcom Industry Association-India (SIA-India), will be held in the national capital from June 25-27 under the theme "Pioneering Innovations in Space Technology: India's Journey Towards Global Partnership".

"Country sessions will also bring delegations from Europe, Asia-Pacific, North America, and the Middle East, highlighting opportunities for bilateral cooperation in capacity-building, joint missions and industrial co-development," SIA-India said in a statement.

OPERATION SINDOOR  
Woman booked for objectionable social media status

PNS ■ MUMBAI

A 40-year-old beautician from Malwani in Mumbai was booked for her allegedly objectionable social media status on Operation Sindoor launched by Indian armed forces, police said on Sunday.

An FIR was registered under the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS), and a notice was served to the woman, who runs a beauty parlour, for joining the investigation. "When governments make reckless decisions,

it's the innocent on both sides who pay the price, not the ones in power," the woman stated on her WhatsApp status while suffixing a slang term to dismiss Operation Sindoor.

Indian armed forces launched "Operation Sindoor" on the intervening night of May 7 and 8, hitting terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, from where terrorist attacks against India had been planned and directed.

India follows its defence, diplomatic strategy: Joshi

PNS ■ BENGALURU/HUBBALLI

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi on Sunday said that India, its defence, and diplomacy follow their strategy, and that the government, after discussions with the armed forces, reached an understanding with Pakistan to stop all firing and

But this time, on the very first day, our soldiers attacked about nine terror bases or launch pads in Pakistan. A large number of terrorists were killed. So, I don't want to respond to those criticising the ceasefire announcement," Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public



military action.

However, before reaching this understanding, the Government decided that India would treat any future act of terror on its soil as an "act of war" and respond accordingly, he said.

"India has its strength. Earlier, even after major terror attacks, our response was mild.

Distribution, said in response to a question.

Speaking to reporters in Hubballi, Joshi said that ever since Narendra Modi became Prime Minister, terrorist activities, which earlier occurred across the country, have been restricted to the border areas—and even there, the government is taking serious action.

India gifts 15 electric vehicles to Nepal for mountain dialogue



PNS ■ KATHMANDU

India gifted 15 electric vehicles to Nepal on Sunday to facilitate the organisation of 'Sagarmatha Sambad' (mountain dialogue).

The Nepal government is hosting Sagarmatha Sambad in Kathmandu from May 16-18 on the theme 'Climate Change, Mountains and the Future of Humanity'.

Indian Ambassador to Nepal Naveen Srivastava presented 15 electric vehicles to Nepal's Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba at a function held at Foreign Affairs Ministry, according to a press release issued by the ministry. The vehicles will be used to facilitate the movement of guests and officials attending the event, which aims to highlight the impact of climate change on mountain regions.

WATER ROW  
Mann: BJP, BBMB to blame if something untoward happens

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Sunday warned that the BJP and the Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) will be held responsible if "violence" or something untoward happens as they continue to send officials to the Nangal Dam. He also called out farmers' unions for their "silence" on the issue.

Mann headed to the Nangal dam in Rupnagar district after he came to know that the BBMB officials had reached there again to release water to Haryana. AAP workers and some local villagers led by Punjab Cabinet minister Harjot Singh Bains held a protest against the officials for their attempt to release water to the neighbouring state.

This came four days after BBMB Chairman Manoj

Tripathi was allegedly locked inside Nangal Dam's guest house by AAP workers.

Punjab and Haryana are at



loggerheads over the distribution of water. The AAP-led government in Punjab has refused to share the water from Bhakra dam saying Haryana has already utilized its share.

Mann also took potshots at the farmer unions for their "silence" on protecting the

state's water rivers.

Addressing the media at the Nangal dam, Mann said it is unfortunate that on one

'Nehru had convened special session during Indo-China war'

PNS ■ GUNA (MP)

Congress leader Digvijaya Singh on Sunday reminded the Union government of the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru convening a special session of Parliament during the war with China following a request by Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Singh wondered whether India had accepted a third-party mediation as he questioned the "silence" of PM Narendra Modi over the understanding reached between India and Pakistan after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes.

Singh demanded that Modi attend all-party meetings and the government convene a special session of Parliament, given the latest developments—the Pahalgam terror attack, Operation Sindoor, and an understanding reached between India and Pakistan amid the cross-border military confrontation.

Referring to the "ceasefire"



He questioned the reliability of Trump's statements.

"When and what he (Trump) will say cannot be guaranteed. But the silence of the Prime Minister has annoyed us. The PM also doesn't participate in all-party



announced by US President Donald Trump on Saturday in the midst of growing military confrontation between India and Pakistan, Singh said it is a stated position of India that it will never accept a third-party intervention (on cross-border issues).

meetings," the former Madhya Pradesh chief minister told reporters.

During the 1962 war with China, the then prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru had convened a (Parliamentary) session on the demand of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, he said.

Half of 2020-born could face climate extremes: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Over half the children born in 2020 could face an unprecedented exposure to heatwaves, compared to 16 per cent of those born in 1960, even if global warming were limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius, a new study has found.

Analysing demographic data and projections of climate extremes around the world, researchers calculated the fraction of each generation born between 1960 and 2020, who could face an unprecedented exposure in their lifetime.

The younger a person, the higher their chances of experiencing unprecedented climate



extremes, including heatwaves, river floods and droughts -- children in the tropics will bear

the worst burden, the team said. Its findings were published in the journal 'Nature'.

"In this new study, living an unprecedented life means that without climate change, one would have less than a 1-in-10,000 chance of experiencing that many climate extremes across one's lifetime," lead author Luke Grant, a climate scientist at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium, said.

"This is a stringent threshold that identifies populations facing climate extremes far beyond what could be expected without man-made climate change," Grant said. The authors wrote, "Under a 1.5 degrees Celsius pathway, 52 per cent of people born in 2020 will experience unprecedented lifetime exposure to heatwaves."

Further, under a scenario of 3.5 degrees Celsius warming, "over 90 per cent will endure such exposure throughout their lives," Grant said.

"The same picture emerges for other climate extremes examined, though with slightly lower affected fractions of the population. Yet the same unfair generational differences in unprecedented exposure is observed," the author said.

In a 2021 study, the team had found that children -- especially in low-income countries -- could see a disproportionate increase in exposure to extreme weather events.

"Now, we examined where the cumulative exposure to

climate extremes across one's lifetime will far exceed that which would have been experienced in a pre-industrial climate," senior author Wim Thiery, professor of climate science at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium, said.

The team's findings also highlight the social injustice of climate change and its impacts.

Under current climate policies, almost all of the most socio-economically vulnerable children born in 2020 -- 95 per cent -- will endure an unprecedented exposure to heatwaves in their lifetime, compared to 78 per cent for the least vulnerable group, the authors said.

Akhilesh: Politicians should not use armed forces for 'self-display'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Amid the recently concluded military confrontation with Pakistan and prevailing "uneasy" calm at the LoC, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday appealed to political leaders to refrain from using defence-related backdrops as photo opportunities, urging them instead to show solidarity with the armed forces.

"In the current highly sensitive environment, 'defence-security' has become an even more serious issue. Politicians are requested to please not make it a photo background or



selfie point. This is a time to stand with the armed forces, not alone for self-display," Yadav said in a post in Hindi on X.

While Yadav did not name anyone directly, his comment is seen targeting Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who posed alongside a BrahMos missile or its model, in Lucknow at an event.



Editor's TAKE

The ceasefire and aftermath

The ceasefire after four days of intense hostilities is welcome as escalation is in nobody's interest

After four days of intense military confrontation involving drones and missile strikes across the India-Pakistan border, both nations agreed on Saturday to an immediate and full ceasefire—a move that has brought a temporary sigh of relief across the subcontinent, despite worrying signs of ongoing tension. The announcement, surprisingly first made by former US President Donald Trump on social media, followed an all-night negotiation reportedly mediated by the United States. Following a prolonged night of negotiations, former US President Donald Trump announced on Social media that India and Pakistan had reached an agreement on a full and immediate ceasefire. He praised both nations for what he described as their use of common sense and intelligence in resolving the crisis. Soon after, Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri confirmed the truce in a formal statement.

But the optimism was short-lived. Within hours of the ceasefire declaration, the ground realities painted a far more complex picture. Drone sightings and explosions were reported across Jammu and Kashmir, and Indian forces activated air defence systems in response. In a late-night briefing, Misri accused Pakistan of violating the truce, noting that the Indian military had provided an “adequate and appropriate response.

Blackout protocols, which had been lifted earlier on Saturday, were swiftly reimposed in several districts across Punjab, Gujarat, and Rajasthan as precautionary measures. Amritsar remained on red alert, with authorities urging citizens to remain indoors. Similar alerts were issued in Gujarat's Kutch district and Rajasthan's border towns.

Meanwhile, Islamabad accused India of ceasefire violations and claimed its own forces were acting with “responsibility and restraint.” The conflicting narratives have only underscored the fragile nature of the truce. The volatility of this episode highlights a deeper and more alarming truth: war between India and Pakistan is not just undesirable—it is unthinkable. Both nations are nuclear-armed, and any escalation carries the risk of catastrophic consequences, not just for the region but for global stability. The existence of nuclear arsenals on both sides elevates every border skirmish into a potential existential threat.

A full-blown war, in this context, would likely move beyond conventional warfare into a realm where control is quickly lost and the price is paid in millions of lives. Even limited military engagements have a staggering human, economic, and environmental cost. In densely populated regions like Punjab and Kashmir, the impact on civilian life is immediate and devastating. Blackouts, evacuations, and psychological trauma become the new normal for border residents. Infrastructure collapses, economic activity grinds to a halt, and societies are thrust into fear and uncertainty. Furthermore, global powers are watching. Any miscalculation or miscommunication could draw in international stakeholders and lead to regional destabilisation. The Indo-Pak rivalry is not isolated; its after-shocks reverberate through global markets, diplomatic corridors, and multilateral forums.

This latest round of hostility underscores the ever-present danger that hovers over South Asia: the threat of war between two nuclear-armed nations. With both India and Pakistan possessing sizable nuclear arsenals, any escalation beyond conventional warfare carries catastrophic implications not just for the subcontinent, but for global stability. History offers sobering lessons. The Kargil conflict of 1999, waged under the shadow of nuclear deterrence, highlighted how quickly limited skirmishes can spiral into larger confrontations. In the current age — marked by advanced drone warfare, cyber operations, and misinformation—the risks have only multiplied. Escalating military conflict would lead to devastating human loss, economic paralysis, and the potential for irreversible damage to bilateral and regional relations. Furthermore, any such escalation would likely draw in global powers, complicating the crisis and potentially turning a regional war into a broader geopolitical conflict.

While political leaders on both sides have often used national security to galvanise domestic support, this is a moment for restraint, not rhetoric. As recent events in Kashmir valley has shown, provocations and reactive posturing only deepen mistrust. Constructive diplomacy, backchannel negotiations, and sustained dialogue must replace the current cycle of provocation and retaliation.

The ceasefire, however shaky, must be reinforced through verification mechanisms, confidence-building measures, and international oversight if necessary.

The current calm, though punctuated by drone sightings and ceasefire violations, is still a welcome pause from the brinkmanship of the past week. But without a genuine commitment to peace and dialogue, this fragile silence risks being shattered again. India and Pakistan cannot afford another escalation. Not because they lack the means to fight, but because they now hold in their arsenals the means to destroy.

Leaderspeak



After a long night of talks... I am pleased to announce that India and Pakistan have agreed to a FULL AND IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE. Trump posted on Truth Social. Congratulations to both Countries on using Common Sense and Great Intelligence.

DONALD TRUMP, PRESIDENT USA

Sabeer Bhatia's misguided critiques

Sabeer Bhatia's criticism India is far removed from the reality. He is entitled to his opinions, but he should be careful not to present them as gospel truths. Criticism without context or understanding does more harm than good

Sabeer Bhatia, best known as the co-founder of Hotmail and a successful Indian-American entrepreneur, has in recent times taken to offering sweeping, and often puzzling, criticisms of India. His recent public appearances and podcasts have included a string of statements about what he perceives as the systemic flaws in India's technological, economic, and educational systems. While healthy criticism is always welcome in a democracy, Bhatia's recent views seem less about constructive feedback and more like a misplaced attempt to juxtapose India unfavourably with the United States - his adopted homeland.

Bhatia, who moved to the US in 1988 for higher education and later sold Hotmail to Microsoft for an impressive \$400 million in 1997, has mostly remained under the public radar. However, since the resurgence of Trumpism in American politics, his admiration for the US model has become more vocal - and more problematic. One cannot ignore the possibility that his new public positioning may align with certain business interests; after all, he runs Showreel, an AI-based learning platform, and Netagram, a social networking app - both based in the US. Aligning with the dominant ideological forces of the time can be a strategic move for entrepreneurs with transnational ambitions.

One of Bhatia's earliest post-2020 public commentaries came during the NASSCOM Technology and Leadership Summit in 2023, where he lamented the “lack of innovation” in Indian startups. Ironically, this statement flew in the face of data that shows India as the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world, behind only the US and China. From just 500 recognised startups in 2016, the country now boasts over 1.6 lakh officially recognised startups as of January 2025. Of these, 118 have achieved unicorn status - with valuations exceeding \$1 billion. Such growth is impossible without significant innovation and entrepreneurship. Innovation doesn't only mean breakthroughs in AI or biotechnology; it also means creating scalable solutions tailored to unique local needs, which Indian startups have done in abundance.

Yet Bhatia's criticisms only intensified. In a February 2025 podcast, he described India's Aadhaar program as “\$1.3 billion ill spent,” claiming that those who built it had never written a line of code. According to him, a superior system could have been built for \$20 million using voice and video recognition. This viewpoint is not just dismissive - it is dangerously reductive. Aadhaar is not a Silicon Valley-style app targeting tech-savvy users; it is a national-scale infrastructure project that has to serve over a billion people across rural and urban geographies, many of whom have



limited exposure to digital technology.

Aadhaar's strength lies in its scalability, reliability, and adaptability - it has enabled financial inclusion for millions, streamlined government subsidy delivery, and reduced corruption by linking benefits directly to recipients. To define such a project by lines of code alone betrays a startling lack of understanding about systems design for developing economies. Coding is a vital part of tech, no doubt, but governance, usability, security, privacy, and logistical feasibility are equally - if not more - important, especially in a country of India's scale and complexity.

Perhaps the most curious of Bhatia's recent pronouncements was his critique of how India calculates its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In an April 2025 appearance, he argued that India's GDP “is all wrong” and accused the current system of overvaluing financial transactions instead of productive labor. His example? If two people exchange Rs1,000 back and forth and are taxed 18 per cent each time, he claimed it adds Rs 2,000 to GDP - a complete misunderstanding of how GDP is measured. GDP is a globally accepted metric based on the System of National Accounts (SNA), developed and followed by international organisations like the UN, IMF, World Bank, OECD, and Eurostat. Like all compliant nations, India calculates GDP using value addition at each stage of production, not simply the movement of money. His



statement that GDP inflates economic value through repeated transactions with no real work is economically inaccurate. GST, like any tax, is added to the market value of goods and services and is incorporated into GDP calculations only insofar as it affects actual value creation. Yes, GDP has its shortcomings. It does not measure income inequality, environmental degradation, or the qualitative aspects of human development. But these limitations are not India-specific - they exist for all countries, including the US. Moreover, countries use supplementary indices like the Human Development Index (HDI), Gini coefficient, and Green GDP to address these gaps. But no viable alternative has yet replaced GDP.

Bhatia's romanticisation of the American work culture - where he claims people report hourly work and taxes are based on that, supposedly leading to more ‘real’ GDP - is equally problematic. The US economy, too, measures GDP through the same SNA framework. If anything, India faces challenges in accurately capturing GDP due to the sheer size of its informal economy, not due to faulty methodology. Statistical estimates are needed when large portions of the population are unregistered or self-employed - a challenge of scale and data access, not conceptual error.

His views on Indian work culture are similarly myopic. He criticises Indian engineers for moving into management roles instead of continuing in engineering roles, implying that only hands-on technical labor adds value. This dismisses the essential roles that managers, planners, and strategists play in any functional organisation. Without people to coordinate efforts, oversee execution, manage supply chains, and provide leadership, technical

operations cannot succeed - regardless of how skilled the individual engineer may be. However, it was his May 2025 comments on Indian education that finally warrant a more thorough rebuttal. In a podcast, he described the Indian school system as one that builds an “army of useless kids” trained only to obey orders, incapable of original thought. He contrasted this with American schools, where, he claims, students are allowed to write freely and creatively, even if their work is full of spelling errors - because “thought” is more important than “correctness.” This is a deeply flawed generalisation. While rote learning and pressure to perform in exams are genuine problems in parts of the Indian education system, sweeping it aside as a factory for unthinking children is unfair. India has produced some of the world's best minds across disciplines - from Nobel laureates to tech entrepreneurs. A 2024 Gallup poll found that 71 per cent of American adults believe humans were either created in their present form or evolved only under divine guidance - hardly a testament to the success of rational, scientific education. Mr. Bhatia is entitled to his opinions, but he should be careful not to present them as gospel truths. India has countless challenges, and we welcome constructive criticism from anyone - including those who have left the country. But criticism without context, nuance, or understanding does more harm than good. We appreciate Mr. Bhatia's interest in Indian affairs. Perhaps it's time he focuses on the issues in his adopted homeland.

The writer is a former Director General, Office of the Comptroller and Auditor general of India, and currently a Professor, Arun Jaitley National Institute of Financial Management. Views are personal)

they obey. In the digital era, guiding children's online behavior has also become a core responsibility. With learning and leisure now deeply intertwined with technology, parents need to ensure their children develop responsible digital habits. Teaching them to identify reliable information, engage respectfully online, and set boundaries on screen time is vital-especially in a country like India, where digital literacy often lags behind digital access. Cultivating social skills such as teamwork, empathy, and communication at home helps children thrive in real-world situations. In an unpredictable world shaped by climate change, economic instability, and shifting job markets, resilience and adaptability are key life skills. These cannot be learned solely from textbooks. Parents must encourage independent thinking, creative problem-solving, and the ability to bounce back from setbacks. Life doesn't always go as planned-and children need to understand that failure is not a dead-end, but an invitation to grow stronger.

In many Indian households, especially among the middle class, academic success is still viewed as the primary path to a secure future. While this belief has merit, it should not come at the cost of creativity, curiosity, or emotional well-being. Around the world, parenting models are evolving-Scandinavian approaches emphasise child-led learning, while American systems increasingly integrate mental health and inclusivity. Indian parents, too, must embrace a balanced path that combines time-less values with modern insights.

(The author is an educator. Views are personal)

(The author is an educator. Views are personal)

Rethinking parenting and education in a changing world

SECOND Opinion

BY SAKSHI SETHI

In today's fiercely competitive and fast-changing world, education is often considered the foundation of a child's future. Across India-and indeed globally-academic achievement is frequently regarded as the most reliable indicator of success. Parents go to great lengths to ensure their children excel, investing in private tutoring, enrolling them in competitive exams, and tracking every grade with meticulous attention. While such efforts are driven by love and ambition, this narrow focus on academics can be limiting.

A child is not a container to be filled with facts, but a unique individual whose personality, emotional well-being, and character must be nurtured. As the saying goes, “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.” Parenting, therefore, extends far beyond report cards. It is a long-term responsibility that encompasses emotional support, value-building, and preparing children to navigate life's inevitable ups and downs.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed many cracks in our educational and parenting frameworks. With schools closed and routines disrupted, parents had to assume multiple roles: educators, emotional anchors, and constant companions. In India, this challenge was compounded by the digital divide-many children, particularly in rural or economically disadvantaged communities, lacked access to online education. This dual burden-academic continuity and mental well-being-brought into

sharp focus the need for a more holistic and inclusive approach to parenting and education.

Today, the world values more than just academic knowledge. Employers and institutions are increasingly seeking individuals who exhibit creativity, emotional intelligence, adaptability, and critical thinking. India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recognises this evolution, promoting a well-rounded educational model. But policies alone cannot drive change. It is parents who must embrace and embody these principles at home, encouraging children to explore their interests-be it music, sports, art, or entrepreneurship-and helping them build a strong sense of self-worth and purpose.

Mental health, once a hush-hush topic, is finally being acknowledged in mainstream parenting conversations. Studies reveal that India has among the highest rates of anxiety and depression among adolescents. Much of this stems from intense academic pressure, limited family communication, and a lack of emotional validation. In the age of social media, children are constantly exposed to unrealistic standards and comparisons, further increasing their stress levels. Here, the parent's role is critical. Being a patient listener, fostering open dialogue, and normalising failure as part of growth can transform a child's outlook. Character development and values are another crucial aspect of parenting. Schools can only do so much in instilling ethics and good behavior. It is at home that children learn about honesty, kindness, respect, and empathy-by observing their parents. In a world often defined by polarisation and division, these qualities are not just desirable, but essential. Parents must lead by example, because children imitate far more than

they obey. In the digital era, guiding children's online behavior has also become a core responsibility. With learning and leisure now deeply intertwined with technology, parents need to ensure their children develop responsible digital habits. Teaching them to identify reliable information, engage respectfully online, and set boundaries on screen time is vital-especially in a country like India, where digital literacy often lags behind digital access. Cultivating social skills such as teamwork, empathy, and communication at home helps children thrive in real-world situations. In an unpredictable world shaped by climate change, economic instability, and shifting job markets, resilience and adaptability are key life skills. These cannot be learned solely from textbooks. Parents must encourage independent thinking, creative problem-solving, and the ability to bounce back from setbacks. Life doesn't always go as planned-and children need to understand that failure is not a dead-end, but an invitation to grow stronger.

In many Indian households, especially among the middle class, academic success is still viewed as the primary path to a secure future. While this belief has merit, it should not come at the cost of creativity, curiosity, or emotional well-being. Around the world, parenting models are evolving-Scandinavian approaches emphasise child-led learning, while American systems increasingly integrate mental health and inclusivity. Indian parents, too, must embrace a balanced path that combines time-less values with modern insights.

(The author is an educator. Views are personal)

Letters to the Editor

Digital battlefield: war of information

Madam — In today's era, war is no longer confined to borders or battlefields. The modern battlefield includes cyberspace, where the fight for control over information is just as critical as the physical conflict.

In times of war, the need for reliable, in-depth information increases manifold. However, paradoxically, credibility often becomes the first casualty. With 24/7 news channels vying for attention, unregulated social media, and the alarming rise of deepfake technology, information becomes easily distorted.

This contamination misguides not only citizens but also influences enemy perception. During crises, people seek the truth, but instead, a flood of half-truths, rumors, and misinformation overwhelms them.

This chaotic environment blurs facts and fabricates narratives, compromising national interest. The responsibility to combat this misinformation doesn't rest solely with the government or the media; it falls upon every citizen.

As seen in the 1990 Gulf War, embedded journalism created an era of strategic narrative control. Even in recent India-Pakistan tensions, the information war proved harder to navigate than the conflict itself.

We are all digital soldiers now. Verifying facts, resisting the spread of fake news, and thinking critically are no longer optional. It is our national duty to uphold truth and integrity in this war of words and images.

DIATPRASAD SHIRODKAR | MUMBAI

Ceasefire or Deception?

Madam — The recent ceasefire between India and Pakistan, brokered by the United States, may appear as a diplomatic breakthrough on the surface. However, its sustainability is questionable. The true challenge lies not in signing agreements but in ensuring their faithful execution. Pakistan's consistent violation of previous ceasefires, often within hours of agreement, makes any new promise hollow.

The country has repeatedly allowed its territory to be used for cross-border terrorism, violating not only bilateral trust but also international law. Despite statements from leaders like External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and even U.S. President Donald Trump hailing the ceasefire, the ground reality remains grim. Hours after the ceasefire was announced, Pakistan resumed firing.

How can there be lasting peace when one party continues to harbor and support terrorist camps? Until Pakistan demonstrates genuine intent to dismantle these camps and dismantle extremist ideologies, no ceasefire can be deemed permanent. India must not allow international pressures to cloud its judgment. The pursuit of short-term peace should not come at the cost of long-term security. Unfortunately, with this ceasefire, India has been denied the full measure of justice it deserves due to foreign mediation that places strategic balance over moral clarity.

BHAGWAN THADANI | MUMBAI

A New Chapter in the Vatican

Madam —The elevation of Cardinal Robert Prevost as Pope Leo XIV has ushered in a wave of hope and renewed energy within the global Catholic community.

As the first American to assume the papacy, his rise marks a symbolic and strategic shift for the Church, echoing the reformist and inclusive spirit of his predecessor, Pope Francis. The selection of the name “Leo” is seen as a nod to past leaders known for reconciliation, suggesting Pope Leo XIV's focus will also be on unity and dialogue. However, his papacy begins amid daunting challenges. The Church faces a crisis of relevance, with declining numbers in baptisms and a noticeable exodus from organized religion in traditionally Christian regions.

Europe, long considered the Church's stronghold, is grappling with an aging population, a declining birth rate, and rising immigration, leading to fears of cultural and demographic transformation. Furthermore, unresolved issues of sexual misconduct, especially in Western nations, continue to erode public trust.

Pope Leo XIV must navigate these turbulent waters with wisdom and moral clarity. Strengthening the role of faith in national identity, promoting accountability within Church ranks, and reinforcing the spiritual and moral foundation of Christianity will be essential for meaningful revival.

MANOJ PARASHAR | GHAZIABAD

HONOURING THE HEART OF HEALTHCARE: THE NURSES DAY

Every day, nurses walk into hospitals, clinics, and community health centers with unmatched resilience, compassion, and expertise.

They are the backbone of the healthcare system — comforting the suffering, administering critical care, and serving as the emotional anchor for patients and families alike. To acknowledge their unparalleled contribution, International Nurses Day is observed each year on May 12.

In 2025, the theme, “Our Nurses, Our Future: Caring for Nurses Strengthens Economies,” rightfully underscores that nurse well-being is directly linked to the strength and efficiency of global healthcare systems. This year also marks the 205th birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale, a pioneer who redefined modern nursing. Despite their critical role, nurses often work under immense pressure, facing physical exhaustion, emotional burnout, and resource shortages. Key issues such as nursing education, international migration, ethical dilemmas, and

lack of leadership opportunities need urgent redressal. Since its official recognition in 1974, International Nurses Day has reminded us not only of their technical expertise but also of the humanity they bring into patient care. Hospitals must support nurses with ongoing training NS emotional resilience programs.

They are more than caregivers — they are healers, educators, and the first line of defense in public health. As we commemorate International Nurses Day, let us move beyond symbolic gestures and commit to systemic change that honors the true value of nursing. The challenges nurses face are not just professional hurdles — they are reflections of broader societal and policy failures that demand urgent attention. Strengthening nursing is a strategic imperative for building resilient healthcare systems. Let us ensure that those who care for us are, in turn, cared for — with dignity, respect, and the resources they need to thrive.

BURRA M REDDY | KARIMNAGAR

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



# From terror to climate: Act before crisis hits

India's preparedness continues to fall short of international benchmarks. With summer already showing signs of strain and systemic failure, the urgent need for a proactive, coordinated, and accountable disaster management strategy has never been clearer

FIRST  
Column

India because of its varied geography, location, geological and climatic conditions coupled with its 'reactive approach' in dealing with things is prone to natural and other disasters. Time and again the national disaster response has not been at all commensurate with the desired level of preparedness as well as, technology and swift action. Our administrative system takes action and rises from slumber only when disasters happen. Every year time and again seasonal disasters occur and several lives are lost as also huge loss of property and life-sustaining resources.

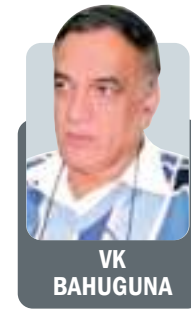
The governance for disaster management during the last few years has improved after the creation of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) but it falls short of the level of international standards. Take for example the recent Pahalgam terrorist attack on 22nd April 2025 in which 26 innocent Hindu lives were brutally killed by Pakistan-sponsored terrorists by first asking about their religion. It was an attack on the soul of India but the administration there miserably failed to plan to prevent such attacks on tourist spots in Kashmir, even as in major tourist spots elsewhere in the country security arrangements are made to oversee law and order and all who matter in running security apparatus in Jammu and Kashmir know full well that Kashmir is always on the radar of Pakistan sponsored terrorists. It was a well-known fact that last year more than 2.35 crore tourists visited Kashmir and the government opened all tourist places without making any arrangements for the security of people.

Whatever, the political rhetoric about peace returning in Kashmir after the aftermath of abrogating Article 370, all Indians were sure that terrorists have been striking at will in Kashmir and Jammu as several cases of civilian killings were witnessed now and then. There was no coordination between the state and central intelligence agencies though intelligence inputs were indicating terrorist strike. In an era of modern technological innovation, there should not be collateral human loss of our armed forces during search operations to tackle the terrorists. We have a very professional Army no doubt but we need to learn a lesson or two from the Israeli Army and their leadership even though they too have a divided coalition polity. The state and central agencies failed to apprehend the local support to terrorists and Islamists not only in Kashmir but all over as the ecosystem that supports anti-national forces is yet to be given a fatal blow as they gleefully carry out their operations.

There have been talks of hunting down the perpetrators and their supporters for the last 35 years but with minimal lasting success as Pakistan keeps blackmailing about the use of their clandestinely achieved nuclear power status. This is so far about



the threat to our national security. A solid standard operating procedure along with accountability and well-defined coordinated responsibility must be enforced.



activities should be suspended as politicians tend to confuse the issue for selfish electoral gains. Let us discuss the other disasters looming large in the coming months. The coming summer is showing its fangs. Only a well-planned strategy can help prevent life and property losses. But what

The government also committed hara-kiri by opting for an early election as terrorist sympathisers also won and boosted their morale. The government should have told all who matter in clear terms not to have a 'holier than thou' approach on national security matters when the direction to hold elections and delimitation was carried out. Unless total annihilation of terrorism is carried out all such political

IT WAS AN ATTACK ON THE SOUL OF INDIA BUT THE ADMINISTRATION THERE MISERABLY FAILED TO PLAN TO PREVENT SUCH ATTACKS ON TOURIST SPOTS IN KASHMIR, EVEN AS IN MAJOR TOURIST SPOTS ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE TO OVERSEE LAW AND ORDER

Delhi-NCR saw on 2nd May 2025 a severe thunderstorm, gusty winds, hails and rains that choked the roads with fallen trees and water logging killing 6 people in Delhi proves that no lesson has been learnt. The roadside trees fell as a pack of cards because for the last many years, the environmentalists have been arguing against the concretisation of soil around trees and pavements which dries up moisture, and trees become weak as their roots cannot spread and do not get water.

The weather pattern and westerly winds coupled with rising temperatures due to climate change are making flying challenging as has been noticed for many days in the last 15 days. A concerted pinpointed strategy is the need of the hour. India's summer and monsoon seasons in 2025 are poised to aggravate challenges due to climate change, population pressures, poor planning, and systemic inefficiencies.

The issues needing attention are heatwaves, water scarcity, flooding, agricultural disruptions, and health risks as their intensity and frequency are increasing every year. While some measures are in place, India's response remains inadequate, and at best policies are reactive, inadequate investment, and

bureaucratic inertia with a lack of accountability.

The second important issue which need to be addressed is how to deal with Heat Island effects and Heat strokes. It is music to hear to notice that the Delhi Chief Minister had the other day proposed a 3 3-hour break from 12 PM to 3 PM for the labourers working on roads and construction works. Last year during 2024 the country experienced a severe heatwave, resulting in more than 700 reported heatstroke deaths across 17 states, according to the "Heat Watch 2024" report. It also identified around 40,000 cases of heatstroke. What this report misses is the actual data which is several times more as the reporting mechanism does not cover all such deaths in rural areas.

There are instances of heat island effects in cities mainly due to factors like reduced vegetation, impervious surfaces concrete pavement, and building materials that store and release heat. In this regard, the Metropolitan cities need to emulate the urban landscape management of Agartala city by the Tripura government where roads and pavements all over have been aesthetically redesigned with vegetation. The civic authorities must plan for at least 20 heat waves this season for each city and proper water management and availability in both urban and rural areas.

The heat-related mortality may increase in slums and rural hinterlands. A new building code be prepared by the civic bodies under the supervision of IDMA which should have provisions on how to deal with heat island effects and how greenery should be used to tackle it.

To deal with seasonal diseases like gastroenteritis and other viral diseases must have a plan of action. Yet another issue is managing the water resources in urban areas.

As more than 60 per cent of our districts in the country are water stressed. Cities like Bengaluru and Chennai may face "Day Zero" scenarios, where water supplies run dry, as seen in Cape Town in 2018. There is a complete absence of water use planning at the household level. We must prepare for rainwater harvesting and water harvesting at the landscape level in both urban and rural areas, especially in forestlands.

Tamil Nadu's success in reviving water bodies should be replicated all over India so all other successful stories. The National Disaster Management Authority must be reformed and be given the role of policy planning and monitoring of disaster preparedness for the entire country and only qualified experts should be posted in it rather than making it a post-retirement sinecure for lobbyists.

(The author is the Chairman of the Centre for Resource Management and Environment. Views are personal)

## Rediscovering our eternal spiritual identity

In an age marked by division and conflict, where labels of nationality, race, and religion deepen the chasms between us, it is easy to forget the truth that lies beyond the surface. Just as cats and dogs instinctively clash, human beings have allowed superficial differences to fuel endless quarrels

In today's sharply divided world, conflicts over nationality, religion, and identity have driven humanity into bitter rivalries. Much like cats and dogs, who instinctively clash, humans too find themselves trapped in endless disputes, driven by superficial bodily identifications. In the process, we often forget a simple, yet profound truth: beneath these external coverings, we are eternal spirit souls.

Each of us is a spiritual spark - part and parcel of the Supreme Being, Lord Sri Krishna - temporarily encased in a material body. Instead of valuing the sanctity of life in every form, people remain divided by superficial labels, ignoring the universal fact that we all belong to a single, divine family.

The ancient wisdom of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, taught by Lord Krishna and echoed in the Vedic tradition, beautifully expresses this truth. It reminds us that the entire world is one family - not just in sentiment, but in spiritual reality. Only by embracing this understanding can true peace, compassion, and mutual respect be restored among all living beings.

His Divine Grace AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada, the Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), dedicated his life to spreading this universal vision. Honoured recently as "Vishwa Guru" by the Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad at the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj (February 2025), Srila Prabhupada consistently reminded us of life's higher purpose. In one of his lectures, he remarked, "Human beings are not meant to quarrel like cats and dogs. They must be intelligent enough to recognise the true value of human life and refuse to live like ordinary animals."

Srila Prabhupada placed special emphasis on the teachings of Bhagavad-Gita. As It Is, where Lord Krishna reveals that the first step in self-realisation is understanding that we are not these temporary bodies, but eternal spirit souls. Without this awareness, it's impossible to transcend death and achieve the eternal spiritual world beyond this fleeting material existence.

Unfortunately, in our modern world, distinctions based on birth, race, and species persist. People continue to treat others differently based solely on appearances, much like a dog instinctively views a cat as its rival. But the Bhagavad Gita clarifies that the body is merely a temporary covering, while the soul continues, changing forms like one changes clothes. As stated the soul discards worn-out bodies just as we discard old garments.

The Vedic scriptures further explain that there are 8.4 million species, and the soul journeys through various forms according to karma, under divine supervision. If humanity truly grasped this eternal nature of the soul and the interconnectedness of all life, countless wars, killings, and violence - against both humans and animals



- could be prevented. Such awareness would cultivate compassion, peace, and God-consciousness, steering society away from a life of sense gratification that reduces human beings to animalistic behaviour - merely eating, sleeping, defending, and mating.

In a prophetic 1976 interview with Bhavan's Journal, Srila Prabhupada predicted the moral decline of this age of quarrel, known as Kali-yuga. He remarked: "Essential human qualities such as religion, truthfulness, cleanliness, compassion, longevity, bodily strength, and memory are gradually deteriorating."

These qualities, he stressed, are what elevate humans above animals. Without religion and higher knowledge, human life descends into an

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animal-like existence. Srila Prabhupada would often say, "A dog has no concern for religion. Though it's a living being, it has no interest in the Bhagavad-Gita." This interest in higher knowledge is what truly separates humans from animals.

Modern society, however, misguides people into chasing after materialistic pleasures and superficial ideals, neglecting the pursuit of God and authentic spirituality. In the Vedic worldview, progress isn't measured by technology or wealth, but by spiritual advancement - realising one's true self and relationship with the Supreme.

Today, society glorifies endless labour for material gain, measuring success by possessions like big houses, cars, and fleeting comforts - while ignoring what genuinely satisfies the soul. Increasingly driven by lust, greed, and anger, the world has witnessed horrific outcomes: violence, rape, genocide, and conflict over trivial disputes. Even those in power often govern with selfish motives, lacking the wisdom of saintly kings,

and indifferent to people's welfare.

Personal relationships have also grown fragile, whether among celebrities or common people. Love often lacks depth, driven by personal gain and temporary pleasure, while family ties steadily weaken. Social media and superficial trends now dominate everyday life, weakening meaningful human connections.

Even more troubling is how young people today fall prey to intoxicants, gluttony, laziness, and uncontrolled sexuality, mimicking animal instincts. Despite material wealth and opportunity, many silently struggle with inner emptiness - a void no temporary gratification can fill. That missing link is a loving relationship with God, Sri Krishna, the eternal well-wisher of every soul. The soul, by nature, longs to love and serve the Supreme. No amount of external pleasure can satisfy this deep-rooted spiritual hunger.

Human life is rare and precious - a unique opportunity for self-realisation, as the Srimad Bhagavatam (11.9.29) explains. After countless births in various forms, the soul finally attains a human body, capable of higher thinking and spiritual growth.

The Bhagavad-Gita, as Srila Prabhupada presented, teaches that the soul's natural state is bliss and eternal joy. However, seeking it through material means is a mistake. Bodily pleasures are temporary and superficial, much like a diseased man tasting sugar as bitter. Only when one transcends bodily identification can the sweetness of spiritual life be experienced. The soul is part of the Supreme, - the embodiment of knowledge, bliss, and eternity.

The very name Krishna means "the greatest pleasure." As minute parts of this Supreme, we naturally share those qualities and eternally hanker for divine love and joy. The Mahabharata beautifully declares that true enjoyment is endless, experienced by yogis who elevate themselves spiritually and find joy in loving devotion to Krishna. Therefore, human life should not be wasted in mere animalistic existence. By cultivating discipline, sincere devotion to Krishna, and absorbing the timeless wisdom of the Bhagavad-Gita, one can attain lasting peace, and joy, and fulfil life's true purpose.

To rise above the chaos of our divided world, we must rediscover our true identity as eternal spirit souls—divine sparks of Lord Sri Krishna. Srila Prabhupada's teachings remind us that real peace and happiness lie not in material gain, but in spiritual awakening.

By embracing the wisdom of the Bhagavad-Gita and cultivating God consciousness, we can transcend superficial differences, foster compassion, and fulfill the rare and sacred purpose of human life: loving service to the Supreme.

(The writer is a student of journalism at IIMC. Views are personal)



IN BRIEF



Delhi airport sees around 100 flight cancellations

Around 100 flights to and from the Delhi airport were cancelled on Sunday, according to a source. Security measures were enhanced, and at least 32 airports in the northern and western parts of the country were temporarily shut in view of the conflict between India and Pakistan. On Saturday, India and Pakistan reached an understanding to stop all firings and military actions on land, air, and sea with immediate effect. As many as 52 domestic departures and 44 arrivals, and one international departure were cancelled. These cancellations happened between 5.00 am and 4.30 pm, the source said. "Delhi Airport is operating normally. However, due to changes in airspace dynamics and increased security measures, some flight schedules and security checkpoint processing times may be affected," DIAL said in a post on X. Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) operates the national capital's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), which is the busiest airport in the country.



Adani Power to supply 1,500 MW to UP

Adani Power on Saturday said it has won a bid to supply 1,500 MW of electricity to Uttar Pradesh from a greenfield ultra-supercritical power plant in the state entailing an investment of USD 2 billion. This is further to the Uttar Pradesh cabinet approving the project earlier this month, a company statement said. The company will now sign a long-term power supply agreement with Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd (UPPCL) under the Letter of Award (LoA) received today, it stated. According to the statement, Adani Power, India's largest private sector thermal power generator, on Saturday said it has won a tightly contested bid to supply 1,500 MW (net) of thermal power to Uttar Pradesh. As part of the contract, the company will supply power at a highly competitive tariff of Rs 5.383 per unit from a greenfield 2x800 MW (1500 MW net) ultra-supercritical power plant to be set up under the design, build, finance, own, and operate (DBFOO) model in the state.



Nepali biz body urges higher currency limit for Indian tourists

A prominent Nepali business organisation on Sunday urged the government to allow Indian tourists arriving via land route to carry up to the equivalent of USD 5,000 in Indian rupees, an increase from the current limit of Rs 25,000, to boost tourism in the country. USD 5,000 equates to approximately Rs 4.25,000. The current provision of allowing Indian tourists entering Nepal via land route to carry only up to Rs 25,000 is insufficient if the country aims to promote Indian tourism, said Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) president Chandra Prasad Dhakal. "When there is a provision to carry USD 5,000 for those who use flights to visit Nepal, why shouldn't the same provision apply to Indian tourists entering Nepal via land?" he asked during a pre-budget interaction between the FNCCI office bearers and Finance Minister Bishnu Paudel here. Dhakal also urged the government to develop better infrastructure along the Nepal-India border to support tourism.

India, EU to hold next round of FTA talks from today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and the European Union (EU) chief negotiators will begin the next round of talks on the proposed free trade agreement (FTA) here from Monday, with an aim to conclude the first phase of the pact as early as possible, according to an official.

The two sides have agreed to conclude the agreement in two phases on account of the uncertain global trade environment, particularly due to the US tariff actions under President Donald Trump.

"The EU team will be here for the 11th round of negotiations. It will continue till May 16," the official said.

Issues where there is convergence would be included in the first part of the agreement. They are aiming to conclude the second part by the end of this year.

Talks for the previous (tenth) round focused on areas like market access offers in goods, services, investment and government procurement.

India has followed the practice of negotiating trade pacts in two phases with Australia. It is following a similar approach to the US.

Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal last month stated



that "if some of the issues which may not be very core to the trade, maybe taking some more time, then it is better to focus on core trade issues. So, we say that first things first..We are also discussing with the EU what can be the early harvest of the first tranche, where we can do faster".

The secretary, on May 10, held a review meeting on the pact with senior officials who are involved in the negotiations. Besides demanding significant duty cuts in automobiles and medical devices, the EU wants tax reduction in products like wines, spirits, meat, poultry and a strong intellectual property regime.

Indian goods' exports to the EU, such as ready-made gar-

ments, pharmaceuticals, steel, petroleum products, and electrical machinery, can become more competitive if the pact gets concluded successfully.

On May 1, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal was in Brussels to discuss progress on the agreement.

In June 2022, India and the 27-nation EU bloc resumed negotiations after a gap of over eight years. It was stalled in 2013 due to differences over the level of opening up of the markets.

On February 28, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the European Commission President agreed to seal a much-awaited free trade deal by the end of this year.

No duty cuts by India on UK wines

India will not provide any duty concessions on British wines and is offering only limited import duty benefits on UK beer under the free trade agreement (FTA) between the two countries, announced on May 6, according to an official. The other sensitive agri products where India will not offer any reduction in the import duty include dairy products, apples, cheese, oats, animals and vegetable oils under the agreement with the United Kingdom. "Wine is on the exclusion list, along with several other agricultural products in the trade pact. We are also offering only a limited duty concession on British beer," the official said. India and the UK on May 6 announced the conclusion of the free trade agreement, which will make British Scotch whiskey and cars cheaper in India, while reducing duties on Indian imports like garments and leather products. As per the agreement, India will reduce duty on UK whiskey and gin from 150 per cent to 75 per cent and further to 40 per cent in the tenth year of the deal.

Aggressive hybrid mutual funds gain traction

Add 3.5 lakh investors in last 1 year

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Aggressive hybrid mutual funds have been gaining traction among investors amid continued volatility in the capital markets, with the asset base of the category surging to Rs 2.26 lakh crore in April 2025, an increase of 12 per cent compared to a year ago.

Also, the investor base expanded significantly, with the number of folios increasing by 3.5 lakh over the past year, to nearly 58 lakh by April 2025, latest data with the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) showed.

This trend highlights the growing appeal of a balanced investment approach that combines growth and stability.

Aggressive hybrid funds, an investment solution blending equity and debt exposures, delivered robust returns over different timeframes. On average, these funds have delivered returns of nearly 9 per cent over the past year, 20 per cent over two years, 15 per cent over three years, and an impressive 21 per

cent over five years, the industry data showed.

These funds differ from other hybrid mutual funds primarily in the equity exposure, as they invest 65-80 per cent in equities higher than the conservative or balanced hybrids that offer better return potential but also higher risk, making them ideal



for investors with a moderate risk appetite and a 3-5 year view, Trivesh D, COO Tradejini, said.

Looking ahead, the outlook for actively managed aggressive funds remains positive. Market movements are increasingly expected to be sector-specific and stock-specific rather than broad-based.

As a result, fund managers with a dynamic and responsive approach will be better positioned to capture emerging opportunities.

FPIs continue to invest; inject Rs 14,167 cr in equities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign investors continue to show confidence in the country's equity market, infusing Rs 14,167 crore so far this month, largely driven by favourable global cues and robust domestic fundamentals.

Notably, this inflow has come despite the ongoing military tensions between India and Pakistan.

This positive momentum follows a net investment of Rs 4,223 crore in April, marking the first inflow after three months, data with the depositories showed.

Prior to this, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) had pulled out Rs 3,973 crore in March, Rs 34,574 crore in February, and a substantial Rs 78,027 crore in January.

Going ahead, global macros (declining dollar, slowing US and Chinese economy) and domestic macros (high GDP growth and declining inflation and interest rates) will facilitate increasing FPI inflow into the Indian equity, VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments, said.



However, debt inflows are likely to remain very low, he added.

According to the data with the depositories, Foreign Portfolio Investors made a net investment of Rs 14,167 crore in equities in this month (till May 9). The latest flow has helped narrow the outflow to Rs 98,184 crore in 2025 so far.

India's equity markets witnessed a sharp resurgence in FPI activity in April, signalling a marked reversal from the outflow seen earlier this year. The momentum continued in May too.

This renewed momentum was underpinned by a blend of favourable global cues and

Indian economy likely to grow at 6.5 pc: CII

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's GDP is projected to grow at 6.5 per cent in the current fiscal and the country's economy is resilient enough to overcome the short-term impact of geopolitical issues, CII president Sanjiv Puri has said.

In an interview with PTI, he asserted that the country must pursue bilateral trade pacts with key trading partners to protect national interests in the backdrop of increasing trade barriers.

Highlighting that the private investment is picking up across various sectors like energy, transportation, metals, chemicals and hospitality, Puri said the current geopolitical uncertainties could lead to "some cautiousness" in investment.

On the economic growth projection for India, he said, "We are looking at 6.5 per cent. We believe this number can be achieved fundamentally, because the fact is, we are starting with a reasonably good foundation, robust economic foundation".

Elaborating on the reasons, he said, "In the recent past, interest rates have eased. Inflation is becoming benign. There is this personal income

tax concession taking in from the first of April. Investments picked up in public and private space in the latter half of last year".

On the high tariffs proposed by US President Donald Trump on several key economies and the trend of rising protection-



ism globally, Puri acknowledged that "more and more barriers to trade are coming in right now", suggesting that India should do bilateral trade agreements which are mutually beneficial and in the national interest.

"Therefore, the countries that India is pursuing, and the big ones among them, being the US and EU, are important. We should do whatever we have to do from a national interest perspective, and I think, most important is these bilateral trade agreements".

He also recommended the creation of a three-tier tariff architecture for certain areas to enhance competitiveness.

Info Edge clocks 36% return on startup investments

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Naukri.com parent Info Edge's long-term bets on Indian startups ranging from Zomato to Policybazaar, are yielding blockbuster returns of nearly 10 times and an estimated gross internal rate of return of 36 per cent, according to the firm's FY25 annual letter to shareholders.

The firm, helmed by Sanjeev Bikhchandani - often referred to as India's Warren Buffett - invested a total capital of Rs 3,959.16 crore across platforms over the last one and half decade. This investment today stands at the Fair Market Value (FMV) of Rs 36,855 crore.

"Since we started our financial investing activity in 2007, we have achieved an estimated 36 per cent gross IRR across all vintages put together," founder and vice chairman Sanjeev Bikhchandani wrote in the letter. Info Edge was one of the early backers in home-grown listed companies, including Zomato and Policybazaar. It invested a total of Rs 483.78 crore and Rs 591.40 crore in the two companies, respectively.

Canara Bank mobilises Rs 16k cr deposits in 10 weeks

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Faced with challenges on deposit growth, state-owned Canara Bank asked each of its 82,000-strong staff to go out to garner funds, and mobilised Rs 16,700 crore in ten weeks, a top official has said.

Amid the system-wide challenges of deposit accretion, the bank's top management gave a call to every employee to garner deposits, and the drive began on January 26 this year.

"We had given a call to each of the 82,000 staff members to canvas, contacting their relations and whatever there is in their circle.



Each one should bring Rs 10 lakh as a deposit either in CASA (current and savings account) or retail term deposit," its managing director and chief executive K Satyanarayana Raju said.

The staff members supported the drive wholeheartedly and are in 'sync' with the top leadership, Raju said, underscoring that the management's actions over the last 2-3 years have helped in the drive.

"In the last 2-3 years, we have taken steps to get benefits to the staff members, bringing transparency in promotions, performance recognition, and transfers, which has gone well. When we gave a call, we explained to them properly and we could convince them about the need of the hour," he said, adding that the trade unions also responded

positively.

Raju said the drive yielded positive results, and the staff was able to collect Rs 16,700 crore in deposits, split evenly between CASA and term deposits.

This helped reduce the credit deposit ratio to 73 per cent in the March quarter from the 76 per cent levels in December, he added. He said the bank was on the verge of hitting the 80 per cent threshold on the CD ratio front, especially with the high demand for credit in the last quarter, and the urge to do something on this front led it to fall back on the employees.

Govt to hold pre-emption right over oil, gas in emergency

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government will hold pre-emption rights over all oil and natural gas produced in the country in any event of national emergency, according to draft rules being framed under a revamped oilfields legislation.

A pre-emption right (or pre-emptive right) is the legal right of a party - often a government or existing shareholder - to purchase or claim a product, asset, or resource before it is offered to others.

The inclusion of such rights over crude oil - extracted from underground or beneath the

seabed and refined into fuels like petrol and diesel - as well as natural gas, which is used for power generation, fertilizer production, CNG for vehicles, and piped cooking gas, is intended to help the government prioritize national interests and ensure public welfare during emergencies.

The producer of oil and natural gas will be paid a "fair market price prevailing at the time of pre-emption", the draft rules said.

Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has invited comments on draft rules after Parliament earlier this year



passed the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Amendment Bill which replaced outdated provisions from the 1948 Act, to boost domestic production, attract

investment, and support the country's energy transition goals.

"In the case of a national emergency in respect of petroleum products or mineral oil,

Government of India shall, at all times, during such emergency, have the right of pre-emption of the mineral oils, refined petroleum or petroleum or mineral oil products produced from the crude oil or natural gas extracted from the leased area, or of the crude oil or natural gas where the lessee is permitted to sell, export or dispose of without it being refined within India," the rules stated.

This right will be exercised by providing a "fair market price prevailing at the time of pre-emption to the lessee by Government of India, for the

petroleum or petroleum or mineral oil products or the crude oil or natural gas taken in pre-emption."

The rules however did not define what would constitute a national emergency. Industry sources said war or war-like situations - like the one that the country faced in the military standoff with Pakistan - or natural disasters could constitute a national emergency. "Government of India shall be the sole judge as to what constitutes a national emergency in respect of mineral oils, and its decision in this respect shall be final," the rules said.

Market to monitor Indo-Pak situation, inflation data: Analysts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The domestic stock market this week would monitor the geopolitical developments after India and Pakistan reached an understanding to stop military actions, analysts said.

Moreover, macroeconomic data announcements, Q4 earnings, trading activity of foreign

investors and global market trends are also likely to influence sentiments, traders said.

India and Pakistan on Saturday reached an understanding to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea, with immediate effect after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes.

"This de-escalation removes a key overhang on investor sentiment and is likely to be seen as a major positive development by financial markets. Historically, markets have shown resilience and a tendency to recover following such geopolitical de-escalations," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

All eyes would be on FIIs who turned negative on Friday trading session after being continuous net buyers in the last 2 weeks, he added.

"This week will be pivotal, marked by several key domestic triggers. Geopolitical developments, particularly the ongoing tensions with Pakistan, will continue to remain in focus. On the macroeconomic front, investors will closely monitor the release of key data points including the Consumer Price Index (CPI), Wholesale Price



Index (WPI), and trade figures for exports and imports.

"Additionally, the corporate earnings season will gather pace, with several major companies such as Tata Steel, Bharti Airtel, Gail, Hero MotoCorp, Tata Motors, Lupin and BHEL scheduled to announce their quarterly results," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

Foreign investors continue to show confidence in the country's equity market, infusing Rs 14,167 crore so far this month, largely driven by favourable global cues and robust domestic fundamentals.



After Rane's statement, Sanam Teri Kasam directors back Govt's ban on Pakistan actors

The debate around artistic collaboration between India and Pakistan has resurfaced following recent developments, as actor Harshvardhan Rane and the directorial duo Radhika Rao and Vinay Sapru—makers of the 2016 romantic hit Sanam Teri Kasam—have taken a firm stand against working with Pakistani talent amid ongoing tensions.

On Saturday, Harshvardhan Rane publicly stated that he would not return for a potential sequel to Sanam Teri Kasam if if there is any possibility of the previous cast being repeated.His remarks came in response to Hocane's criticism of Operation Sindoor, the Indian military offensive launched in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir following the tragic Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 civilian lives. Backing Rane's stance, directors Radhika Rao and Vinay Sapru expressed their disapproval of several Pakistani celebrities—including Mawra Hocane, Fawad Khan, and Mahira Khan—who either condemned the Indian air strikes or remained silent on the issue of cross-border terrorism.

In a statement to Hindustan Times, the filmmakers said, "Innocent Indian lives continue to be lost to decades of cross-border terrorism. What's even more disheartening is the silence—or worse, the statements—of Pakistani actors who have worked in India, receiving love, respect, and opportunity."

The director duo further declared their support for the Indian government's decision to bar Pakistani actors from working in India. "We fully agree with our government's decision: Not a single rupee should be paid. Not a single minute of our time as a nation should be offered. Not a single Indian platform should engage with them," they emphasized.

Reinforcing their nationalistic sentiment, the directors concluded their statement with a strong message: "What matters most is our nation and the welfare of our people. We stand by our government and fully support its decision. Nation First — Always!"

KARAN TACKER TRANSFORMS INTO CAPT. SAMAR RAINA FOR TANVI: THE GREAT



The wait is finally over! Karan Tacker, who stole hearts and headlines with his riveting performances on OTT, is now ready to command the big screen with Tanvi The Great — his first feature film, directed by none other than the legendary Anupam Kher. The newly released poster reveals Tacker in a fierce, uniformed avatar as Captain Samar Raina — a character cloaked in intensity, honour, and untold heroism.

Sharing the poster socially Anupam Kher mentioned," Actors of Tanvi The Great: Happy Birthday Karan! When I watched #Neeraj Pandey's 'Special Ops' I was deeply impressed by the presence and performance of #KaranTacker. #Khaki TheBiharChapter was equally impressive! Karan has this unique ability to make his performances look effortless but still carry the weightage of a seasoned actor. The role he plays

in #TanviTheGreat had these requirements! He carries the Indian Army uniform and the responsibilities that come along with it with finesse, dignity and majestic grace. You will love him in TTG! Thank you Karan for your love, dedication and Brilliance! Happy Birthday once again my friend. Jai Ho and Jai Hind!

With Tanvi The Great, Tacker is all set to showcase his acting chops on the celluloid. Adding another layer of pride to this milestone, Tanvi The Great will be screened at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival 2025, with Karan walking the red carpet and representing Indian cinema on a global stage.

Karan says, "This moment is incredibly surreal. To debut on the big screen with a film like Tanvi The Great, under the direction of someone I've admired for years — Anupam Kher sir — is not just a professional milestone, it's a dream

manifested. Playing Capt. Samar Raina challenged me in ways I'd never imagined. Getting the opportunity to represent India at Cannes with this film is humbling beyond words. As an actor, you crave stories that move people, that matter — and Tanvi The Great is exactly that. I'm grateful to Anupam sir and Boman sir for believing in me, for giving me a space where I could fly. I can't put in words the thrill of sharing a glimpse of the world we have created."

While Tanvi The Great marks his feature film launch, Tacker is not slowing down. He's already neck-deep in another exciting role as Gaurav Tiwari, a paranormal investigator in the upcoming thriller Bhay — promising yet another intense, layered performance. And that's not all — two more big projects are in the pipeline, soon to be announced, each expected to push the envelope further for this rising star.

Sajid Khan says Bollywood has 'Leads, Not Heroes' anymore

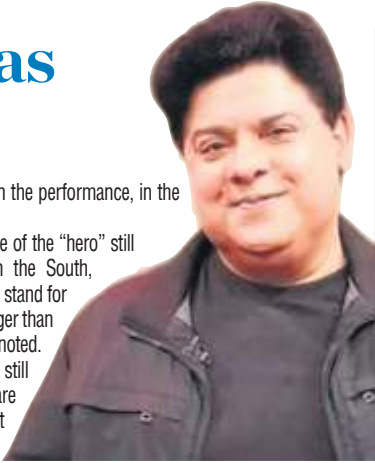
Filmmaker Sajid Khan recently shared candid thoughts about the changing face of Bollywood heroes, suggesting that the golden era of iconic, larger-than-life heroes is fading. Appearing on Bharti Singh and Haarsh Limbachiya's YouTube channel Bharti TV, Khan reflected on how the very definition of a "hero" has transformed in the Hindi film industry.

According to Sajid, today's film landscape is populated by "lead actors" rather than true heroes. "Hero bahut kam bache hain apne paas. There are no heroes in today's time. There are leads," he remarked. He believes the aura and moral compass that once defined a hero have gradually been replaced by performance-focused leads who may not embody the same cinematic gravitas.

He fondly recalled the era of stars like Amitabh Bachchan, Dharmendra, Vinod Khanna, and Mithun Chakrabarty—actors who, despite not having chiselled physiques, commanded the screen with raw intensity and charisma. "Back then, the hero didn't need six-pack abs. Their power came through their eyes, their expressions," Sajid explained. He credited Salman Khan for pioneering the gym-toned look in Bollywood with Maine Pyaar Kiya, which shifted the focus toward physical aesthetics. However, Sajid was quick to clarify that sculpted bodies do not define heroism. "Just muscles

won't make you a hero. It has to be in the performance, in the eyes," he emphasized.

Sajid also highlighted how the essence of the "hero" still thrives in South Indian cinema. "In the South, heroes still get grand entries. They still stand for values, for righteousness. They are larger than life, but grounded in principles," he noted. He added that South Indian heroes are still written with strong moral codes and are not shown engaging in behavior that sends the wrong message to audiences. To illustrate his point, Sajid cited Ranbir Kapoor's performance in Animal, asserting that Kapoor's emotional delivery would have landed just as powerfully even without the added muscle. "It was the pain in his eyes that mattered more than the biceps," he said. He also praised Sunny Deol in Gadar 2, noting that Deol doesn't fit the stereotypical gym body image, yet his raw, "desi" strength made him a believable and impactful action hero.



ISHAAN KHATTER OPENS UP ON ACTOR ENTOURAGES: 'No one should burden an entire setup'

With a witty new series that playfully jabs at the film industry's extravagant tendencies, actor Ishaan Khatter is offering a balanced take on the growing debate around actor entourages. Speaking in the context of his latest Netflix release The Royals, Khatter reflected on the rising costs of support staff and their impact on film production budgets. "I'm neither for nor against it," Ishaan told PTI, addressing whether actors should travel with a large support crew. "It should be a personal choice. But no one person should have enough people to burden an entire setup."

His comments come as The Royals—a satirical series where he stars opposite Bhumi Pednekar—delivers a tongue-in-cheek look at the trappings of celebrity life, including the sometimes comical presence of oversized entourages on set. "I've had very different experiences," Ishaan added. "On A Perfect Couple, I was literally my own everything. I didn't have anyone with me. And then there are setups where you're used to a lot of help. It can often be funny." The Royals sees Ishaan stepping into the role of Aviraaj Singh, a reluctant royal navigating modernity, while Bhumi Pednekar plays Sophia Shekhar, a self-made start-up CEO. The duo join forces to transform Aviraaj's ancestral haveli into a luxury bed-and-breakfast, blending legacy with ambition.

Sunita Ahuja warns gossipmongers: 'Don't spread lies about my marriage'



Sunita Ahuja, the wife of Bollywood veteran Govinda, has finally addressed the swirling rumours surrounding their marriage, firmly denying claims of separation and alleged infidelity. In a latest interview, Sunita dismissed the reports as "baseless gossip" and offered a strong affirmation of her bond with her husband. "These rumours are completely false. Unless something comes from me or Govinda himself, no one should believe it," she stated unequivocally.

Speculation about the couple's relationship began to surface in early 2025, prompting concern and curiosity among fans. However,

Sunita made it clear that there is no truth to the whispers of a split or extramarital affair. Emphasizing her confidence in their relationship, she said, "I don't think Govinda can live without me. I certainly can't imagine a life without him."

Taking a firm stand, Sunita also addressed the more salacious aspects of the gossip — namely, the claims that Govinda was romantically involved with another woman. "He would never leave his family for any stupid person or stupid woman," she said pointedly, dismissing the narrative with disdain.

Sunita also criticized the culture of unverified

news and blind speculation. "Why don't people verify facts before spreading such things?" she questioned, highlighting the damage such unfounded claims can cause.

She went on to challenge anyone harboring doubts to confront her directly. "If something serious ever happens, I'll be the first one to talk about it. But don't believe everything you hear," she added.

Her final statement was both emotional and deeply rooted in faith: "Bhagwan mera ghar kabhi nahi todega" — a powerful affirmation of her belief that her family will remain intact, no matter the noise outside.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



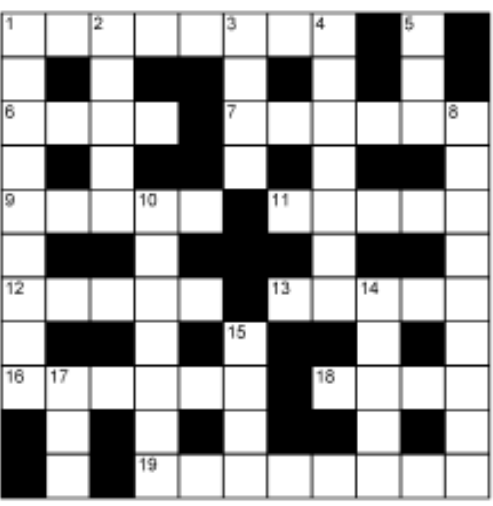
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

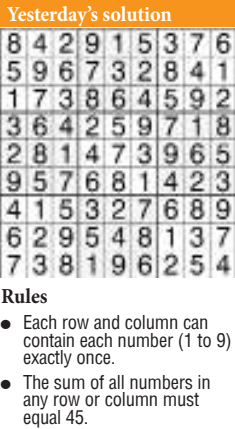
- 1 Air-holes in your nose
- 5 A chopping tool
- 6 Become larger
- 8 An insect that flutters by
- 9 Speaks
- 10 Baby cats
- 11 The body's pump
- 14 Sea
- 12 Uncles' wives
- 15 Second-hand
- 13 Took away illegally
- 17 A month
- 16 Hot coals left from a fire

DOWN

- 1 A frightening dream
- 2 Small seat without a back
- 3 A feeling that makes you want to scratch



SUDOKU



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.







**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA** ■ Colombo

Valencia scored thrice in the first half to ease past Getafe 3-0 as it continues to recover its form as the season reaches its end. It had been in last place and was now 10th.







## Sumanth clears the air about marriage rumours with Mrunal

Actor Sumanth's upcoming film *Anaganaga* is set to premiere directly on OTT soon. Ahead of its release, rumours were circulating online about his alleged marriage to actress Mrunal Thakur, sparked by a picture of them making rounds on social media.

Mrunal Thakur chose not to respond, knowing the buzz was baseless. Meanwhile, during the promotions for *Anaganaga*, Sumanth addressed the rumours head-on.

"The news is completely wrong. I am not getting married. The picture was taken during *Sita Ramam* and the rumours are false," said Sumanth in an interview with media channels. Sumanth played a pivotal role in *Sita Ramam*, which starred Dulquer Salmaan and Mrunal Thakur in lead roles.

Sumanth was previously married to actress Keerthy Reddy, but the couple later divorced. Since then, he has expressed his disinterest in remarrying, preferring to remain single. He added that such baseless rumours are not only false but also quite embarrassing.

On the other hand, Mrunal Thakur is currently starring opposite Aditi Sesh in the Telugu film *Dacoit*. In addition, she is busy with three to four Hindi films and seems unbothered by such gossip, choosing to ignore it entirely.



## MAHESH BABU'S NEPHEW JAYAKRISHNA TO DEBUT UNDER AJAY BHUPATHI'S DIRECTION

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Another young actor from the Ghattamaneni Krishna family is all set to make his film debut soon. Yesteryear superstar Krishna's grandson and Mahesh Babu's nephew, Jayakrishna, is preparing to enter the film industry, with an official announcement expected on Krishna's birthday, May 31. A source confirmed that director Ajay Bhupathi of *RX 100* fame will helm this prestigious project. Ashwini Dutt and Gemini Kiran are jointly producing the film, ensuring a grand launch for the young actor. Jayakrishna is the son of Mahesh Babu's brother, Ramesh Babu,

who passed away in January 2022. Jayakrishna has completed an acting course in New York and is ready to make his debut. Krishna's younger brother, Adishesagiri Rao, is overseeing Jayakrishna's debut film, the source added. "For the past few years, many scripts were considered, but they finally settled on Ajay Bhupathi's story and locked him in as the director. This is a prestigious project, with two big producers introducing Jayakrishna, and every detail has been taken care of," said the source. Interestingly, Ashwini Dutt has introduced several major stars to the industry, including Mahesh Babu, Ram Charan, and Allu Arjun. Now, he is introducing another star kid from a legendary legacy—Jayakrishna.



## VD's Kingdom may miss May release

Vijay Deverakonda and Bhagyashree Borse play the lead roles in *Kingdom*, which was officially scheduled for release on May 30. Directed by Gowtam Tinnanuri, the film is a prestigious project for Vijay and is produced by Sithara Entertainments.

However, according to a source, the makers are now considering postponing the release to July. "Due to current circumstances and some remaining technical work, they don't want to rush the release," said the source. Although there's no official announcement yet, insiders reveal that the film may not arrive on May 30.

Vijay Deverakonda, who is seeking a major comeback, has invested significant effort in *Kingdom* and is pinning high hopes on its success. Recently, a song from the film was released and quickly climbed music charts, raising curiosity and expectations. Vijay also underwent a complete makeover for his role.

## AP Home Minister launches emotional tribute song *Amma*



On the occasion of Mother's Day, Andhra Pradesh Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha released the emotional track *Amma* from the upcoming movie *Friday*. The film stars Diya Raj, Inaya Sultana, Rihana, Vikas Vasishtha, and Rohith Boddapati in lead roles. It is produced by Kesanakurthi Srinivas and directed by Eswar Babu Dhulipudi.

The film has completed shooting and is currently in post-production. Its earlier posters generated significant buzz, raising expectations around the release. The newly released song *Amma*, a tribute to mothers, was launched by Home Minister Anitha on Sunday. After watching the song, she praised the film's team for beautifully capturing the essence of maternal love and extended her best wishes to the cast and crew. The song is soulfully sung by Snigdha Nayani, with lyrics penned by Madhu Kiran M and music composed by Prajwal Krish.

Talking about the film, director Eswar Babu said it explores how a mother's emotional world affects her unborn child—highlighting the essence of pregnancy and motherhood. "On this Mother's Day, let's remember two legendary women: Maharani Jija Bai, mother of Shivaji, and Jaivanta Bai, mother of Maharana Pratap. They raised their sons to uphold Dharma and protect their land," he added.

## RAJ TARUN VENTURES INTO TAMIL CINEMA



Actor Raj Tarun, who has been struggling to find success in Telugu cinema, is now set to make his Tamil debut. The film will also be released in Telugu. On the occasion of his birthday, the team announced his new project. The film will be directed by renowned cinematographer and filmmaker Vijay Milton. Known in Tamil cinema, Milton has worked as a cinematographer on over 43 major films featuring top stars like Vijay and Ajith. He has also directed critically acclaimed films such as *Goli Soda*, *Bairagi*, and *Kadugu*.

This upcoming project is part of the *Goli Soda* franchise and is expected to be a high-energy, action-packed entertainer. According to the makers, Raj Tarun will appear in a completely fresh and surprising avatar, playing a role unlike any he has done before. Further announcements regarding the film's title, cast, and release schedule are expected soon.

## Premisthunna promises limitless love

Director Bhanu is bringing a fresh new love story to the screen with *Premisthunna*, starring Satvik Varma and Preeti Neha in lead roles. The film is produced by Kanakadurga Rao Pappula.

"Every love story has love, but this one has limitless love—as vast as the sky," say the makers. With a unique concept never explored in previous love stories, *Premisthunna* is crafted to stand out. The film is packed with elements that the young generation will want to watch repeatedly.

Siddharth Saluri, a descendant of legendary music composer Saluri Rajeswara Rao, has scored five songs for the film, making it a musical love story. Bhaskar Shyamala handled cinematography, while Anil Kumar Achugatla wrote the dialogues. Two well-known actors are playing key roles, with their names to be revealed soon.



## Vishwak Sen Returns to Direction with CULT

Actor Vishwak Sen is seeking a comeback after his recent films failed to make a mark. His last film *Laila*, where he portrayed a woman, received heavy criticism. Known for his directorial ventures *Falaknuma Das* and *Das Ka Damki*, Vishwak has now returned to directing.

On Sunday, his new film was officially launched, marking his third directorial project, titled *CULT*. The launch event saw the presence of several Tollywood celebrities. The film is produced by Karate Raju and Sandeep Kakarala.

Vishwak Sen is not only directing the film but also writing the story himself, making it a deeply personal and creatively rich endeavor.

*CULT* is touted to be a new-age party thriller

inspired by real events and promises a first-of-its-kind cinematic experience. The actor-director is also introducing 40 newcomers through this movie. Acclaimed filmmaker Tharun Bhascker is penning the

dialogues, and renowned composer Ravi Basrur of *KGF* and *Kantara* fame is scoring the music. The film will be released in Telugu, Hindi, Japanese, Spanish, and English.

