



The Pioneer

Paper with passion since 1864

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DELHI

LUCKNOW

BHOPAL

BHUBANESWAR

RANCHI

CHANDIGARH

DEHRADUN

HYDERABAD



No cabinet reshuffle on cards, says
K'taka DCM

'POTENTIAL
TO INCREASE AGRI, FISHERY
EXPORTS TO RS 20 LAKH CR



Sagar steps back into khaki for The
100, says it's not your typical
COP FILM



- Harish Rao, BRS MLA P3

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The Pioneer

Revanth, if anyone deserves the whip, it's you for selling out Telangana's water rights and staging shows behind closed doors with your MLAs and BRS defectors. Your actions are not just shameful, they are a violation of legislative privilege. We will move privilege motions in both Houses. Why isn't the Chief Minister holding open discussions, and instead is hiding inside the Praja Bhavan, trying to spin lies with staged presentations

DON'T MISS...

Model flower market proposed in V'wada

District Collector Dr G Lakshmisha has announced that proposals are being prepared to construct a model flower market in Vijayawada under a government-private partnership model. The new market aims to serve both wholesale and retail flower traders as well as consumers. Chairing a meeting at the Collectorate on Wednesday with representatives from the Marketing, Horticulture and Municipal departments, as well as the Wholesale Flower Market Traders' Welfare Association, Dr Lakshmisha said the...

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Modi holds talks with Namibia Prez

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday held talks with Namibian President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah and discussed ways to bolster bilateral cooperation in areas such as digital technology, defence, security, agriculture, healthcare, education and critical minerals. During the delegation-level talks, the two leaders reviewed the full range of India-Namibia relations. "Cooperation in areas such as digital technology, defence, security, agriculture, healthcare, education and critical...

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Gold declines Rs 700 to Rs 98,420/10 g

Gold prices declined by Rs 700 to Rs 98,420 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday in line with weak global trends, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 99,120 per 10 grams in the previous market session. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity depreciated by Rs 600 to Rs 98,000 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). It had settled at Rs 98,600 per 10 grams on Tuesday. Additionally, silver prices plunged by...

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Gill storms into top-10 rankings

India captain Shubman Gill on Wednesday broke into the top-10 of the ICC men's Test batting rankings for the first time in his career after a record-breaking performance against England at Edgbaston. Gill smashed 269 and 161 in the game -- becoming only the second player in history to score more than 150 in both innings of a Test -- as India thrashed England by 336 runs to level the five-match series 1-1. This was also his first win as Test captain. The 24-year-old, who was ranked 23rd before...

-SPORTS

CM: Technology must serve people, not just progress

SAYS CHALLENGE LIES IN ENSURING THAT TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS REACHES THE GRASSROOTS

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has reiterated that technology must be used to transform lives meaningfully, particularly for the underprivileged. Chairing a review meeting with representatives from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation at the State secretariat, the Chief Minister stressed that the ultimate purpose of innovation must be citizen welfare, not just advancement.

Naidu stressed that while Andhra Pradesh is embracing digital governance, the challenge lies in ensuring that technological progress reaches the grassroots. "In today's world, digital tools are plenty, but what matters is how meaningfully they are used. By August 15, 95-97 per cent of government services will be delivered online. But people must be equipped to access and benefit from these services," he said.

The Gates Foundation is partnering with Andhra Pradesh on a range of citizen-centric initiatives covering healthcare, agriculture, education, environment, infrastructure, RTGS and capacity building. "Their global expertise and tested models are a valuable asset. But we must ensure these tools serve the real needs of our citizens," the CM remarked.



Affordable healthcare and education non-negotiable

With rising medical costs pushing families into financial distress, the CM outlined his vision to integrate technology into the healthcare system. Regular diagnostics, digital health records, early detection of diseases, and lifestyle monitoring will form the foundation of a new, proactive healthcare model. "Technology will help us deliver continuous, preventive, and personalised healthcare. We aim to align our system with the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission," he added.

He stressed that quality education should be accessible to every family, especially the economically weaker

sections. "Technology can help reimagine classrooms and reduce the cost of delivering high-quality education. Our focus is on building strong foundations to secure every child's future."

Empowering farmers with real-time support

Naidu highlighted the importance of supporting farmers throughout the agricultural cycle — from seed to sale. "Accurate soil testing, real-time data, and market intelligence will empower farmers to make the right decisions and fetch better prices. We must move towards demand-driven farming," he noted.

Skills, AI university, innovation

The Chief Minister also announced plans to scale up capacity-building pro-

grammes beyond government staff. "Our aim is to upskill citizens and make them future-ready. Andhra Pradesh is already a leader in MedTech manufacturing. We now plan to establish an Artificial Intelligence University in Amaravati with Gates Foundation's support to build the next generation of AI professionals," he said.

To ensure progress, CM Naidu proposed holding bi-monthly review meetings with the Gates Foundation.

Senior government officials and Foundation representatives participated in the session, which set the stage for deeper collaboration in transforming Andhra Pradesh into a technology-powered, people-first State.

Cabinet approves key projects

Focuses on infrastructure, agriculture and welfare

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a significant move towards strengthening infrastructure, welfare, and economic development, the Andhra Pradesh State Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, approved a series of key proposals in its 27th e-Cabinet meeting held at the State Secretariat. The Minister for Information, Public Relations, and Housing, Kolusu Parthasarathi, briefed the media on the decisions. **Amaravati infrastructure gets major boost**

The Cabinet approved allocation of ₹524.70 crore for the speedy completion of residential quarters for MLAs, MLCs, and All India Services officers in Amaravati. The complex, comprising 432 residences in 18 towers, will be executed on a lump sum basis with a two-year defect liability period. In addition, land allocations in the CRDA region will be reviewed as per the Amaravati Land Allotment Rules and Regulations of 2017.

Desilting of Krishna River

An administrative sanction of ₹286.20 crore was approved for desilting of sand from Krishna River and the foreshore of the Prakasam Barrage. APCRDA has been authorised to undertake the work in compliance with environmental and legal guidelines, with



coordination from various departments including Water Resources and Mines.

Irrigation and water projects

The Cabinet cleared the continuation of 71 irrigation works under various Chief Engineers and approved ₹22.5 lakh for urgent repairs to sluices on the Right Main Canal under the Kallapadu Project in Nellore district. These repairs aim to ensure uninterrupted water supply for crops during the cultivation stage.

Airports and infrastructure development

To strengthen aviation infrastructure, the Cabinet approved a ₹1,000-crore loan from HUDCO to be availed by AP Airports Development Corporation Ltd. with a government guarantee. The funds will support development at Kuppam, Dagadharthi, Srikakulam, and Amaravati airports.

Continued on Page 2

Govt should buy mangoes from farmers: Jagan

YSRCP chief deplores arrests, restrictions by police

PNS ■ BANGARUPALEM

Former Chief Minister and YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has demanded that the State Government buy the entire mango produce from farmers at Rs 12 per kg. He also warned against the 'repressive measures', reiterating that he would be questioning time and again on behalf of the people.

Addressing the media at the Market Yard here on Wednesday, Jagan said that there are over 76,000



farmers who cultivated mango in an extent of over 2.20 lakh acres. The yield was 6.45 lakh tonnes, and they

are in distress as they are not getting MSP.

Continued on Page 2

India, Africa must act together to create future: Modi

PNS ■ WINDHOEK

Underlining that India values Africa's role in world affairs, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the two sides must act together to create a future defined not by power and dominance, but by partnership and dialogue.

Addressing a Joint Session of the Parliament of the Republic of Namibia, PM Modi also said that Africa must not be just a source of raw material. "Africa must lead in value creation and sustainable growth," he said.

"We must act together. Let us create a future defined not by power, but by partnership; not by dominance, but by dialogue; not by exclusion, but by equity," Modi said. The Prime Minister said that India was ready to

ADDRESSES JOINT SESSION OF NAMIBIA PARLIAMENT



expand its cooperation with Africa in defence and security.

"Our development partnership in Africa is worth over USD 12 billion. But its real value is in shared growth and shared purpose. We continue to build local skills, create local jobs and support local innovations," he said. In

his address, Modi highlighted the strong historical and cultural ties between India and Namibia. "India attaches great importance to its historic relation with Namibia," he said.

He said India and Namibia have a powerful story of cooperation, conservation and compassion, highlighting India's cheetah reintroduction program and its readiness to supply Namibia with a radiotherapy machine.

"We are excited to support the next generation of Namibian scientists, doctors and leaders," Modi said. "Our bilateral trade has crossed \$800 million, but like on the cricket field, we are just warming up! We will score faster and score more!" he said.

Jagan's tour was a staged drama: Atchannaidu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Agriculture Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaidu has launched a scathing attack on YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy over his tour in Chittoor, accusing him of 'orchestrating political theatrics' in the name of farmer support. Addressing the media on Wednesday, Atchannaidu stated that Jagan's tour was nothing more than a staged drama aimed at misleading the public and gaining political mileage.

"These tours are not about helping farmers, they are political shows carefully designed for media optics. During the YSRCP's tenure, Opposition leaders weren't even allowed to step out for farmer-related issues. Now, while we are allowing Opposition tours, they are misusing the opportunity to stage events and create unrest," Atchannaidu said.

The Minister alleged that the recent mango-dumping incident during Jagan's tour was pre-planned. "In Chittoor, tractors filled with mangoes from a 25-acre orchard owned by YSRCP district secretary Prakash Reddy were deliberately driven ahead of Jagan's convoy and the fruits were dumped on the road."

Continued on Page 2

Two pilots killed in Jaguar fighter jet crash in Rajasthan

PNS ■ JAIPUR/NEW DELHI

Two pilots of the Indian Air Force (IAF) were killed on Wednesday morning in a crash of a Jaguar fighter jet near Churu in Rajasthan, the third such accident since March involving the twin-engine bomber.

The IAF said a court of inquiry has been constituted to ascertain the cause of the accident. "An IAF Jaguar Trainer aircraft met with an accident during a routine training mission and crashed near Churu in Rajasthan, today," it said in a brief statement. "Both pilots sustained fatal injuries in the accident. No damage to any civil property has been reported," it said.

The IAF said it "deeply regrets" the loss of lives and stands firmly with the bereaved families in this time of grief. "A court of inquiry has



been constituted, to ascertain the cause of the accident," it said.

The IAF is yet to make public the names of the deceased pilots. Earlier, Rajasthan Police officials said the jet crashed at around 1.25 pm.

The aircraft crashed in an agricultural field in Bhanoda village around 1.25 pm, SHO of Rajaldesar, Kamlesh, said. He said human body parts were found near the crash site.

Shortly after the crash, locals rushed to the site and found burning debris.

Thousands attend Simhachalam's 'Giri Pradakshina'

32-KM-LONG CIRCUMAMBULATION OF SIMHACHALAM HILL RANGE BEGAN IN THE EARLY HOURS

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Several thousands of devotees from Visakhapatnam and neighbouring areas participated in the annual 'Giri Pradakshina' at Simhachalam on Wednesday, demonstrating devotion despite sweltering heat and high humidity. The 32-km-long circumambulation of the sacred Simhachalam hill range began in the early hours of the day. Devotees, including a large number of women and youth, commenced the spiritual trek equipped with umbrellas, caps, and other heat-resistant gear.

The district authorities, in coordination with various civic and voluntary organisations, made elaborate arrangements to ensure the smooth conduct of the event. Nearly 300 medical camps were set up along the



Devotees taking part in 'Giri Pradakshina' near MVP Junction in Visakhapatnam on Wednesday

route, along with mobile toilets and hundreds of drinking water stalls at regular intervals.

The pilgrimage gained momentum

at 'Tholi Pavancha', the foothills of Simhachalam, where a replica of the presiding deity Sri Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy was installed.

The area witnessed a sea of devotees breaking coconuts and beginning their trek with chants of "Govinda Govinda" and "Jai Sri Ram". Officials facilitated the ritual by setting up 50 queue lines and nearly 100 coconut-breaking grills.

A large number of volunteers, NGOs, colony welfare associations, and political representatives came forward to serve devotees by distributing buttermilk, drinking water, energy drinks, and food such as upma, veg biryani, halwa, and pulihora.

Former Union Minister and hereditary trustee of the Simhachalam temple, Sri Pusapati Ashok Gajapathi Raju, offered special prayers to the Pushparatham — a flower-decorated chariot carrying the deity's replica — which commenced its ceremo-

nial journey at around 4 p.m. Hundreds of devotees joined the pradakshina alongside the chariot, raising devotional slogans.

"This is my 11th consecutive year performing Giri Pradakshina. I strongly believe that my wishes have been fulfilled with the blessings of the Lord," said K. Pradeep Kumar, a government teacher from S. Kota. Many devotees observed that the relatively moderate weather, despite the summer conditions, encouraged them to take part. Several women with children were seen walking enthusiastically.

A few devotees also chose to circumambulate the temple atop the hill 32 times — a traditional alternative believed to be equivalent to the 32-km trek.

Continued on Page 2

AP attracts major investments in aviation, infrastructure

TURNING POINT IN MAKING STATE A FUTURE AVIATION HUB: JANARDHAN REDDY

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh is witnessing a surge in strategic and sustainable investments, particularly in the aviation and technology sectors, thanks to the proactive efforts of Minister for Investments, Infrastructure, Roads and Buildings, BC Janardhan Reddy. With an investor-friendly atmosphere created under the leadership of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, global and national firms are now showing renewed confidence in the State.

On Wednesday, several top aviation and data technology companies met Minister Janardhan Reddy at the Secretariat to express their interest in setting up operations



in Andhra Pradesh. Among them was Sarla Aviation, a leading Electric Vertical Take-Off and Landing (EVTOL) aircraft manufacturer. Following fruitful discussions, the company shared a comprehensive presentation outlining its plans to establish a manufacturing unit in the State. The Minister assured that necessary approvals will be

granted once formal proposals are submitted.

Golden Epaulets Aviation Academy, known for its pilot training programmes, also expressed interest in setting up a training institute in the State to train aspiring airline pilots. Meanwhile, Haribon Aeronautics Private. Ltd., a manufacturer of aviation and nautical equipment such as radars, GPS devices, and navigation systems, proposed to provide services in sectors like defence, agriculture, and port security.

Minister Reddy noted that this growing interest marks a turning point in making Andhra Pradesh a future aviation hub. He stressed the State's commitment to attracting long-term, technology-driven investments that generate

employment for local youth.

The Minister highlighted that other leading EVTOL firms like EPlane Company, BLUJ Aviation and Magnum Wings had already shown interest in investing in the State. Adding to the momentum, CtrlS Data Centres, one of India's premier data infrastructure companies, expressed willingness to invest ₹500 crore in Andhra Pradesh.

Minister Reddy reaffirmed that the State government is prioritising infrastructure development—roads, ports, and airports—to support industrial growth. He added that industries offering sustainable employment will be incentivised and assured investors of full cooperation and fast-track approvals.

Panel to review demands of RMPs, ASHAs: Health Min

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Health Minister Satya Kumar Yadav has announced the formation of a committee to examine the long-pending demands of Rural Medical Practitioners (RMPs). Speaking at the Secretariat on Wednesday, the Minister said that the State Government is committed to resolving issues concerning RMPs, ASHA workers and the Andhra Pradesh Indian Medicine Association.

TDP politburo member TD Janardhan met the minister to discuss key concerns raised by these grassroots health workers. RMPs who provide essential healthcare services in rural areas, have been demanding professional recognition and refresher training programs. They are urging the government to revive the training initiatives offered previously. Special Chief Secretary MT Krishna Babu noted that concerns have been raised about some RMPs identifying themselves as registered medical practitioners and displaying boards branding their centres as primary healthcare units. He said that the government must carefully consider opinions issued by the National Medical Commission and Supreme Court, along with the existing practices and objections, before making decisions.

On ASHA workers' issues, Janardhan welcomed the coalition government's positive response. Minister Yadav stated that several of their demands have already been approved by the Chief Minister and are under review by the Finance Department. He directed Krishna Babu to coordinate with Finance officials to expedite the file clearance.

Visakhapatnam to...

Continued from Page 1

Committees focusing on city beautification, exhibitions, protocol, hospitality, transportation, logistics, culture, media, traffic and security will also be formed.

APIIC MD Abhishek Kishore, I&PR Director Himanshu Shukla, NEDCAP MD Kamalakhar Babu and senior CII representatives were present. MAUD Principal Secretary SSuresh Kumar, Tourism MD Amrapali, IT Secretary K Bhaskar and Food Processing Secretary Chiranjeevi Chowdhury joined the meeting virtually.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha

Tithi: Purnima: Jul 10 01:37 AM to Jul 11 02:06 AM

Krishna Paksha Pratipada: Jul 11 02:06 AM to Jul 12 02:08 AM

Nakshatram: Purva Ashadha: Jul 10 04:49 AM to Jul 11 05:56 AM

Rahukalam: 1:58 PM to 3:36 PM

Yamagandam: 5:52 AM to 7:29 AM

Varjyam: 02:52 PM to 04:32 PM

Gulika: 9:06 AM to 10:44 AM

Amritakalam: 12:54 AM to 02:35 AM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:55 AM to 12:47 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Cloudy

Temp: 34°

Humidity: 70%

Sunrise: 5:41 AM

Sunset: 6:44 PM

Updated: July 9, 2025 5:00 PM

APCRDA holds meeting on green certification for housing projects

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA) has convened a key technical meeting at its office in Lenin Centre, Vijayawada, to advance green building standards for Amaravati's housing sector. The meeting was chaired by Mallarapu Naveen, Additional Commissioner (Admin), APCRDA, and attended by the Engineer-in-Chief and senior officials.

The session focused on implementing the EDGE (Excellence in Design for Greater Efficiencies) green certification framework across upcoming and ongoing housing developments in the capital region. Technical presentations were made by three empanelled



firms: Ela Green Buildings & Infrastructure Consultants Pvt. Ltd., Chennai, Chinoy Design Services, Vijayawada, and Essential India Greenedge Analytics Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai. Each firm outlined their expertise, introduced their technical teams and EDGE-certified auditors, and presented successful green building case studies. Strategic action plans were proposed for Amaravati's housing projects, aimed at achieving

EDGE Pre-Certification within three months.

APCRDA emphasised its commitment to integrating energy efficiency, water conservation, and sustainable practices into Amaravati's urban development model. This initiative represents a major step toward building a climate-resilient, environmentally responsible capital city, setting a benchmark for future urban infrastructure across the State.



Speaker inspects MLA, MLC Quarters under construction

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly Speaker Chintakayala Ayyanna Patrudu inspected the under-construction residential quarters for MLAs and MLCs in Amaravati on Wednesday. He stressed the need to develop innovative residential communities keeping in view the future reorganisation of constituencies.

The Speaker instructed officials to ensure the availability of modern facilities such as swimming pools, hospitals and club-houses within the quarters meant for legislators. He also directed them to incorporate features like solar energy usage, groundwater recharge systems and efficient wastewater management to promote sustainability. Expressing satisfaction over the progress of construction, the Speaker stated that all 288 quarters being built across 12 towers will be ready for

occupancy by December this year. He noted that MLAs and MLCs will reside in these quarters during the next budget session. Besides, Ayyanna Patrudu said that quarters for 35 ministers and 36 judges are expected to be completed by March next year. He suggested giving special recognition to residential units allocated for the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Council Chairman and Deputy Chairman, along with ministerial quarters.

The Speaker also recommended setting up temporary accommodation facilities for visiting MLAs, MLCs and MPs from other States when they come to Amaravati.

He revealed that the official residence of the Chief Minister and Raj Bhavans will be constructed along the banks of the Krishna River, enhancing the administrative presence in the capital region.

Continued from Page 1

Welfare and employment

In a notable decision, the Cabinet amended Section 4 of the AP Public Services Act to offer compassionate employment to T. Veeranjineyulu, whose father was killed in a politically motivated incident. He will be appointed as a Junior Assistant in a suitable department.

Technological advancements

A major step towards high-end research, the Cabinet approved the formation of Amaravati Quantum Computing Centre (AQCC) with an estimated ₹4,000 crore investment. The centre will make Amaravati a hub for quantum technology, supporting startups, universities, and industries.

Green tax relief

An ordinance was approved to revise the Green Tax on transport vehicles, reducing it from as much as ₹20,000 per year to ₹1,500-₹3,000. This move will benefit nearly 9.5 lakh vehicle owners and ease financial burdens.

Space policy and bulk drug park

The Cabinet also approved the Andhra Pradesh Space Policy 4.0 to develop the State into a hub for satellite development, space tech R&D, and private space launches. Additionally, approval was given for land adjustments and incentives to establish a Bulk Drug Park in Anakapalli.

Agriculture support initiatives

A key focus of the meeting was agricultural welfare. The Cabinet sanctioned: ₹14.88 crore to procure 2,976.76 MT of unsold cocoa at ₹50/kg.

₹260 crore to procure 6.5 lakh MT of Totapuri mangoes from farmers at ₹4/kg in the Chittoor region to prevent distress sales

₹1,000-crore additional loan guarantee to AP MARKFED to clear pending dues to farmers for Rabi 2024-25.

Rural water supply reforms

The Cabinet approved the formation

of AP Jal Jeevan Water Supply Corporation to mobilise ₹10,000 crore from financial institutions for clean drinking water projects under the Jal Jeevan Mission.

Other key decisions

It has been decided to establish a World Economic Forum – AP Centre for Energy and Cyber Resilience in Amaravati with a ₹36-crore budget. Landless Poor Pension has been reinstated for 1,575 Amaravati families displaced due to capital development. Amendment will be made to the AP Shops & Establishments Act, 1988, for labour reforms and reduced compliance burden.

Mega Parent-Teacher Meeting 2.0 today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh is poised to set a new benchmark in education engagement as it prepares to host the Mega Parent-Teacher Meeting (PTM) 2.0 on Thursday. With an estimated participation of 2.28 crore people, including students, parents, teachers, donors, alumni and officials, this initiative marks one of the largest community-driven educational exercises ever undertaken in the country.

The event is a brainchild of Education Minister Nara Lokesh, who aims to institutionalise annual Parent-Teacher Meetings in all government, aided, and unaided schools and junior colleges. The State has made elaborate arrangements to ensure the event is conducted across 61,000 edu-

Over 2 crore students, parents and teachers to participate across 61,000 institutions

cational institutions, including government and private schools.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Minister Nara Lokesh will take part in the flagship event at Zilla Parishad High School, Kothacheruvu, Puttaparthi constituency, where they will interact directly with students, their parents, and teaching staff.

A festive approach to education

The meeting is being conducted in a festive atmosphere for the second consecutive year, reflecting the government's commitment to strengthen parent-teacher

engagement across the educational ecosystem. The State expects participation from 74.96 lakh students, 3.32 lakh teachers, and nearly 1.5 crore parents and donors.

This initiative not only promotes transparency and accountability in education, but also encourages active participation from the community in shaping the learning environment.

Progress cards, feedback, and dialogue

During the event, parents will receive comprehensive progress cards detailing their child's academic performance, behaviour, and awareness of social issues. This gives parents

a clear understanding of their children's strengths and areas needing attention.

Importantly, the event also provides a structured platform for parents to share feedback and suggestions directly with school authorities and the government.

Issues related to infrastructure, teacher performance, and student well-being are expected to be discussed during the interactions.

Lokesh has emphasised the importance of involving parents in the school system, extending PTMs beyond private institutions and embedding them deeply into government schools.

Labour Minister defends Factory Act reforms

Promises support to film industry workers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Labour Minister Vashamshetti Subhash has strongly refuted the Opposition's criticism over the proposed amendments to the Factories Act, dismissing them as baseless and misleading. He clarified that claims suggesting a "sword hanging over workers' rights" are factually incorrect and designed to mislead the public.

Addressing the media here on Wednesday, Minister Subhash stressed that the amendments to Sections 54, 55, 56, 59, 64 and 65 aim to enhance factory management efficiency while safeguarding workers' health, safety and income security. He stressed that the weekly work limit of 48 hours and the overall cap of 60 hours including overtime remain unchanged.

The proposed amendments include: increasing the daily



work hour limit from 9 to 10 (while retaining the weekly cap of 48 hours), mandating a 30-minute rest break after six hours of work, extending the spread-over period from 10.5 to 12 hours, and raising the overtime limit from 50/75 hours per quarter to 144 hours, with double wages applicable.

"These changes are aimed at increasing income opportunities, promoting work-life balance, and allowing more rest days, not curtailing worker rights," he said. He further reaffirmed the coalition government's commitment to labour welfare, citing improvements in ESI healthcare services, new ESI hospitals, safe transport

options for women workers and educational support through the P4 initiative.

In a separate development, a delegation from the Andhra Pradesh Film Industry Employees Federation met the Minister to raise concerns over the financial and health security of cinema workers. Led by president Thoram Raja, the delegation urged the creation of a Cine Workers Welfare Board.

Minister Subhash responded positively, assuring swift action. "The government stands firmly with film industry workers and will take necessary steps to address their grievances," he said.

840 kg ganja seized, four held in Anakapalli district

Smugglers used forest paths to bypass checkpoint; contraband sourced from Odisha, bound for Karnataka

PNS ■ ANAKAPALLI

The Nakkapalli police in Anakapalli district arrested four individuals and seized 840 kg of ganja, worth Rs 42 lakh, the other day. The operation was held at Vedullapalem Junction in Nakkapalli mandal, following a tip-off. During a press conference held on Wednesday, SP Tuhin Sinha briefed the case details. He said that the Nakkapalli police conducted a vehicle inspection drive, where they stopped a Bolero and two motorcycles, which led to the discovery of 840 kg



of ganja concealed in 20 bags. In addition to the illegal substance, the police also seized three mobile phones from the suspects.

As per police investigations, the suspects had

brought the ganja from the Janaba region in Odisha and transported it using a planned route. The group loaded the contraband at Uyyala Bridge and navigated through Dharakonda and Chintapalli

to reach Downur.

To escape from the Downur check-post, the smugglers utilised an elaborate strategy. They unloaded the ganja prior to the checkpoint and carried it on foot through garden paths, reloading it into the vehicle after passing the checkpoint. The shipment was en route to Karnataka via Tallapalem when the police intercepted it at Vedullapalem Junction.

The four persons taken into custody have been identified as Pangi Arjuna Rao (32), Vanthala Suresh (23), Kaisarla Diwakar (23), a repeat offend-

er with prior cases registered at Rolugunta and Kirlampudi police stations, and Yalamanchili Ramana (60). The main suspect, Sukri Arjun from Mangopalem village in Chintapalli mandal, is believed to have masterminded the operation in collaboration with his accomplices.

A case has been filed under Crime No. 119/2025, under sections 20(b)(ii)(c) and 25 in read with 8(c) of the NDPS Act at the Nakkapalli Police Station. The police formed a special team to arrest additional suspects involved in the trafficking network.

Govt should buy...

Continued from Page 1

He demanded that the government buy the entire produce by paying Rs 12 per kg and come to the rescue of the farmers. He recalled that mango farmers got Rs 29 per kg during the YSRCP's tenure, and the RBKS monitored the crop throughout. "In just one year after the coalition government came to office, the prices dipped. Normally, mango procurement should take place in early May. The delay has resulted in the produce piling up and drastic fall in prices, which shows the Chandrababu Naidu government's inefficiency.

"Nowhere in the country

are mango farmers selling their crop at Rs 2 per kg. The other day, Karnataka managed to convince the Centre to buy its mango at Rs 16 per kg. When Karnataka got the assurance from the Centre, what was Chandrababu Naidu doing? Why couldn't he persuade the Centre and assure a better price for the farmers," he questioned.

"When YS Jagan comes to express solidarity with the farmers, why should there be so many restrictions? What is wrong if farmers come to express their woes when the situation is so bad with no input subsidy coming and no marketing facilities nor MSP being paid.

Jagan's tour was a staged drama...

Continued from Page 1

It was clearly a coordinated act to malign the NDA government and project a false crisis." Attchannaidu pointed out that Jagan, despite witnessing the situation, did not bother to step out or speak with the farmers. "He simply drove over the mangoes and moved on. That shows his actual concern for farmers." Refuting allegations of negligence in mango procurement, Attchannaidu clarified that the government has been efficiently procuring mangoes at support prices across districts. "In Annamayya district, 99 per cent of the mango produce has been procured, 98 per cent in Tirupati and 80 per cent in Chittoor. This is the real situation on the ground. Jagan's claims are far from reality."

Model flower market proposed in Vijayawada

New market aims to serve both wholesale and retail flower traders

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

District Collector Dr G Lakshmisha has announced that proposals are being prepared to construct a model flower market in Vijayawada under a government-private partnership model. The new market aims to serve both wholesale and retail flower traders as well as consumers.

Chairing a meeting at the Collectorate on Wednesday with representatives from the Marketing, Horticulture and Municipal departments, as well as the Wholesale Flower Market Traders' Welfare Association, Dr Lakshmisha said the market will be established on an 80-cent plot at the GS Raju Road Rythu Bazaar, which has seen poor patronage in recent times due to its proximity to the Kedareswarapet Rythu Bazaar. Only 10 to 15 stalls are currently operational at the site.



The Collector said proposals will be sent to the government for repurposing this land for a wholesale flower market. With the current flower market located on Railway-owned land near the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation, there is a need for a more permanent and accessi-

ble solution. He added that the Traders' Welfare Association will bear the full cost of construction, as per government norms, and 10 per cent of the shops will be reserved for government management. Rents would be allocated on a lease basis, with a 10 per cent

increment every three years. The project aims to attract not only consumers, but also tourists visiting the city. Officials and traders were also encouraged to visit the Kadiyam flower market near Rajamahendravaram for inspi-

AGROS to strengthen State-wide operations

Larger number of farmers to get individual farm implements in 2025-26

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Agro Industries Development Corporation (AP AGROS) is set to significantly expand its farm mechanisation efforts across the State under the revived Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanisation (SMAM) scheme. The move aims to supply individual farm implements to a larger number of farmers during the 2025-26 financial year.

This decision was made during a high-level review meeting held at the AP AGROS State Head Office in Vaddeswaram, near Mangalagiri. The meeting was chaired by AGROS Chairman Subba Naidu, who directed officials to prepare a comprehensive action plan to strengthen AGROS operations in all districts.

Vice-Chairman and Managing Director S Dilli Rao, General Manager Rajamohan, Manager Kurma Rao, and Agriculture Department SE Haribabu Chowdary were among the key participants in the meeting.

District-wise reviews were conducted, covering pending



court cases, receivables, land assets, and overall sales performance. The discussions focused on identifying bottlenecks and accelerating progress.

Chairman Subba Naidu emphasised that the reintroduction of the SMAM scheme after five years under the new coalition government marks a renewed commitment to farm

mechanisation. The expanded distribution of individual implements is expected to enhance agricultural productivity and support farmer welfare across Andhra Pradesh.

CREDAI serves buttermilk to Giri Pradakshina devotees

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The CREDAI Visakhapatnam Chapter organised a buttermilk distribution camp on Wednesday for devotees taking part in the annual Simhachalam Giri Pradakshina, offering much-needed respite to thousands of participants undertaking the arduous 32-kilometre spiritual walk around the sacred Simhachalam hill in honour of Sri Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy.

Members of CREDAI's Youth Wing and Women's Wing actively participated in the initiative, enthusiastically distributing chilled buttermilk to pil-



grims enduring high humidity and soaring temperatures. The effort drew appreciation from devotees, many of whom gratefully paused at the stall to refresh themselves before continuing

their uphill trek. The service was not only a gesture of goodwill, but also part of CREDAI's broader commitment to community engagement and cultural tradition.

Journalists urge govt to resume Amaravati housing project

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Amaravati Accredited Journalists Mutually Aided Co-operative House Building Society has appealed to the Municipal Administration Minister, P Narayana, to resume the long-pending journalists' housing project in Amaravati.

A delegation of senior journalists met the Minister at the AP Secretariat on Wednesday and submitted a formal representation seeking revival of the multi-storey apartment project, which was originally launched during the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) regime

between 2014 and 2019 but was stalled following the change in government.

The society highlighted that 30 acres of land had been allotted through Government Orders MS No 36 and 67 and later handed over to the Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) for the construction of apartments similar to the Happy Nest project. Further, GO MS No 107, issued on March 7, 2019, authorised construction with four categories of plinth area to accommodate varying housing needs.

"We had formed the society and enrolled members accord-

ingly, but the project was abruptly halted. With the TDP back in power and renewed focus on Amaravati's development, we urge the government to resume this project," said P Srinivasa Rao, general secretary of the Society.

The delegation stressed that completing the housing project would be a meaningful gesture of support for the journalist community in the State.

Other representatives present included founder secretary Chava Ravi, directors Eeshwar, Srinivas, Narasimha Rao and senior journalists Krishna Mohan, Mallikarjun, Pawan Kumar and Mukkanti.



360 MTs of tobacco purchased from 110 farmers in Prakasam

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Reiterating that all steps have been taken to purchase tobacco from the farmers, Prakasam district in-charge Collector R Gopal Krishna has said that 360 Metric Tonnes of tobacco had been purchased from 110 farmers so far.

The Collector on Wednesday inspected the process of tobacco purchase at a purchasing centre at Garlapadu village of Maddipadu mandal. On the occasion, the In-charge Collector spoke to the farmers and inquired about how many quintals of tobacco were brought to the purchasing center, whether they were being purchased as per the schedule, and whether there were any difficulties at the purchasing center.

He also inquired about whether there were any difficulties in storing the tobacco bales brought by the farmers, how much storage could be done, how the farmers would be paid after purchase, and other details, as well as the tobacco purchase policy, from the Mark Fed officials.

Speaking on the occasion, In-charge Collector Gopala Krishna revealed that as per the orders of the state government, HD Barley tobacco has been purchased through Mark Fed at the purchase center at Garlapadu for the past 15 days. "So far, 360 metric tonnes of tobacco produce, worth Rs 3 crore has been purchased from 110 tobacco farmers in the district," he acknowledged.

After the tobacco farmers register their names in the CM App, tobacco will be purchased from the farmers through Mark Fed as per the prescribed schedule, he said adding that the purchase of tobacco will be done till the month of September," he made it clear and asked the tobacco farmers not to worry.

The In-charge Collector said that if the tobacco bales are brought after grading as per the guidelines issued by the government, the Markfed would purchase them. RDO Lakshmi Prasanna, Mark Fed DM Hari Krishana and Tahsildar Aadilakshmi were among those who accompanied the In-charge Collector.

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

Uddanam cashew, celebrated for its superior quality and large-scale cultivation in north coastal Andhra Pradesh, has been selected for the 2025 National Award under the One District One Product (ODOP) initiative. The recognition, part of the Union Government's effort to promote region-specific products, foster rural employment, and drive local economic growth, was officially communicated to the district administration.

Srikakulam Collector Swapnil Dinkar Pundkar and District Horticulture Officer Ratnala Varaprasada Rao are set to receive the award during a national ceremony in New Delhi on July 14. Uddanam, a major cashew-producing belt in Srikakulam district, spans several man-

Uddanam Cashew bags national honour under ODOP

Part of Union Government's effort to promote region-specific products, foster rural employment

dals including Palasa, Vajrapukotturu, Mandasa, Sompetta, Kaviti, Kanchili, and Ichapuram. Cashew is cultivated on over one lakh acres, and the region is home to numerous processing units.

The sector sustains the livelihood of over 1.05 lakh families, both directly and indirectly.

Known for its high-quality nuts and cashew dal, Uddanam supplies nearly 3,000 kg of cashew dal daily for the preparation of laddus

at the Tirumala temple in Tirupati.

Farmers, supported by the Horticulture Department and agricultural scientists, have embraced hybrid varieties and mechanised cultivation techniques.

However, they are urging the government to fix a Minimum Support Price (MSP) of Rs 16,000 per 80 kg of raw cashew nuts to ensure long-term sustainability.

A Central evaluation team that visited the region in February assessed farming

practices and processing infrastructure before recommending the award. Agriculture Minister K. Atchannaidu described the recognition as a "collective achievement" of officials, farmers, and entrepreneurs.

Cashew Farmers' Association representatives said the award will boost morale and expand market reach. "This reflects the scientific and progressive strides of Uddanam's cashew farmers," added Varaprasada Rao.

Govt committed to uplift Madiga community: Corporation chief

Rs 51 crore sanctioned specifically for Madiga development

PNS ■ NELLORE

The Andhra Pradesh Government is firmly committed to the development of the Madiga community, said Dr Undavalli Sridevi, Chairperson of the Madiga Corporation. Addressing a press conference at the Roads & Buildings Guest House in Nellore on Wednesday, she stated that the State Government had allocated ₹40,000 crore in the budget for SC welfare, reaffirming its commitment to marginalised communities.

She said that ₹51 crore had

been sanctioned specifically for Madiga development and that 55 out of 89 shopping complexes sanctioned in the district are currently operational. Funds have also been released for the development of the remaining 27 complexes.

Dr Sridevi recalled that during the earlier TDP regime, initiatives like subsidised Innova cars through SC Corporation to convert drivers into car owners and foreign education support schemes were launched. She



criticised the previous government for discontinuing these welfare programmes and forcibly acquiring Dalit lands.

She noted that in her Tadikonda constituency, 30 per cent of the population comprises Dalits. Stressing the importance of Amaravati's development, she said the NDA government is working to attract ₹5 lakh crore in investments, which will generate large-scale employment, including for SC youth.

Dr Sridevi also condemned the previous regime for filing false cases against Dalits and slashing SC welfare funds. She highlighted the loss of 540 medical seats in 17 colleges, which affected educational opportunities for Dalit students.

She praised Andhra Pradesh for being the only State to establish a dedicated Madiga Corporation and urged continuous support for Dalit education and employment.

SC Corporation officer Srinivas Rao and other leaders were also present.

Medical reps stage protest, seek revival of legal safeguards

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Medical representatives affiliated with the Federation of Medical and Sales Representatives' Associations of India (FMRAI) staged a protest near the Gandhi statue at the GVMC office on Wednesday, as part of the nationwide general strike. The agitation sought to draw attention to longstanding issues affecting the profession and urged the Union Government

to take corrective steps. FMRAI Visakhapatnam district president P.V. Sudhakar said that the protest reflected the growing concerns of field representatives over the erosion of job security and legal protections following recent labour reforms.

Echoing these concerns, FMRAI State secretary Chandra Mouli stated that the Sales Promotion Employees (Conditions of Service) Act, 1976, once instrumental in

protecting the rights of medical representatives, has lost significance in light of the rollback of several labour laws and the imposition of new labour codes. He called for urgent revision of the Act, a standard work policy, reduced pricing of essential medicines, and the removal of duties on life-saving drugs. He also sought free healthcare essentials for the poor and strict action against counterfeit and substandard drugs.

State executive member



Kiran Kumar Chowdhury alleged that the Centre was attempting to dilute provisions under the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954, while encouraging online medicine sales. He urged the State Government to classify medical representatives as "highly skilled" and implement an eight-hour workday as per G.O. No. 100.

Veteran representative Sanjay Kumar shared insights from his

35-year career, highlighting professional hardships. Assistant secretaries Mahesh Kumar and Verma criticised arbitrary job terminations and increased surveillance at workplaces. Vice-president Srinivas Sanyasirao pointed to rising stress and health risks among workers. A memorandum listing their demands was submitted to the District Collector. Union leaders termed the protest successful, with wide participation across the district.

ACROSS THE STATES



District courts in Himachal receive bomb threats

District courts in Himachal Pradesh's Shimla, Kullu and Nahan on Wednesday received bomb threats via emails, police said. Authorities swung into action and the premises of district courts in Shimla, Nahan, Kullu and Rampur were immediately evacuated, they said. Bomb and dog squads were deployed and a detailed inspection of the court buildings and surrounding areas is being conducted, the police said. So far, no explosives or suspicious items have been found, they said. Shimla SP Sanjeev Kumar Gandhi told PTI that emails threatening to blow up court premises in several places, including Shimla and Rampur, were received on Wednesday. Preventative actions are being taken, and police teams headed by DSP-level officers are on the spot, he added. The threat prompted an immediate evacuation and heightened security to ensure the safety of the public and court staff, the police said. SP Gandhi said the Himachal Pradesh Police are coordinating with other states that received similar threats, and an investigation is underway to trace the accused.



'1,209 elephants died in Assam during 2000-2023'

Human-elephant conflicts in Assam have claimed over 1,400 lives during 2000-2023, while 1,209 pachyderms died in the state during the same period with majority 626 fatalities due to anthropogenic activities, a Wildlife Institute of India (WII) report has said. Electrocuting emerged as the leading cause of human-induced mortality, accounting for 209 elephant deaths during the 23-year period, the report released recently said. The other major causes of unnatural death of pachyderms over the period were accidental deaths (127), various other anthropogenic stressors (97), train collisions (67), poaching (55), poisoning (62), retaliatory killings (5) and vehicle collisions (4). Of the 583 fatalities due to natural causes, 'natural deaths' accounted for the maximum number of elephant deaths at 344 which includes old age, heart attacks and stillbirths, drowning, struck by lightning, falling from hills, etc. Territorial fights accounted for 81 deaths, and unknown factors resulting from natural causes led to 158 deaths between 2000-23, the report said.



Maha govt to bring strict anti-conversion law

Maharashtra Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule on Wednesday said a stringent law to prevent religious conversions will be enacted in the state. Replying to a debate on the issue raised by Anup Agrawal (BJP) and others in the state assembly, Bawankule said he would speak to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis on how to bring an anti-conversion law with stringent provisions. "A strict law to prevent religious conversions will be enacted in the state," he said. The minister also said he has instructed the divisional commissioner concerned to conduct a probe into unauthorised churches in Dhule-Nandurbar belt and demolish them in six months. Atul Bhatkalkar (BJP) asked why was the six-month time being given and demanded immediate action against unauthorised religious structures. To this, Bawankule said the unauthorised churches will be demolished and that complaints needed to be probed before taking action. Sanjay Kute (BJP) said conversions take place not just in Nandurbar but tribal areas across the state. Agrawal claimed tribals and non-tribals in Navapur (Dhule district) were being lured into converting to Christianity.

GUJARAT BRIDGE COLLAPSE

10 killed as vehicles fall into Mahisagar river

PNS ■ VADODARA

Ten persons, including two siblings, were killed and nine others rescued, some of them with injuries, after multiple vehicles plunged into the Mahisagar river when a portion of a four-decade-old bridge collapsed in Vadodara district on Wednesday morning, officials said.

A slab of the Gambhira bridge, which connects central Gujarat to the Saurashtra region and is located near Padra town, caved in, killing ten persons, Superintendent of Police (Vadodara rural) Rohan Anand said. Visuals from the site showed the entire chunk of the slab of the bridge between two piers has collapsed. The slab collapse caused the vehicles, which were passing through the bridge, to plunge into the river.

Five out of nine persons who were rescued were getting treated at state-run SSG Hospital in Vadodara city, Anand said, adding none of them is in a critical condition. The SP said the 10 to 15 metres long slab of the bridge came crashing down at around 7.30 am.

Kailash Yatra set to commence from 15th

PNS ■ SHIMLA

The Kailash Yatra is set to commence from July 15 in Himachal Pradesh's Kinnaur district, officials on Wednesday said.

The district administration has mandated registration forms and medical certificates for all pilgrims for the yatra, which will continue till August 30, they said.

A meeting was held under the chairmanship of Kalpa Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Amit Kaltaik during which he reviewed the preparations for the yatra.



The rescue operation, involving fire brigade personnel, local residents as well as a team of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), was still underway at the site, officials said.

At least half a dozen vehicles -- two trucks, two vans, an autorickshaw and a two-wheeler -- fell into the river after the bridge collapsed, Vadodara Collector Anil Dhameliya said.

Two other vehicles that came dangerously close to falling in the river were dragged away to a safer location, the collector said.

Three persons on a two-wheeler, which fell into the river, managed to swim to safety, he added. According to the police, two out of ten persons who lost their lives were siblings -- a two-year-old boy and his four-year-old sister. Most of the deceased were residents of Vadodara and Anand districts, and all except a child were male.

Out of five persons undergoing treatment at SSG Hospital, four were men and one woman. One of the injured is from Udaipur district in adjoining Rajasthan, police said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel expressed grief over the tragedy and announced ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh and Rs 4 lakh, respectively, to the next of the kin of each deceased and Rs 50,000 as compensation to the injured.



Modi holds talks with Namibia Prez Netumbo

PNS ■ WINDHOEK

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday held talks with Namibian President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah and discussed ways to bolster bilateral cooperation in areas such as digital technology, defence, security, agriculture, healthcare, education and critical minerals.

During the delegation-level talks, the two leaders reviewed the full range of India-Namibia relations.

"Cooperation in areas such as digital technology, defence, security, agriculture, healthcare, education and critical minerals figured prominently in our discussions," Modi said in a post on social media after the meeting.

"We also discussed how to boost linkages in trade, energy and petrochemicals.

Expressed gratitude for the assistance from Namibia in Project Cheetah," he added.

After the talks at the State House, the two sides signed four agreements, including on cooperation in the field of health and medicine, setting up an entrepreneurship development centre in Namibia, CDRI Framework and Global Biofuels Alliance Framework.

This is the first visit of Prime Minister Modi to Namibia and the third-ever by an Indian Prime Minister to the country.

Modi, who arrived here from Brazil on the final leg of his five-nation tour, also paid tribute to Namibia's founding father Sam Nujoma at the national memorial Heroes' Acre. Nujoma led Namibia to independence in 1990 and served as its first President for 15 years.

No cabinet reshuffle on cards, says K'taka DCM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Wednesday dismissed speculation about leadership change in the Congress-led government in the state, saying there are currently no plans to alter the cabinet composition.

"No cabinet reshuffle is on the cards. Myself and the chief minister are meeting central ministers to discuss various state issues," Shivakumar told reporters here. When asked about the buzz that he will take over as chief minister after completion of two-and-a-half years of the Congress

government in the state, Shivakumar -- who occupied the CM's suit in the new Karnataka Bhawan like previous occasion -- termed it media speculation and clarified there is no such plan.

The Karnataka Congress has been under scrutiny over reports of a rotational chief minister arrangement between Shivakumar and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah following the party's victory in the 2023 Assembly elections.

While both leaders have publicly denied any such formal agreement, speculation continues



to persist within party circles.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge had recently said there is no proposal

before the party for an immediate reshuffle and that the media would be informed if such a decision were made.

While few ministers are reportedly under scrutiny for performance and corruption concerns, these claims have not been officially acknowledged by the government or party leadership. Shivakumar said Siddaramaiah is meeting Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to seek permission for an air show that has become a signature event during Mysuru Dasara, celebrated in September-end. He also said four vacant MLC positions

will be filled before the next assembly session.

Shivakumar, who also holds the water resources portfolio, said he met Union Environment and Jal Shakti ministers on Tuesday and demanded early clearance of several water projects, including the Yettinahole Project and Kalasa Banduri project. On the Yettinahole Integrated Water Supply project, the deputy chief minister said the Centre has stalled works in Tumkur and Hassan districts citing forest land issues. "We have given alternative land and sought early forest clearance so that work can continue," he said.



CBI secures extradition of fugitive economic offender from US

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI successfully extradited alleged economic offender Monika Kapoor from the United States on Wednesday, bringing an end to her more than 25-year flight from justice, officials said.

Kapoor, who had an Interpol Red Notice against her, was taken into custody in the US by a CBI team which has boarded an American Airlines flight AA 292 expected to land here Wednesday night, they said.

This marks the second major success for the agency in recent days, following the arrest of Nehal Modi in the US through sustained cooperation with American authorities.

"This extradition marks a major breakthrough in the pursuit of justice and reiterates CBI's commitment to bringing fugitives to face the law in India, irrespective of international boundaries. The CBI team is returning to India with the fugitive. Monika will be produced before the court concerned and she will now face the trial," CBI spokesperson said in a statement.

In total, the CBI has secured the return of more than 100 fugitives in recent years through mutual legal assistance or Interpol coordination, setting a record of sorts in cross-border enforcement.

Kapoor, the owner of Monika Overseas, in conspiracy with her brothers Rajan Khanna and Rajiv Khanna, allegedly forged export documents - shipping bills, invoices and bank certificates of export and realisation in 1998, the CBI spokesperson said here.

She, along with her two brothers, allegedly forged documents to obtain six replenishment licences meant for importing duty-free materials for jewellery manufacturing and export, the agency said.

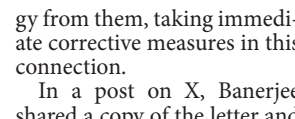
In furtherance of the criminal conspiracy, they sold the licences to Deep Exports, Ahmedabad on a premium, she said.

Bihar becomes West Bengal in NITI Aayog map

Mamata demands apology, immediate correction

PNS ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday wrote to the Vice Chairperson of the NITI Aayog expressing her strong disapproval over the state being shown as Bihar in an official report. She condemned the error and demanded an apology from them, taking immediate corrective measures in this connection.



In a post on X, Banerjee shared a copy of the letter and a screenshot of India's map that appeared on the front page of the report, in which Bihar was shown as West Bengal. "I am writing with deep concern and unequivocal disapproval that in



the 'summary report for the state of West Bengal' published by NITI Aayog and available on its website, the map intended to represent the state of West

Bengal has depicted the territory of Bihar in its place," Banerjee wrote to Vice Chairperson of the NITI Aayog Suman K Bery.

Describing the error as a "grave lapse" of the NITI Aayog, the CM claimed that such a blunder in an official publication of NITI Aayog reflects an "alarming lack of diligence and respect" towards the states of the Union.

SC takes suo motu note of ED summoning lawyers for legal advice

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The Supreme Court has initiated a suo motu case over the issue of investigation agencies summoning lawyers who offer opinion or represent parties in cases to examine if they can be put to notice. A bench of Chief Justice B R Gavai and Justices K Vinod Chandran and N V Anjaria will hear the matter on July 14, when the court reopens after the summer break.

The action comes in the wake of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) summoning a couple of senior lawyers - Arvind Datar and Pratap Venugopal.

However, the ED on June 20 directed its investigating officers not to issue summons to any advocate in a money laundering

Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA), 2023. "Further, if any summons needs to be issued under the exceptions carved out in proviso to Section 132 of the BSA, 2023, the same shall be issued only with the prior approval of the director, ED," the agency said. The counsel had offered legal advice to Care Health Insurance Limited on the employee stock ownership plan given to Rashmi Saluja, former chairperson of Religare Enterprises.

The summons were condemned by the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) and the Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association (SCAORA), calling it a "disturbing trend" that struck at the very foundations of the legal profession.



'Govt must treat public grievances as opportunities to identify flaws'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Wednesday said over 26 lakh public grievances are filed each year, and the government must treat them as opportunities to identify flaws in policies and administrative rules.

Addressing an event, the Union minister of state for personnel called for a fundamental shift in the way public grievances are handled and emphasised that their redressal must go beyond disposal to ensure citizens' satisfaction. "Grievance redressal ought to be a tool for systemic reform and ease of living," he said.

Addressing the National Workshop on 'Effective Redressal of Public Grievances, NextGen CPGRAMS and Progress Review', he said the government must treat grievances as opportunities to identify flaws in policies and administrative rules. The Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) allows citizens to raise grievances online.

Tracing the evolution of grievance redressal in India, the minister recalled how, in 2014, only about two lakh grievances were filed annually, and many government websites created for this purpose remained unused.

Opp parties promoted 'one district, one mafia' policy in UP: CM

PNS ■ GORAKHPUR (UP)

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday accused the opposition parties of corruption and promoting a policy of 'one district, one mafia' during their tenure in contrast to his government's focus on development and zero-tolerance against crime.

Addressing an event here, the chief minister questioned the critics of his government's tree plantation drive.

"I want to ask those who question the tree plantation



program. When they had the opportunity, they could do nothing. They made schemes a center of corruption, a center of loot," said Adityanath. "Today our government is giving one district, one product, one district, one crop and these people, whether it was the Samajwadi Party, Congress

or Bahujan Samaj Party, their governments gave one district, one mafia," he added.

Alleging that these parties "worked to spread poison in society in the name of nepotism", the chief minister claimed, "These mafias indulged in illegal felling of forests, illegal mining, grabbed lands, wreaked havoc with anarchy and oppressed the poor." "Now the result of zero-tolerance policy against mafia tendencies is being seen across the country. It is a result of that there is no identity crisis for the youth of the state," he asserted.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Seventeen river gauge stations across India are currently above the warning level, with four in severe flood condition where water levels are at or above the danger mark but still below the historical peak, according to the Central Water Commission (CWC).

According to the latest flood bulletin issued on Wednesday, there are no stations currently in an "extreme flood situation", where the previous highest flood level (HFL) is equalled or exceeded.



However, four sites, including locations on the Dhansiri River in Assam and the Wainganga River in Maharashtra, are in a severe flood condition, indicating a significant flood risk.

An additional 13 stations are

witnessing "above normal flood situations", with water levels surpassing warning levels but remaining below danger thresholds. These include rivers such as the Brahmaputra, Ganga, Gandak, and Subarnarekha

across Assam, Bihar, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.

The inflow forecast component of the report indicates that 34 reservoir and barrage sites have received inflows above their specified thresholds.

These sites span Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

Reservoirs such as Srisailem and Almatti (Krishna River), Hirakud (Mahanadi), Indira Sagar (Narmada), and Maithon (Barakar) are seeing high inflows.

Editor's TAKE

BRICS takes on an aging empire

BRICS nations have unanimously challenged US hegemony, while Trump is retaliating with more tariffs

A paradigm shift is visible for all to see. The world order dominated by the Western Bloc, led by the US, is crumbling, and the unease is visible. While the BRICS nations — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — may not have challenged the old world order directly, they have taken the first step in defiance at the BRICS Summit in Rio. Of late, the US President has taken the world by storm — recklessly announcing unilateral trade policies and acting on its own — without even caring for the United Nations, while taking action to maintain global power matrix. It struck Iran, though retracted later, but the message it sent to all was clear: while US power is waning, it would not mind playing power games to restore its hegemony. Indeed, a new global power contest is unfolding — not through conventional warfare or old Cold War rhetoric, but through trade, currency realignment and strategic alliances.

At the centre of this confrontation is BRICS — a bloc once seen as a loose grouping of emerging economies, now maturing into a potent geopolitical force — and the Western world led by a combative and unpredictable Donald Trump. The recent Brazil summit marked a turning point. The leaders of Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa and new BRICS+ members issued a joint statement condemning the rise of unilateral tariffs and protectionism. Not to be outdone, President Trump's announcement of a blanket 10 per cent tariff on countries aligning with "anti-American" BRICS policies further inflamed tensions. While he failed to define these policies, it was clear the threat was retaliation against BRICS's growing push to de-dollarise global trade. This move by Trump appears more than economic posturing. It reflects a deeper anxiety in Washington — the fear of losing grip over a global order long shaped by the dominance of the dollar and Western-led institutions like IMF and World Bank. From setting up alternative payment systems to questioning the legitimacy of dollar hegemony, BRICS has begun to redefine the rules of the global economic game. India which would assume its Chair next year would have a significant role to play.

Indeed, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's voice in Brazil carried weight. India walked a diplomatic tightrope — aligning with calls against tariff wars and unilateralism, while also maintaining strategic autonomy. Its silence on Trump's tariff threat, however, sparked debate about whether New Delhi is hesitating to fully commit to the emerging anti-West consensus within BRICS. With countries like Iran and Indonesia joining, and others like Saudi Arabia and Nigeria knocking on the door, BRICS is no longer just an economic club — it's a political entity which has its own engine and momentum; something the US-led Western bloc would never like to see. The bloc's condemnation of US strikes on Iran and its sympathy for the Palestinian cause show that BRICS is no longer afraid of taking on the US. Trump may try to intimidate this emerging order with tariffs and threats, but the response from BRICS leaders held their ground.

Interestingly, Lula da Silva said, "The world has changed. We don't want an emperor. We are sovereign countries." In this contest between an ageing empire and a coalition of awakening powers, the stakes are not just about tariffs or currency — they are about the shape of the world to come.

Power tussle in Karnataka Congress

Despite public denials, speculation is rife that the high command may be forced to honour a rotational chief ministerial agreement by November — triggering what could become a political flashpoint for the ruling party

The Karnataka Congress is facing challenges due to a power struggle between Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar.

Many in the party predict a potential change of guard. The growing speculation about Shivakumar replacing Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has created an atmosphere of uncertainty. The ruling Congress is struggling with internal conflicts, a lack of discipline, and factionalism among its members, adding to the intrigue.

Rumours are gaining momentum, primarily as senior leaders, such as G Parameshwara, have publicly acknowledged significant discontent within the party. While Siddaramaiah attempts to do some damage control, the Shivakumar camp is openly lobbying for a leadership change, claiming it could occur within the next three months. The reason for the next three-month time limit is intriguing.

Insiders claim that the power struggle is now in the open. Additionally, Congress MLA Iqbal Hussain, a staunch supporter of DK, has claimed that around 100 MLAs are in favour of a leadership change. DK, as the state party president, has issued disciplinary action against him.

The Congress had deputed and said there was no change in leadership last week. Although a temporary ceasefire may be in place, the potential for change remains. The Congress came to power in the 2023 Assembly polls.

There was a buzz that both leaders were contenders for the top post.

The High Command floated a two-and-a-half-year rotational formula, which was acceptable. Accordingly, Siddaramaiah will complete two and a half years as Chief Minister of Karnataka by November this year. He will also celebrate his 25 years of leadership. Siddaramaiah is recognised for his extensive experience in administration and his strong support from the OBC community.

With the Bihar elections approaching at the end of the year, the Congress leadership is keen to maintain stability by not disturbing Siddaramaiah, an important OBC leader. His administration is known for offering freebies, appeasing Muslims, and dividing the Hindu community. On the other hand, Shivakumar is known as 'Mr Fixit'.

DK is the 'go-to' man, and the Congress leadership has used him in dealing with dissidents in other Congress-ruled states as well. DK is valued for his able leadership and organisational skills, as well as his financial resources and ability to manage



internal dissent. Both leaders have their contributions to the Congress. The party needs them in times of crisis.

Besides DK, other candidates are also vying for the post. The Lingayat community's minister, MB Patil, also aspires for the top job. Shivakumar represents the Vokkaliga community, while Siddaramaiah, from the Kuruba community, is a significant OBC figure.

Alarmed at the dissident activity, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has warned his ministers to maintain confidentiality regarding internal party matters in a recent cabinet meeting, warning of stern action. Shivakumar, resigned to his fate, publicly said, "Whatever the party and High Command want will happen," adding, "What option do I have? I have to stand by him and support him." However, his camp continues to chant "D K for CM".

Meanwhile, the BJP, eyeing an opportunity to come back to power, is predicting a mid-term poll, asserting that the Congress Government is likely to collapse soon. Siddaramaiah has dismissed any suggestions of a leadership change, and the Congress High Command has also ruled out such a possibility.

A day after Congress leader Randeep Surjewala stated that there would be no moves for leadership change following meetings with legislators and leaders, the Chief Minister asserted, "There will be no change in the Chief Minister in Karnataka." Currently, Siddaramaiah remains confident that he will serve the full five-year term. His strong declaration and warning were intended not only to silence dissent but also to convey a message of stability to the public, party workers, and the Congress leadership.

Replacing Siddaramaiah is not easy for the Congress leadership, as he could split the party. The Congress leadership must be careful in handling the situation in Karnataka. If Sonia Gandhi or Rahul Gandhi had promised D K a rotational Chief Minister role, it would be hard to

refuse him now. The High Command must fulfil the promises made after the elections to resolve the Chief Minister issue. If they don't, Karnataka could face the same problems as Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. In both states, the claim was between two influential state leaders, and the High Command had promised a rotational Chief Minister; however, when the time came, they were unable to fulfil this promise. Shivakumar, a major candidate for the Chief Minister position, agreed to serve as Deputy Chief Minister under Mr Siddaramaiah in 2023.

He was also appointed the head of the party's state unit to calm him down, a post he does not want to relinquish. Indiscipline, factionalism, and revolts have been ongoing challenges in Karnataka, and the Congress party has consistently sought viable solutions to address these issues. The party is unable to decide on aspirants from various castes. The party's leadership faces a dilemma in effectively tackling the recurring political crises that often emerge.

(The writer is a popular columnist. The views expressed are personal)

PIC TALK



Devotees at 'Goti Pahandi' ritual of Lord Balabhadra, the return procession of the deities in Puri. PTI

What we don't see behind 'service with a smile'

SECOND Opinion

I like to tell real-life stories, even in columns that address universal themes, because that's where the true pulse of human experience lies. That's where we find meaning — and, more often than not, a mirror. The resonance of my encounters, and those of people I meet along the way, is what keeps my writing rooted in authenticity.

Perhaps it helps readers navigate the maze of my reflections and opinions, too. So here's a tiny but poignant tale from my travel diary, penned during recent wanderings. It was the morning after we checked into a snazzy hotel in Chicago for a family weekend getaway. The room bell buzzed, and I opened the door to be greeted by Elsa (name changed), her smile, warm but weighed down by the burden of a baby soon to be born.

I glanced at the badge pinned to her apron and asked, "How's the baby, Elsa?" "Making me very, very tired," she said, gently cradling her bump. In her third trimester, Elsa, a housekeeping staff member, was a living embodiment of "service with a smile".

Her job demanded it. She had no choice but to set aside her discomfort and ask each guest, "Do you need anything?" Elsa might have longed for a break that morn-

ing; she might have wished someone would ask her that same question — "Do you need anything?" But life's intransigence doesn't offer her that luxury. She had to carry on with the weariness she bore, because anything less might reflect poorly in her work report. She had a job to do, and she must do it — with a smile. Always. I wanted to hug her, just to let her know I saw her, that I felt her.

But I stepped back. There are protocols, unspoken boundaries about how much one can reach out. It's hard to know what's okay and not okay in the context of etiquette — both in personal and professional spaces. Cut to a cruise ship a few days later.

A world unto itself — a floating paradise turning the mundane into the sublime for the guests onboard. Surrounded by men and women waiting to tend to your every whim, you begin to wonder: where do they summon these smiles from? How do they keep their courtesies crisp through endless hours of duty?

Pressed by long shifts and the demand to deliver faultless service — because even a minor guest complaint could spiral into a workplace disaster — they were, each of them, Elsa's photocopies.

Scratch the surface, and you'll see: beneath those cheerful overtures lie waves of woes, quietly brimming, carefully concealed. It's a pattern that repeats itself across the



ASHA IYER KUMAR

hospitality and entertainment industries — actors, singers, dancers, on land, at sea, and in the sky. Men and women whose job it is to make others feel cared for, indulged, and entertained must present their best selves — even when they're quietly aching inside. Their pains don't get time off. Their worries don't come with mute buttons. Yet they show up — smiling, bowing, anticipating our needs, and never letting the mask slip.

Because in these industries, emotional neutrality — or rather, perpetual pleasantness — is part of the job description. Not only are they required to serve, but they must also do so with joy. As if the theatre of happiness must never be interrupted by the ordinary struggles of being human.

I leave you with two lingering allusions that echo the heart of this reflection. "Kehta hai joker saara zamaana" — where the world laughs, while the joker bleeds behind his painted grin. And "Tum itna jo muskura rahe ho" — a line that questions the smile worn to hide what trembles beneath.

Not every smile is a sign of happiness. Sometimes, it's a mask worn out of duty. Sometimes, it's a quiet plea not to be seen too closely. And so, the next time someone serves you with a smile, remember — it may be their job, but it might also be their armour.

(The author is a columnist and independent journalist based in Dubai. The views expressed are personal)

Letters to the Editor

A nationwide strike: A costly standoff!

The nationwide strike led by over 25 crore workers across sectors such as banks, postal services, coal mining, and public corporations is expected to result in substantial economic losses. While striking employees may face salary cuts and other deductions, the disruption will also severely impact common citizens and essential services.

The Central and State Governments should have proactively engaged with trade unions to prevent such widespread inconvenience. The Modi Government has implemented several labour and farmer-friendly initiatives aimed at public welfare, but the strike — termed "Bharat Bandh" by the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) — appears to have political undercurrents, reportedly backed by opposition parties.

Such actions, at a time when the country is already facing economic challenges, could further strain national resources. It is crucial for leaders across the political spectrum, as well as economists and policymakers, to assess the actual impact of such shutdowns — both in terms of immediate economic losses and long-term damage to investor and public confidence.

The people, largely uninvolved in the political motivations behind the strike, are left to bear the brunt. Their concerns and the strike's consequences deserve serious introspection.

YUGAL KISHORE SHARMA | FARIDABAD

Assam floods: A crisis of neglect, not nature

The report "Three Assam Rivers Flowing Above Danger Level, Severely Hit" (8 July) once again highlights the annual tragedy that Assam endures. As a native of the region, I write with deep anguish that between 2019 and 2023, more than 880 lives have been lost and lakhs displaced, yet the Centre continues to evade declaring Assam's floods a 'national calamity', despite repeated pleas from successive State Governments.

While agencies like the Central Water Commission and India Meteorological Department issue data and alerts, the ground-level response remains woefully bureaucratic and inadequate.

If such devastation occurred in a metropolitan city, it would dominate headlines and parliamentary sessions. Assam, however, suffers in silence — its pain buried under national apathy.

This neglect has delayed critical investments in flood-resilient infrastructure and stalled long-term plans like the North East Water Resources Authority.

We must stop treating Assam's annual floods as divine inevitability and start recognising them as a failure of governance. A State that enriches India with tea, oil, and unmatched biodiversity deserves more than tokenism. It deserves urgency, respect, and meaningful action.

SAGARTIRTHA CHAKRABORTY | GUWAHATI

The price of progress

Nature humbles us in ways nothing else can. All our technology, infrastructure, and human pride stand powerless when nature decides to unleash her fury. Yet, it is we who push her to the brink — forcing her to erupt in rage. The recent rains in Texas are a stark reminder of this truth. Normally, Texas receives heavy rainfall in spring (March-May) and occasionally in early autumn (September-October), with short, intense showers.

But this year, the rain fury has unusually extended into June, bringing floods, storm warnings, and widespread disruption. Central Texas is under storm impact, North Texas is under flood watch, and yet, paradoxically, much of the state continues to reel under drought. This bizarre contradiction reflects the imbalance we have caused. Where there has been more development and human interference, the suffering has been deeper. To protect ourselves, we must first protect Mother Nature. Let these rains be more than a passing headline. Let them be a wake-up call. Because if we don't act now, nature will continue to remind us — louder and harsher each time — that we are not in control. Every tree we cut, every wetland we reclaim is a warning we ignore. Every concrete jungle replaces a breathing forest we once had. We are not outside nature — we are part of it, and so is our fate. In saving her, we are, in truth, saving ourselves.

JAYANTHI SUBRAMANIAM | MUMBAI

TRUMP'S TARIFF THREATS SHAKE BRICS, INDIA MAINTAINS SILENCE

The global power dynamics are shifting, and at the centre of this storm is US President Donald Trump, whose aggressive posturing has once again stirred controversy.

By threatening an additional 10 per cent tariff on what he called "anti-American" BRICS nations — including India — Trump appeared to treat diplomacy like a monarchy, wielding punitive measures as royal decrees.

What's more concerning, however, is India's silence. While Russia, China, and Iran swiftly condemned Trump's threats,

India's conspicuous lack of response has raised eyebrows globally.

Prime Minister Modi, who was present at the BRICS summit, along with the Ministry of External Affairs, chose not to comment. This silence has fuelled perceptions of India being a passive player or worse, a 'Trojan horse' — within the BRICS alliance.

BRICS originally emerged as a counterweight to Western-dominated financial systems, with Brazil, Russia, and China at the helm, later joined by South Africa and Iran.

These countries have vocally pushed for de-dollarisation and stronger local currency trade. India, however, has taken a more cautious approach — one driven by its geopolitical concerns about China and a desire to maintain strong ties with the United States.

This balancing act has begun to erode India's credibility within BRICS. At a time when the bloc seeks unity and strength in numbers, India's ambiguous stance undermines the collective spirit and long-term goals of the alliance. As global alignments shift, India must decide whether to lead with conviction or continue to straddle both sides — risking its influence in both.

BHAGWAN THADANI, MUMBAI

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

MONEY MATTERS



ICICI Prudential AMC files IPO papers with Sebi

ICICI Prudential Asset Management Company (AMC), a subsidiary of ICICI Bank, has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to seek approval to launch an initial public offering (IPO). The proposed IPO comprises an offer for sale (OFS) of 1.76 crore equity shares by promoter -- UK-based Prudential Corporation Holdings, with no fresh issue component, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) filed on Tuesday. Since the issue is entirely an OFS, the company will not receive any capital from the offer, and the proceeds will go to the selling shareholder. At present, ICICI Bank holds 51 per cent stake in the asset management company, while the remaining 49 per cent is with its joint venture partner Prudential Corporation Holdings. On June 28, ICICI Bank stated that its board approved an additional 2 per cent increase in stake in ICICI Prudential AMC. This purchase will primarily be towards maintaining the bank's majority shareholding in the event of the grant of stock-based compensation by the company, the private sector bank stated.



Rupee rises 6 paise to settle at 85.67 against US dollar

The rupee appreciated by 6 paise to close at 85.67 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday following optimism over a possible trade deal with the US and a delay in the imposition of reciprocal tariffs. A firm US dollar in overseas markets and crude oil staying near USD 70 per barrel capped the gains in the local currency, forex dealers said. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened weak at 85.84 against the US dollar, and traded in a range of 85.93 and 85.65 during the day. The local unit finally closed at 85.65 (provisional), up 6 paise from the previous close. On Tuesday, the rupee rose by 21 paise to 85.73 against the US dollar. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, climbed 0.03 per cent to 97.02.



Airtel selects Ericsson core for fixed wireless access

Bharti Airtel and Ericsson on Wednesday announced a new agreement to support the telco's rollout of Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) services in India with core network portfolio, deepening a long-standing partnership between the two companies. The deployment will enhance Airtel core capability and capacity for FWA, thereby elevating customer experience for Airtel FWA users, according to a release. As part of this agreement, Ericsson is introducing a new platform which will support high capacity FWA with a smaller footprint and better total cost of ownership.

Trump's trade blitz produces few deals but lots of uncertainty

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump and his advisers promised a lightning round of global trade negotiations with dozens of countries back in April.

White House trade adviser Peter Navarro predicted "90 deals in 90 days." Administration officials declared that other countries were desperate to make concessions to avoid the massive import taxes -- tariffs -- that Trump was threatening to plaster on their products starting July 9.

But the 90 days have come and gone. And the tally of trade deals stands at two -- one with the United Kingdom and one with Vietnam. Trump has also announced the framework for a deal with China, the details of which remain fuzzy.

Trump has now extended the deadline for negotiations to Aug 1 and tinkered with his threatened tariffs, leaving the global trading system pretty much where it stood three months ago -- in a state of limbo as businesses delay decisions on investments, contracts and hiring because they don't know what the rules will be.

"It's a rerun, basically," said William Reinsch, a former US trade official who's now an



Trump has now extended the deadline for negotiations to Aug 1 and tinkered with his threatened tariffs, leaving the global trading system pretty much where it stood three months ago -- in a state of limbo as businesses delay decisions on investments, contracts and hiring because they don't know what the rules will be

adviser with the Centre for Strategic and International Studies think tank. Trump and his team "don't have the deals they want. So they're piling on the threats."

The pattern has repeated itself enough times to earn Trump the label TACO -- an acronym coined by The Financial Times' Robert Armstrong that stands for "Trump Always Chickens Out."

"This is classic Trump:

Threaten, threaten more, but then extend the deadline," Reinsch said. "July 30 arrives, does he do it again if he still doesn't have the deals?" (Trump said Tuesday that there will be no more extensions.)

The deal drought represents a collision with reality.

Negotiating simultaneously with every country on earth was always an impossible task, as Trump himself belatedly admitted last month in an

interview with the Fox News Channel. ("There's 200 countries," the president said. "You can't talk to all of them.") And many trading partners -- such as Japan and the European Union -- were always likely to balk at Trump's demands, at least without getting something in return.

"It's really, really hard to negotiate trade agreements," which usually takes several months even when it involves just one country or a small regional group, said Chad Bown, an economic adviser in the Obama White House and now senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics. "What the administration is doing is negotiating a bunch of these at the same time."

The drama began April 2 -- "Liberation Day," Trump called it -- when the tariff-loving president announced a so-called baseline 10% import tax on everybody and what he called "reciprocal" levies of up to 50% on countries with which the United States runs trade deficits.

The 10% baseline tariffs appear to be here to stay. Trump needs them to raise money to patch the hole his massive tax-cut bill is blasting into the federal budget deficit.

No impact of 50 pc copper tariffs on Indian companies, says industry

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The proposed 50 per cent import tariff on copper announced by US President Donald Trump will not have any impact on Indian companies as the country is copper-deficient, according to an industry official.

Also, Coal and Mines Minister G Kishan Reddy on Wednesday said India will discuss the impact of US tariffs on copper.

International Copper Association India Managing Director Mayur Karmarkar said, "India is a copper-deficient country, and its export, as such, is not significant. Again, of the total exports, the shipments to the US are just around 10,000 tonnes."

The proposed duty, as a result, will not have any impact on the Indian firms, particularly as the domestic demand is extremely buoyant, given India's thrust on renewable energy, EVs, and a host of other copper-intensive sectors, Karmarkar said.

US President Donald Trump

on Tuesday announced 50 per cent tariffs on copper, after having implemented similar duties on steel and aluminium.

A vision document released by G Kishan Reddy on Friday forecast a sixfold increase in copper demand by 2047 and outlined plans to add 5 million tonnes per annum of smelting



and refining capacity by 2030.

India remains a net importer of copper products throughout the entire copper value chain; hence, to meet the growing demand for copper, India needs to embrace strategic initiatives across the value chain, it stated.

In 2023, India imported 1 million tonnes of copper concentrate, with a significant portion of these imports coming from a handful of countries.

Draft guidelines to incentivise domestic production of rare earth on anvil

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Consultations are underway to draft guidelines for incentivising production of rare earth minerals and magnets to help India reduce dependence on China for these critical inputs used in sectors including telecom and EV, according to sources.

Ministries of heavy industries and mines are working on a scheme to boost domestic production of rare earth magnets and minerals, they added.

The scheme will be for both private sector as well as PSUs. In April this year, China, the world's dominant exporter of rare earth magnets, imposed restriction on shipments of seven rare earth elements and finished magnets, mandating export licences. The revised framework demands detailed end-use disclosures and client declarations, including confirmation that the products will not be used in defence or re-exported to the US.

India, which sourced over 80 per cent of its 540 tonne of magnet imports from China last fiscal, has started to feel the impact.

Equity mutual fund inflow rises 24 pc to Rs 23,587 cr

Breaks 5-month declining streak

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The net inflow into equity mutual funds surged 24 per cent to Rs 23,587 crore in June, reversing the declining trend of the last five months, driven by strong equity market performance across segments, data released by the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) showed on Wednesday.

Also, the latest fund infusion by investors marks the 52nd consecutive month of net inflows into the segment.

Additionally, a healthy growth was witnessed in SIP (Systematic Investment Plan) inflow at Rs 27,269 crore during the month under review, an increase from Rs 26,688 crore in May.

"There is confidence amongst retail investors which is reflected through the incremental flows, this is very healthy and positive for the industry and Indian markets," Akhil Chaturvedi, Executive Director & Chief Business Officer of Motilal Oswal AMC, said.

According to the data, equity-oriented mutual funds saw an



inflow of Rs 23,587 crore in June, way higher than the Rs 19,013 crore inflow seen in May.

This was the first increase in net equity fund inflows after five straight months of decline.

The net inflows continuously declined from Rs 41,156 crore in December to Rs 39,688 crore in January, Rs 29,303 crore in February, Rs 25,082 crore in March, and Rs 24,269 crore in April. Prior to this downward trend, inflows stood at Rs 35,943 crore in November.

"This rebound underscores a resurgence in investor confidence, supported by a strong equity market performance across segments. Broad-based market gains, including a surge in the Nifty 50 index and even

exporters.

Citing an example, Goyal said that in Indigo flight, people buy food packets including Rice-Dal, poha and upma for Rs 250 to Rs 400, which otherwise would cost only Rs 40.

Through this example, "I want to tell you the potential (of food processing)," he said, adding similarly, there is huge potential to cater to 4 crore Indian origin people living abroad.

He said that because of initiatives taken by the Modi government to promote millets, people all over the world are shifting towards these nutritional foodgrains.

As a result, there is a situation of shortage of millets in the country, he added.

Further, the minister said that people should not be dependent on government subsidies.

India-origin Sabih Khan appointed new COO of Apple

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Apple Inc has named India-origin Sabih Khan as its new Chief Operating Officer (COO), marking a key move in its long-planned leadership transition.

Khan, 58, who has been with Apple for 30 years and is currently the senior vice president of operations, will succeed Jeff Williams later this month, the iPhone maker said in a statement.

Before joining Apple's procurement group in 1995, he worked as an applications development engineer and

key account technical leader at GE Plastics.

Born in 1966 in Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh, Khan moved to Singapore during his school years before settling in the US. He holds dual bachelor's degrees in economics and mechanical engineering from Tufts University, and a master's in mechanical engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI).

He has spent nearly three decades in key roles across the company. He rose through the ranks to become senior vice president of operations in 2019.



Over the past six years, he has led Apple's global supply chain, overseeing planning, procurement, manufacturing,

logistics, and product fulfilment.

He has also overseen Apple's supplier responsibility programmes that focus on worker protection, education, and environmental sustainability.

Apple highlighted his pivotal contribution in "delivering each of Apple's innovative products to market".

Williams will continue reporting to CEO Tim Cook and overseeing the design team and Apple Watch. Upon his retirement later this year, the design team will report directly to Cook.

Gold declines Rs 700 to Rs 98,420/10 g

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices declined by Rs 700 to Rs 98,420 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday in line with weak global trends, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 99,120 per 10 grams in the previous market session.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity depreciated by Rs 600 to Rs 98,000 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). It had settled at Rs 98,600 per 10 grams on Tuesday.

Additionally, silver prices plunged by Rs 800 to Rs 1,04,000 per kg (inclusive of all taxes) on Wednesday. The white metal had ended at Rs 1,04,800 per kg in the previous market close.

"Gold prices are experiencing selling pressure on Wednesday due to reduced expectations for a Federal Reserve rate cut in July and a strengthening US dollar.

On the global front, spot gold went lower by USD 11.66 or 0.35 per cent to USD 3,289.81 per ounce.

"Gold prices dropped below USD 3,300 per ounce as markets balanced US interest rate cut prospects with new trade risks," Rahul Kalantri, Vice-President of Commodities, Mehta Equities, said.

President Donald Trump on Tuesday ruled out extending the August 1 tariff deadline and unveiled sweeping new measures, including a 50 per cent tariff on copper and possible 200 per cent duties on pharmaceuticals.



India urges IMO to review maritime incidents involving foreign vessels

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Wednesday highlighted recent maritime incidents involving foreign-flagged container vessels operating in Indian waters and urged the International Maritime Organization to review all such incidents, according to an official statement.

Shipping secretary TK Ramachandran, while participating in the 134th session of the Council of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), said recent maritime incidents caused by undeclared hazardous cargoes have raised serious safety concerns.

"India delivered a strong and principled statement addressing recent maritime incidents involving foreign-flagged container vessels operating in Indian waters," the statement said.

India urged the IMO to undertake a comprehensive investigation and global review of all such incidents involving container ships, it added.

Citing the proactive role of the Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard in ensuring the safety of life at sea, the statement said India called for urgent enhancements in the safety framework for container shipping.



"The Indian statement underscored the need to reinforce international protocols related to packaging, declaration, stowage, and monitoring of lithium-ion batteries and IMDG cargo," it noted.

According to the statement, India proposed the establishment of IMO-led investigations into such incidents to help build global best practices, improve standardisation, and strengthen operational norms that ensure the safety and security of container ship operations across the world.

India proudly shared the remarkable achievement of a 650 per cent increase in the

number of Indian women seafarers, showcasing the country's commitment to creating equal opportunities in the maritime sector.

The country has witnessed serious maritime incidents along its coastline that exposed vulnerabilities in the current emergency response framework. The sinking of the container ship MSC ELSA 3 in May 2025 and the major fire and explosion of the container ship WAN HAI 503 in June 2025, off the coast of Kerala, led to the loss of several containers in the waters and the release of hazardous cargo and significant environmental risk.

IFFM Pays Tribute to Guru Dutt with *Pyaasa* and *Kaagaz Ke Phool*

The Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM), the biggest Indian film festival outside of India is set to pay a heartfelt tribute to one of the greatest pioneers of Hindi cinema, the legendary Guru Dutt. As part of its 2025 edition, IFFM will host special screenings of two of his most iconic masterpieces, *Pyaasa* and *Kaagaz Ke Phool*.

Guru Dutt, whose visionary storytelling and deeply human narratives forever changed the language of Indian cinema, continues to inspire generations of filmmakers and cinephiles around the globe. His films, marked by poetic intensity, aesthetic brilliance and social relevance, remain timeless in their appeal and artistic impact. With this homage, IFFM aims to celebrate not just the man, but the legacy of a true auteur who gave Indian cinema some of its most memorable moments.

Festival Director, Mitu Bhowmick Lange, shared her thoughts on this special tribute

"Guru Dutt was far ahead of his time, both in terms of cinematic technique and the emotional depth of his narratives. His films like *Pyaasa* and *Kaagaz Ke Phool* are not just classics, they are cultural treasures that speak to the soul of Indian cinema. At IFFM, we believe it is essential to honour those who shaped our cinematic heritage.

This tribute is our humble way of remembering his genius and introducing his timeless work to new global audiences."

The screenings will be part of a curated retrospective celebrating Indian cinema's golden age and its enduring influence. Audiences in Melbourne will get a rare opportunity to experience the visual poetry of Guru Dutt's work on the big screen, a fitting tribute to a man who saw cinema not merely as entertainment, but as a form of profound artistic expression.

IFFM 2025 continues its legacy of showcasing the depth and diversity of Indian storytelling, honouring the icons of the past while embracing the voices of the future.



It's baby time! Rajkummar Rao and Patralekhaa announce pregnancy

Bollywood's favorite duo, Rajkummar Rao and Patralekhaa, shared exciting news that immediately caught the attention of the industry. Their social media post was met with effusive congratulatory messages from prominent celebrities. Farah Khan expressed her joy: "Finally the news is out!! I was having a tough time keeping it to myself, congratulations." Sonam Kapoor added, "So happy for you both my dear friends," while stars such as Varun Dhawan, Bhumi Pednekar, Esha Gupta and Huma Qureshi also joined in celebrating the couple's announcement.

On the career front, Rajkummar Rao has plenty to look forward to. He will star in Pulkit's crime thriller *Maalik*, scheduled for release on Friday, July 11, 2025. In the film, Rajkummar takes on the gritty character

of a gangster known as Maalik. The movie also features Manushi Chhillar, Saurabh Shukla, Swanand Kirkire and Satish Badal in key roles. Known for his powerful performances in *Shahid*, *Newton*, *Ludo* and *Queen*, Rajkummar earned the National Film Award for Best Actor for his portrayal of human rights lawyer Shahid Azmi in *Shahid* (2012). Patralekhaa, who consistently earns praise for her performances, was most recently seen in Ananth Mahadevan's biographical drama *Phule*. The film explores the lives of social reformers Jyotirao and Savitribai Phule and also features Darsheel Safary, Pratik Gandhi and Vinay Pathak.

AMITABH BACHCHAN BEGINS WORK ON NEW SEASON OF *KBC*

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan has officially kickstarted preparations for the upcoming season of the iconic quiz-based reality show *Kaun Banega Crorepati* (*KBC*). The beloved host took to his personal blog to share behind-the-scenes glimpses from the rehearsal sessions and announced the beginning of yet another exciting chapter of the show. "Shuru kardiya kaam," wrote the 81-year-old actor alongside a string of candid pictures from the *KBC* set, radiating his signature enthusiasm and dedication. Reflecting on the show's impact, he added, "And the prep begins the beginning, to be back to the people, to be with them in their desires to improve life and livings, the opportunity that changes lives, in an hour, my love and regard." *Kaun Banega Crorepati*, the official Hindi adaptation of the internationally acclaimed show *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*, first premiered in 2000 and has since become a cultural phenomenon in India. Bachchan has been the face of the show for nearly all its seasons, except the third, which was hosted by Shah Rukh Khan.

With its trademark format of multiple-choice questions and lifelines to aid participants, the show has remained a life-changing platform for countless individuals from all walks of life, offering not just money but hope, inspiration and knowledge.



Alia Bhatt's ex-secretary arrested in ₹77 Lakh fraud case

In a significant development, Mumbai's Juhu Police have arrested Vedika Prakash Shetty, the former secretary of Bollywood actor Alia Bhatt, in connection with an alleged fraud amounting to Rs 76.9 lakh. The arrest was made in Bengaluru, nearly five months after an FIR was registered based on a formal complaint by Bhatt's mother, veteran actor Soni Razdan.

According to police sources, Shetty had been absconding since the complaint was filed and was finally tracked down by the authorities. She was produced in court on July 8 and has been remanded to police custody until July 10 for further investigation.

The Juhu Police have booked Shetty under Sections 316(4) and 318(4) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). The charges stem from allegations that she forged Alia Bhatt's signature and embezzled close to Rs 77 lakh over a period of two years.

While the investigation continues, neither Alia Bhatt nor her production house, Eternal Sunshine Productions, has issued an official statement regarding the matter. The production house, launched in 2021, made its debut with the critically acclaimed *Darlings*, co-produced with Shah Rukh Khan's Red Chillies Entertainment.

On the professional front, Bhatt is gearing up for her role in *Alpha*, an action-packed film set in the YRF Spy Universe. The film also stars

Sharvati Wagh and is set to hit theatres on December 25, 2025.

Additionally, the actor will reunite with her husband Ranbir Kapoor and filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali for *Love & War*, which also stars Vicky Kaushal.

FUN

ARCHIE



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



CAIVIN AND HOBBS



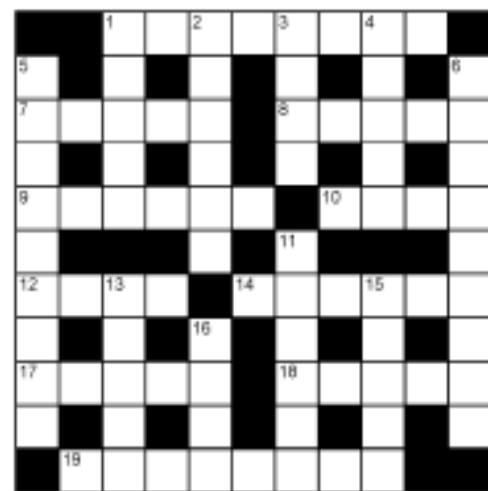
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Speaks very quietly
- A builder follows these when building a house
- The backbone
- Athena is the capital city of this country
- Fewer
- You see with these
- The large country just north of the USA
- Weary
- Near
- Young people

DOWN

- A huge sea mammal
- A six-legged creature
- Shove

4 Lift up

- Food that looks like lots of worms
- A daily publication
- A small dish under a cup
- Garden soil
- A nut from an oak tree
- A worshipped statue



People may also need 0.1% melatonin (medicine used in insomnia, jet lag and depression cases which the individual faces during the hair loss) in their daily consuming diet to strengthen hair's anagen phase. Hormone screening for managing the abnormal cortisol, thyroid, or androgen levels should be done as well before considering any of this. Ensuring the diet has all micronutrients required for healthy hair growth, if not we may have to prescribe the required supplements. Adopt some advanced topical therapies like PRP, SVF, GFC or transplantation of hair where conservatives' methods are not working.

In conclusion hair loss is a very complex and successful treatment which is completely dependent on the tailored, multi-angle management by the doctors. Some specialised doctors such as dermatologists, trichologists, endocrinologists, nutritionists and surgeons provide their relevant insights and evidence-backed interventions for generating the awareness among the public. Future innovations may include FDA-approved oral therapies and stem-cell treatments, but until then, integrated care remains the gold technique in the context of hair loss problems.

Television actor Sagar, aka RK Naidu in the Telugu serial *Mogali Rekulu*, returns to the silver screen with *The 100*, a film where he once again dons the khaki — but with a difference. Sagar opens up about his journey from household fame to political aspirations, the real story behind *The 100*, and why this cop role is unlike any we've seen before

Sagar steps back into khaki for *The 100*, says it's not your typical cop film

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Sagar is a household name in the Telugu states, thanks to his portrayal of RK Naidu in the long-running TV serial *Mogali Rekulu*. The mega-serial aired from 2008 to 2013 and left a lasting impression. He also appeared in another popular serial, *Chakravakam*. After gaining recognition on the small screen, Sagar transitioned to films, acting in a few projects, but never quite found his commercial breakthrough.

Now, he returns with a new film titled *The 100*, which hits theatres this Friday. The movie has received strong support from political figures such as Pawan Kalyan, Komati-reddy Venkat Reddy, Sridhar Babu and Venkaiah Naidu.

"We started this film as a project without any title. But after shooting for some time, we decided on the title *The 100* and it gave the film a new emotional depth. We wanted to say something meaningful to society and you'll understand the reason behind the title after watching the film," said Sagar.

The actor has already screened the film for prominent personalities, including top cop Sajjanar and former Vice President Venkaiah Naidu. "They loved the film and I'm confident the audience will too. It's a message-oriented film and I wanted to screen it for people whose words carry weight and can help the message reach a wider audience," he added.

Having played a cop in *Mogali Rekulu* for nearly six years, Sagar developed close ties with real-life police officers. "During one of our conversations, a cop shared his personal story. I asked if I could use it for a film, and he agreed. That's how *The 100* began," revealed Sagar.

Before moving forward, he shared the story with director Sukumar, who was excited about the concept. "He said this kind of story should be told. I spent a few months with Sukumar's team, but they moved on to another film. That's when I decided to go ahead with this project myself. I collaborated with director Raghav Omkar Sashidhar and once we completed the script, we began shooting," Sagar explained.

When asked why he didn't pursue films earlier, despite the popularity of *Mogali Rekulu*, Sagar said, "I didn't want to do another cop story right away since I had worn the uniform for six years on TV. I wanted to explore something different." He went on to act in *Siddharth*, *Man of the Match* and *Shaadi Mubarak*. "Now, after many years, this cop story truly excites me. But I can confidently say this film is unlike any other cop film made so far. Every police officer can feel proud after watching it," he said.

Interestingly, he hasn't returned to television since *Mogali Rekulu*. "I didn't find any interesting scripts and I didn't want to accept just anything that came my way," he said. On how *The 100* cop differs from RK Naidu, he shared, "This is a more authentic portrayal. There's no style or attitude—just the behavior of a real cop."

Sagar admits having an emotional attachment to the khaki uniform he wore in the serial. "That's one of the reasons I avoided cop roles. But now feels like the right time to return to it, with a powerful and real story," he added.

He also clarified previous comments about *Mr. Perfect*, where he was expected to play a parallel lead with Prabhas. "That was my mistake. The role I picked wasn't what I thought it would be. It's in the past. Since then, I've focused on proving myself as a lead actor," said Sagar. "In the future, I will continue taking up lead roles, but if a strong supporting character comes along, I'll do it—if the story excites me."

Sagar expressed disappointment over missing out on Pawan Kalyan's *OG*. "I didn't reject the offer, but due to a miscommunication, I missed it. Back then, I wasn't a part of the Jana Sena Party. Now, I've joined the party and am working with Pawan Kalyan," he said. He also confirmed that he plans to transition into full-time politics soon.

On his co-stars, Sagar had high praise. "Misha, Dhanya and Vishnu Priya—these three female characters are central to the film and have intense roles," he revealed. As for his portrayal, he emphasized, "This cop is not your cinematic hero. There's no swagger—just grounded, realistic performance."

Sagar also assured fans they won't have to wait long for his next release. "I believe in quality over quantity. But I'm not taking long breaks anymore—I'm planning my projects so they release with minimal gaps," he concluded.



Siddhu Jonnalagadda turns *Badass* in Ravikanth Perepu's new film

After the debacle of *The Jack*, actor Siddhu Jonnalagadda is planning his upcoming films carefully. He is now busy with *Telusu Kada* and on *Wednesday*, another of his new projects was announced. This time, the title of the film is *Badass* and it is directed by Ravikanth Perepu. Both earlier worked together for the film *Krishna* and *His Leela*. Now, this combo is reuniting and this time they are stepping into a whole new zone. Naga Vamsi and Soujanya are jointly producing this film. This film is going to take Siddhu into a space we've never seen him in before, according to the makers. This project is written by Ravikanth Perepu and Siddhu Jonnalagadda and directed by Ravikanth himself. Siddhu is stepping far away from the vibrant entertaining zone of Tillu. In this film his madness will be on steroids bringing out a deep and mature performance that will mark a complete makeover for the actor.

The makers have unveiled the title along with a striking first look and the poster already grabs attention with its raw and bold statement: "If middle finger was a man". In today's times it's rare for content to instantly connect with audiences at first sight—but this squad has done exactly that in their very first attempt. With a bigger budget, a deeper story and a team that believes in pushing limits, this film is gearing up to be one of the most anticipated emotional dramas of 2026.

Anil Geela breaks into mainstream with *Mothevari Love Story*

A love story titled *Mothevari Love Story*, is a seven-episode series set against the rustic backdrop of Telangana's heartland, where a long-held family secret sets off a chain of humorous and dramatic events. Anil Geela is playing the lead and also did the editing part. *Mothevari Love Story* is a wholesome ride of emotions and unexpected twists, all sparked by a single wedding that soon becomes the centre of everyone's attention. Apart from directing, Shiva Krishna Burra has also penned the script.

The first look of this web series was launched on Wednesday, at an event in Hyderabad, where Anand Deverakonda attended as the chief guest. This web series is going to stream on Zee5.

"I don't call this a small project, this is a big-hearted web series. The title is so unique and the poster looks amazing. When Anil messaged me, I didn't even think for a second. I usually avoid public events, but I said yes immediately for two reasons. One, I'm a huge fan of My Village Show videos. When I was in the USA, our friends and family members used to binge-watch them. They reminded us of our own vil-

lages, culture and festivals. Second, when Madhura Sreedhar sir offered me *Dorasani*, I prepped for it by watching *My Village Show* to learn the Telangana dialect. This was my way of paying it back. I wish the Zee5 team and everyone involved a huge success!", said Anand Deverakonda about the web series.

"This is the first step in turning *My Village Show* into a full-fledged production house. We felt like we had hit a saturation point on YouTube and were waiting for someone to give us a wider platform. That's when Jayanth anna called and encouraged us to pitch an idea in our style. Contrary to the belief that OTT platforms take months to approve, Zee5 gave us a nod in the first sitting," said Anil Geela about how this started.

He added that Madhura Sreedhar supported them without even hearing the story. "We gave up remuneration and comforts and worked hard on this series. Vijay (Deverakonda) anna gave me my film debut with *World Famous Lover* and now Anand (Deverakonda) anna is launching me into OTT. They are both our lucky charms," said Anil Geela. *Mothevari Love Story* premieres on August 8.



Kiran Abbavaram pays it forward with debut production for newcomers

Kiran Abbavaram is now a busy actor, but before that he started his career with short films. From a commoner to now a popular star, Kiran established himself as a successful lead actor and has always been vocal about the struggles he faced during his early days in the industry. Without any backing or support, he carved his own identity by choosing strong content and innovative filmmaking. At the pre-release event of his earlier film *Dil Ruba*, he stated that, having faced hardships himself, he is committed to supporting aspiring actors and technicians who, like him, come from non-film backgrounds.

Staying true to his word, Kiran is now producing a film under his own banner, collaborating with fresh talent. He is introducing Sai Tej, who previously worked as a camera assistant on Kiran's earlier films, as the lead actor. The film will be directed by Muni who was online editor in his past projects. Inspired by real-life events, this film is set to be an emotional drama with a compelling narrative. Pre-production is currently underway and the first look and title will be unveiled soon. The shoot is scheduled to begin later this year.

"Every journey begins with a dream. When I started seven years ago, I had no idea if it would come true. But today, with the love of the audience, I've earned recognition as a lead actor. Through KA Productions, we aim to create opportunities for young talent who enter the industry with a dream, just like I did. We'll officially announce the project on the 10th of this month," said Kiran Abbavaram.

Suhas has an inspirational journey: Manchu Manoj

Suhas and Malavika Manoj of *Joe* fame are playing the lead pair in the film titled *Oh Bhama Ayyo Rama*. This is also her Telugu debut with this film. It is hitting the screens this Friday and on this occasion, the team held a pre-release event in Hyderabad. Manchu Manoj attended as the chief guest and praised Suhas and said he is inspiring many. Ram Godhala is the director, while Harish Nalla produced it.

"Suhas is like a brother to me," said Manchu Manoj. "He's always positive and carries a charming smile. He made it big as a lead actor without any film background, even nepo kids have to work hard in this industry. Success only comes through struggle — I say this as a nepo kid myself," said Manchu Manoj.

"Suhas's journey from YouTube to



cinema is truly inspirational. Just like Vijay Sethupathi in Tamil, Suhas is carving a space for himself in Telugu. I wish this film brings success and recognition to the entire team. With such a solid crew, this deserves to be a blockbuster hit," said Manchu Manoj.

Talking about the film Suhas said that the entire team worked really hard on this film. "Once people watch it, they'll fall in love with Malavika. I had the joy of acting alongside senior artists like Ali, Anita and Prudhvi. In every man's life, mother and wife play crucial roles in success—those emotional aspects are central to this film and will surely touch hearts," said Suhas. He added they are making good movies with everyone's support. "I'll be announcing some big updates about my career very soon," he said.