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JAYAHO... BC

BC Quota Raised to 34% in Rural, 33.33% in Urban Bodies

Amaravati, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly reverberated with "Jaiho BC" slogans on Tuesday as Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu announced the Cabinet's decision to enhance reservations for Backward Classes (BCs) in local bodies. He said the NDA coalition government was committed to social justice and BC empowerment from the panchayat to Parliament.

Under the decision, BC reservations will be 34 per cent in rural local bodies and 33.33 per cent in urban local bodies, in accordance with constitutional and legal provisions. Naidu said the government had fulfilled its electoral promise by convening a special Cabinet meeting and approving the enhanced reservations.

The Chief Minister recalled that reservations for BCs in local bodies were

first introduced during the tenure of former Chief Minister N.T. Rama Rao and later enhanced to 34 per cent under the Panchayat Raj legislation. Elections were conducted with 34 per cent reservations in 1995, 2001, 2006 and 2013. CM Naidu said the policy had helped produce prominent BC leaders, includ-

ing Yerrannaidu, K.E. Krishnamurthy, Yanamala Ramakrishnudu, Ayyanna Patrudu and Devender Goud. He cited former Kurnool MPTC member Bastipati Nagaraju, who later became an MP, as an example of grassroots political leadership. He announced that mayors and municip-

pal chairpersons would henceforth be elected directly to ensure stable governance and prevent frequent changes in urban local-body leadership. He also announced plans to establish 28 Zilla Praja Parishads, against the existing 13, following district reorganisation. Naidu said local-body elections were necessary to access Rs.2,300 crore in rural grants and Rs.1,562 crore in urban grants expected from the 16th Finance Commission. He urged coalition leaders to identify capable candidates for local leadership. Naidu said BC communities account for 50.42 per cent of Andhra Pradesh's population and make a major contribution to the State's economy. The government would combine traditional BC skills with modern technology to take their capabilities to global markets. He said BC residential schools would be transformed into centres of excellence, with greater opportunities in edu-

cation, skills, employment, entrepreneurship and political representation. Naidu stressed that development should not be measured only through roads, buildings and infrastructure, but by improved living standards, reduced economic inequalities and progress of the most disadvantaged. He asserted that BC reservations were not against any community and said the government's objective was to achieve social justice in a constitutional, legal and equitable manner. "BCs are not backward; they are people who have remained behind because they did not get adequate opportunities," he said. Naidu alleged that the previous government had reduced BC reservations in local bodies from 34 per cent to 24.15 per cent through government orders, depriving around 16,800 BC leaders of opportunities for political representation.

Lokesh Hails BC Reservation Decision

Amaravati, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Minister for Education and IT Nara Lokesh welcomed the AP Cabinet's decision to provide 34% reservation for Backward Classes (BCs) in Rural Local Bodies and 33% in Urban Local Bodies, calling it a historic step towards their political empowerment. Lokesh said the Telugu Desam Party had supported BCs since its inception and described the decision as another milestone in strengthening local governance. The reservations will be implemented under the AP Panchayat Raj Act, 1994. He also welcomed direct elections for Mayors and Chairpersons in urban local bodies and the proposed reorganisation of 13 Zilla Parishads into 28, saying the measures would strengthen local bodies and decentralise administration.



SRM AP, APDC Sign MoU To Advance Drone Technology



4,192 Criminal Cases Against MPs, MLAs Pending Nationwide

New Delhi, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

A total of 4,192 criminal cases against MPs and MLAs are pending across the country, according to the 22nd report submitted by the Amicus Curiae to the Supreme Court on speedy trials. The report stated that 519 cases have remained pending for more than 10 years, while 754 cases have been pending for five to 10 years. Of the total, 335 cases involve sitting MPs and 1,222 sitting MLAs. Another 269 cases concern former MPs and 1,339 former MLAs. Investigations in 700 cases are yet to be completed, including 360 pending for over three years. Meanwhile, Association for Democratic Reforms data showed that 251 of 543 Lok Sabha members face criminal charges, with 170 facing serious criminal cases.

CM Naidu Orders Intensified Search for Missing Fishermen

Amaravati, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu directed officials to intensify search operations for eight fishermen who went missing at sea after their fishing boat departed from Odalarevu jetty in Allavaram mandal of B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema district. Chandrababu reviewed the incident with CMO officials and sought details of the ongoing efforts to trace the missing fishermen and boat. Officials said the fishermen, from Odalarevu, Dummalapeta and Vasatalippa villages, had set out for fishing at 10 a.m. on August 3. Their families remained in contact with them by phone until 11 a.m., after which communication was lost. The boat was equipped with mobile phones and a VHF set. Officials estimated that it reached the fishing grounds around 6 p.m. on August 3 and was expected to return by August 12. As it failed to return, a special search operation was launched immediately. The Coast Guard Commandant informed officials that Coast Guard vessels had been alerted and search operations were underway. Fishing boats from Kakinada, Bhairavapalem, Visakhapatnam and Paradip were also alerted to assist in locating the missing vessel. The Chief Minister directed officials to maintain constant communication with the families and keep them informed about developments. He instructed the Coast Guard, Fisheries Department and district administration to coordinate all available resources until the boat and fishermen were located. Chandrababu assured the affected families that the government stood firmly behind them and urged them to remain courageous



Nabin Urges Youth to Lead India Towards Viksit Bharat 2047

Visakhapatnam, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

BJP National President Nitin Nabin called upon the youth to channel their energy, talent and intellectual capabilities towards building a Viksit Bharat by 2047, describing them as the country's most powerful resource capable of shaping India's future. Addressing an interactive session with higher education students organised by Yuva Morcha in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday, Nabin urged youngsters to focus on creation, solutions and positive thinking rather than criticism or destruction. He said the success of today's youth should benefit not only their families but also society, Andhra



Pradesh and the nation. Nabin said internships and leadership programmes involving public representatives and MLAs could provide young people with practical exposure to governance and policy-making. A student also sought internship opportunities with public representatives during the interaction. **From Job Seekers to Job Creators**

Nabin highlighted India's expanding startup ecosystem and growing opportunities in manufacturing, mobile products, defence equipment, semiconductors, artificial intelligence and data centres. He urged young entrepreneurs and researchers working abroad to return and contribute to India's development, stressing the need to transform youth from job

seekers into job creators. **AI and Education** Nabin said Artificial Intelligence would increasingly transform education through personalised learning based on students' capabilities and needs. He advised students preparing for competitive examinations such as JEE and NEET to effectively use emerging technologies and AI-driven tools. **Responsible Social Media Use** Nabin also urged youth to use social media responsibly and develop the habit of fact-checking amid the spread of misinformation, morphed images and AI-generated fake content. He said rights should be accompanied by responsibilities and social media should

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Delhi Seeks AP Expertise in Industrial Policy and Smart Governance

Amaravati, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Delhi Industries, Food, and Environment & Forests Minister Sardar Manjinder Singh Sirsa praised Andhra Pradesh's industrial policies, data-driven governance and large-scale infrastructure development, describing the State as a model for attracting investments and implementing Public-Private Partnerships (PPP). Sirsa led a Delhi Government delegation visiting Andhra Pradesh to study its industrial policies and administrative reforms. The delegation met officials of the State Industries Department at the Real-Time Governance Society (RTGS) in the Secretariat on Tuesday. State IT and RTG Minister Nara



Lokesh and Industries Minister TG Bharat welcomed the delegation and explained the State's investment and governance initiatives. Lokesh said Andhra Pradesh had emerged as an investment destination, attracting \$18 billion in investments during the 2026 financial year and accounting for 25% of investments flowing into India. He said industrial development was being pursued through a cluster-based approach, with 22 specialised clusters planned across sectors including electronics, data centres, shipbuilding, semiconductors, medical devices, pharmaceuticals, aerospace, defence and drones. He said Amaravati, Tirupati and Visakhapatnam were being developed as economic zones, while a 300-acre Drone City was being established in Kurnool. The Bhogapuram International Airport, he added, would play a key role in North Andhra's development. Lokesh also explained the

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Delhi Minister Praises AP's Transparent Mega DSC

Amaravati, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Delhi Industries Minister Sardar Manjinder Singh Sirsa praised Education, IT and RTGS Minister Nara Lokesh for conducting Andhra Pradesh's Mega DSC transparently and filling more than 16,000 teacher posts without controversy. Sirsa met Nara Lokesh at the RTGS office on Tuesday and enquired about the recruitment process, noting that teacher recruitment in Delhi often faces court cases, complaints and legal hurdles.

Government Schools Show Signs Of Enrolment Recovery

Year	Govt %	Aided %	Private %
2021-22	56.96	2.57	40.47
2022-23	49.36	1.89	48.75
2023-24	46.33	1.44	52.24
2024-25	43.09	1.21	55.7
2025-26	41.4	1.13	57.47
2026-27	42.34	1.09	56.57

K Kalyan Krishna Kumar

Amaravati: Government schools in the state are showing early signs of recovery in student enrolments after recording successive declines over the past three academic years. Enrolments fell by 7.6% in 2022-23, 3.03% in 2023-24 and 3.24% in 2024-25, raising concerns over the ability of government schools to attract and retain students. The decline coincided with the tenure of the previous YSRCP government. Enrolment trends are considered an important indicator of parental confidence in government education, including teaching quality, infrastructure and student facilities. The latest figures, however, indicate a gradual shift. Enrolments declined by only 1.69% in 2025-26 before registering a 0.94%

increase in 2026-27. The government has also maintained that no government or aided schools have been closed in the State during the past two years. Though the latest increase is modest, it marks a departure from the continuous decline recorded earlier. The same was stressed by Education and IT Minister Nara Lokesh while responding to queries raised by YSRCP MLCs Parvathareddy Chandrasekhar Reddy, T. Kalpalatha and M.V. Ramachandra Reddy in the Legislative Council on Tuesday regarding school closures and enrolment trends. Lokesh said the government examined records inherited from the previous YSRCP regime and removed fake or irregular enrolment data. He said the correction contributed to the 1.69% decline

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Industries Turn Green Under AP's 33% Green Cover Drive

ARN Mahesh

Industries across the state are gradually being covered with green, as the State Government pushes for a stronger balance between industrial growth and environmental protection. Industrial premises that were once dominated by concrete structures and operational facilities are increasingly making space for trees and greenery, supporting cleaner surroundings and a healthier environment. The first phase of a special green-cover drive has already produced visible results. Under the Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board (PCB) action plan, 26 industries-one selected from each district-were tasked with achieving the 33% green-cover target within 14 days. The drive, launched on July 28 and completed on August 11, resulted in



43,300 saplings being planted across 129 acres. Native and climate-suitable species, including Neem, Kanuga, Peepal and Jamun, besides fruit-bearing and ornamental plants, were prioritised. The initiative reflects the vision of Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Forests & Environment Pawan Kalyan, who has stressed that industrial development must go hand in hand with environmental responsibility.

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Govt Plans Drinking Water Security in Rayalaseema



Vijayawada, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Water Resources Minister Nimmala Rama Naidu said the government would take measures to ensure drinking water security in Rayalaseema until July 2027. Reviewing Tungabhadra water availability and allocations under the Low Level

Canal (LLC) and High Level Canal (HLC), he directed officials to prioritise drinking water amid concerns over El Niño. Officials estimated Tungabhadra Dam may receive around 105 TMC this year, with Andhra Pradesh's share expected at 32.9 TMC, including 11.88 TMC for HLC, 16.09 TMC for LLC and 4.95 TMC for K.C. Canal. Rama Naidu stressed prudent utilisation and efficient management of every available drop. The meeting was attended by MLAs Kalva Srinivasulu, Paritala Sunitha, J.C. Asmith Reddy, Bandaru Sravani, Boggula Dastagiri, Daggubati Venkateswara Prasad and Jaya Nageswara Reddy; MLC B.T. Naidu

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Delhi Industries Minister Visits Amaravati, Praises Capital Development

Amaravati, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Delhi Minister for Industries, Food & Supplies, Environment, Forests and Wildlife Sardar Manjinder Singh Sirsa visited Amaravati on Tuesday and reviewed capital region planning and ongoing infrastructure projects. Sirsa and his delegation visited the APCRDA Headquarters at Rayapudi, where Additional Commissioner T. Rahul Kumar Reddy and senior officials welcomed them. At the Amaravati Integrated Command and Control Centre (AICCC), Rahul Kumar Reddy briefed the delegation on Amaravati's vision, master planning and develop-

ment initiatives. Officials used the APCRDA Digital Twin Platform to showcase the Amaravati Master Plan, major infrastructure projects, technology-driven initiatives and future development plans. The delegation was also briefed on plans to establish global-standard educational institutions, quantum research centres and advanced infrastructure. Sirsa appreciated the comprehensive planning and infrastructure initiatives and commended the State Government's efforts under Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu. He particularly praised Amaravati's green spaces, iconic towers and extensive transportation infrastructure. The delegation later visited the GAD and HoD Towers under construction at the Amaravati Government Complex.



structure. The delegation later visited the GAD and HoD Towers under construction at the Amaravati Government Complex.

APCRDA Commissioner V. Vijay Rama Raju explained the diagraph structural system and environmentally sustainable construction methods

being adopted for the towers. APCRDA Engineer-in-Chief R. Gopala Krishna Reddy, Office Management Director Vallabha neni Srinivasa

Rao, Planning Department Director B. Suresh Kumar, Economic Development Manager Anjana James and other officials participated.

Lokesh Congratulates MLC Dalavayi Ramadevi



Amaravati: MLC Dalavayi Ramadevi, along with her family members, paid a courtesy call on Andhra Pradesh Minister for Human Resources Development, IT, and Electronics Nara Lokesh. She thanked

Lokesh for recognising her grassroots-level service and providing her the opportunity to serve as an MLC. Lokesh congratulated her and urged renewed commitment to public service and welfare outreach.

Durgesh Vows Support for Telugu Film Industry



Vijayawada, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Minister for Tourism, Culture and Cinematography Kandula Durgesh said the Alliance Government was committed to developing the Telugu film industry while promoting arts and artists in Andhra Pradesh. Durgesh attended the 'Ven ditera - OTT Awards 2025-26', organised by VB Ente rainments under the theme 'Save Artist - Save Talent' at A-Plus Convention Centre in Vijayawada, as chief guest and presented awards to winners. He said Vijayawada had historically contributed to the film industry and noted that film-shooting permissions were being issued quickly and free of cost through a single-window system. He

urged producers to establish dubbing, recording and re-recording studios in the State. Durgesh said the industry would be expanded with Central Government support under Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan. He said the government was ready to allot land for infrastructure and encouraged annual film events in Vijayawada. AP Film Development Corporation member K.S. Rama Rao, hero Vadde Nav en, music director Raghu Kunche, actors Divya Vani, Anita, Rajeev Kanak ala, Sameera Bharadwaj, Aata Sandeep and Jyothi, Bim bisara fame Baby Sridevi, former FDC Chair rman Ambika Krishna, and organisers Vishnu Boppana, Ravi kumar and Anita attended.

Cabinet Approves Mediation, Arbitration Centres at High Court

Amaravati, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Law and Minority Welfare Minister NMD Farooq said the State Cabinet approved the establishment of Mediation and Arbitration Centres at the Andhra Pradesh High Court to expand legal services and reduce the backlog of cases. Speaking after the Cabinet meeting at the Velagapudi Secretariat, chaired by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, Farooq said the Mediation Centre would have 14 staff members and the Arbitration Centre 15 personnel. The Cabinet also approved filling the Administrative Officer (AO) post in the High Court on deputiation from Public Prosecutors (PPs) or Assistant Public Prosecutors (APPs) serving under the



Directorate of Prisons. Farooq said administrative measures were being implemented to bring legal services closer to people and expand their reach across the State. The government was focusing on reducing pending cases and ensuring speedy justice, he said. He added that steps had already been taken to create the post of Registrar (Court Case Management) in the High Court. A special court was also established in Visakhapatnam to try cases registered under the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act, he said.

ASSOCHAM Seeks Partnership to Promote Andhra Pradesh

Amaravati, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

A delegation from ASSOCHAM (The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India) met Minister BC Janardhan Reddy at the R&B and I&I Department office in the Secretariat on Tuesday, expressing interest in collaborating with the Andhra Pradesh Government to promote the State's policies and investment opportunities. ASSOCHAM Senior Directors Preminder Jeet Kaur and Varun Agarwal, along with South States Regional Director Macha Dinesh Babu, discussed initiatives to publicise the government's key policies and strategic decisions at national and international levels. The representatives said ASSOCHAM was keen to work with the State Government to attract investment, promote trade and support industrial growth, leveraging the favourable environ-



ment created through infrastructure development. They also briefed the Minister on opportunities to promote the 'Andhra Pradesh' brand globally. BC Janardhan Reddy responded positively to the proposals and said the association could work

with the government if it came forward with comprehensive plans. He stressed that such collaboration should ultimately contribute to the State's development and strengthen Andhra Pradesh's investment and industrial prospects.

Rs.21 Lakh Aid to Families of Seven Gurukula Students

Amaravati, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Social Welfare Minister Dr. Dola Sree Bala Veeranjaneeya Swamy said the Alliance Government was giving special attention to the health and safety of students in Ambedkar Gurukulas and welfare hostels. He distributed 'Swanthana' scheme cheques totalling Rs.21 lakh to families of seven students who died due to health complications, with Rs.3 lakh provided

to each family. The Minister said the scheme was introduced with a Rs.5 crore corpus on the directions of Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu. Ailing students are being identified promptly and provided corporate-level medical care, he said. So far, Rs.33 lakh has been distributed to families of 11 deceased students under the scheme. Claiming that no other State had a similar initiative for poor students, Dr. Dola



Sree Bala Veer anjaneya Swamy said it reflected the Chief Minister's commitment to their welfare. He added that

residential schools were being strengthened with improved education, facilities, health and safety measures.

Durgesh Welcomes BJP Appointments, AP Green Leadership



Amaravati, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Minister Kandula Durgesh welcomed the appointment of Rajamahendravaram MP Daggubati Purandeswari and Ram Madhav as National Vice-Presidents and Vishnuvardhan Reddy as Joint Coordinator in the 65-member BJP national executive committee announced by BJP National President Nitin Nabin. Durgesh congratulated the

leaders and expressed confidence that they would contribute to Viksit Bharat and Viksit Andhra Pradesh under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan. He also welcomed MLC Konidela Nagendra Rao (Nagababu) as Chairperson of the Andhra Pradesh Society for Greening and Reforestation for Ecological Enrichment (AP Green) Executive Committee. He said

Nagababu would help advance the "Green Andhra Pradesh-Healthy Andhra Pradesh" vision. Meanwhile, Durgesh released the special song "Kadilindi Ika Janasena... Kadam Tokku Veera Mahila" at his Vijayawada camp office. Produced by Alamuri Sridevi under Krishna-Penna Regional Coordinator Ravi Sowjanya's guidance, the song aims to encourage Janasena Party's 'Veera Mahilas' to participate actively in politics.

Pawan Kalyan Congratulates New BJP National Office-Bearers

Amaravati, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan congratulated Rajamahendravaram MP Daggubati Purandeswari and Ram Madhav on their appointment as National Vice-Presidents of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). He also congratulated Vishnuvardhan Reddy on his selection as Joint Coordinator for all BJP wings at the national level. Pawan Kalyan expressed confidence that their extensive political

experience would help them discharge their responsibilities effectively. He conveyed his greetings to all members selected to the new BJP National Executive Committee and hoped they would work towards national development and public service. Pawan Kalyan said the new team would advance the party's objectives under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the leadership of BJP National President Nitin Nabin.

Anitha Hails 34% BC Reservation as Historic Step

Amaravati, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha described the State Cabinet's decision to provide 34% reservation for Backward Classes (BCs) in local body elections as a historic step towards their political empowerment. Anitha said she was proud to be part of the Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu where the decision was taken. She said BCs were not merely a vote bank but the backbone of the Telugu Desam Party and Alliance government. She said the increased reservation from 24.15% to 34% would create political opportunities for BC activists who had stood by the party during difficult times and worked among people across villages. Anitha said the decision fulfilled an important electoral promise and reflected the government's commitment to its word. She said Chandrababu Naidu's



objective was to make BCs partners in power rather than limiting empowerment to welfare and financial assistance. Recalling the role of TDP founder and former Chief Minister NTR in promoting BC political representation, Anitha said Chandrababu Naidu was continuing the approach by creating leadership opportunities. She thanked Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, Minister Nara Lokesh and Cabinet colleagues for the decision.

Savitha Hails 34% BC Reservation as Historic

Amaravati, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Minister for BC Welfare, EWS Welfare, Handlooms and Textiles S. Savitha described the Assembly's approval of 34% reservation for BCs in rural local bodies and 33.33% in urban local bodies as a historic day for the community. Speaking during the monsoon session, Savitha thanked Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan and Minister Nara Lokesh for fulfilling another electoral promise. She said the decision would expand political representation and opportunities for BCs in local governance. Savitha recalled that TDP founder NTR and Chandrababu Naidu had promoted BC political empowerment, with 34% reservations introduced in 1994. She alleged that the previous YSRCP government reduced the quota to 24%, resulting in BCs losing around 16,800 positions.



She said Nara Lokesh had promised during his padyatra to restore the reservation, while Chandrababu Naidu reiterated the assurance during the election campaign. Savitha said the Alliance government had increased BC welfare allocations to Rs.39,000 crore, Rs.47,000 crore and Rs.51,000 crore in successive budgets. She also highlighted 34% reservation in nominated posts and welfare schemes for fishermen, weavers and other BC communities, including NTR Bhārōsa, Thalliki Vandanam and Nethannala Sevalo.

Atchannaidu Directs Faster FCV Tobacco Purchases

Amaravati, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Agriculture Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaidu directed Tobacco Board officials to accelerate FCV (Flue-Cured Virginia) tobacco purchases and secure better prices for farmers. He reviewed the ongoing auctions and procurement process with senior officials on Tuesday. Officials said 117 auctions had been completed, with around 60 million kg of tobacco purchased at an average price of about Rs.210 per kg. Daily procurement had recently increased to 1.5-2 million kg, while the percentage of 'no-bids' was gradually declining. Atchannaidu said the increased procurement pace and reduction in 'no-bids' were encouraging but stressed the need to sustain the improvement. He directed officials to hold discussions with purchasing companies and traders to increase procurement volumes and further reduce 'no-bids'. The Minister also asked the Tobacco Board to coordinate with companies and traders to improve



the average price realised by farmers. He said the government was continuously monitoring auctions and procurement to ensure tobacco growers faced no difficulties. Atchannaidu assured farmers that all necessary measures would be taken in coordination with the Tobacco Board, purchasing companies and traders to protect their interests and ensure better returns.



Amaravati:The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, met at the Secretariat on Tuesday and took several key decisions, with Backward Classes (BCs) reservations among the major issues discussed.

Special Degree College for Hearing-Impaired Students in Bapatla

Vijayawada/Amaravati, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

M. Venugopal Reddy, Director (FAC), Department for the Welfare of Differently-Abled, Transgender, and Senior Citizens, said the government has approved the establishment of a special government degree college for hearing-impaired students at Vedullapalli in Bapatla district. He said the college was approved through G.O. Ms. No. 16 (Program-II), dated July 31, 2026, under the "Indradhanussu - Comprehensive Development Program for the

Differently-Abled" announced by Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu. Classes will commence during the 2026-27 academic year, offering B.Com. with Computer Applications as the main subject, along with an Artificial Intelligence (AI) certification course. Thirty seats have been sanctioned, and applications are invited from eligible hearing-impaired students. Venugopal Reddy urged students to pursue higher education and acquire technical skills to improve employment opportunities. For details, applicants may contact the college Principal or call 90000 13633 or 99483 72899.

Assembly Highlights Road Safety, Coconut Farmers' Issues

Amaravati, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly on Tuesday discussed measures concerning sleeper-bus safety, port and fishing-harbour development, temple recruitment, coconut farmers and the Handri-Neeva Sujala Sravanthi (HNSS) project. Transport Minister Mandipalli Ramprasad Reddy, responding to MLA Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy during Question Hour, said 16 government and 835 private sleeper buses were registered in the State. Special inspections were being conducted and Rule 128 of the Central Motor Vehicles Rules strictly enforced. The government was taking preventive measures against fire accidents and human error, as well as uncompromising action against drunk driving. Minister BC Janardhan Reddy said four ports were under construction. Progress stood at 81.45% at Ramayapatnam, 59.24% at Machilipatnam, 76.17% at Mulapeta and 33.04% at Kakinada Gateway. Of seven proposed fishing harbours-



Juvvaladinne, Uppada, Nizampatnam Phase 2, Machilipatnam Phase 2, Budagatlalalem, Pudimadaka and Kothapatnam-four were under construction. Juvvaladinne recorded 97.98% progress, Nizampatnam 81.61%, Machilipatnam 71.96% and Uppada 86.24%. He replied to MLAs Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy, Gouthu Sirisha and Kagita Krishna Prasad. Minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy

said no zonal system was in force for temple recruitment. Replying to Adoni MLA Dr. Valmiki Parthasarathi, he said 172 of 344 recently filled posts went to major temples in Rayalaseema. Recruitment for Srisailam, Mahanandi, Srikalahasti and Kanipakam was based on Veda, Sanskrit and Agama knowledge and merit. Of 1,431 applications from Rayalaseema, 172 candidates were selected. He said 440 posts were sanc-

tioned in Zone-4 major temples, with 245 personnel currently employed and 147 vacancies to be filled. Agriculture Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaidu said the government would provide Rs.1,000 per sapling to replace damaged coconut trees in Konaseema. Responding to Giddi Satyanarayana and Bandaru Satyanandara, he said desilting canals and drains was essential to prevent saline-water intrusion. Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan had inspected affected areas and laid the foundation stone for Shankaraguptham canal works. Mandipalli Ramprasad Reddy welcomed administrative sanction of Rs.1,323.75 crore for HNSS Phase-II works. He said Rs.750.07 crore was sanctioned for works in Sri Sathya Sai district and Rs.573.68 crore for Annamayya district and the Neeva branch canal. About Rs.350 crore of works cover the 490-535 km stretch in Rayachoti constituency. He thanked Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu and Water Resources Minister Nimmala Rama Naidu.

Industries Turn Green Under AP's 33% Green Cover Drive

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His approach seeks to ensure that industries contribute not only to production and employment but also to maintaining ecological balance and reducing air pollution. "Development must preserve the environment," is the core principle behind the drive. Pawan Kalyan has directed officials to ensure strict implementation of the 33% green-cover requirement across industrial units and called for stronger action against non-compliance. Following the successful first phase, Pawan Kalyan directed PCB officials to extend the programme to the remaining industries and ensure that green-cover targets are achieved on the ground. He also called upon departments and industries to work collectively towards the broader goal of increasing the State's green cover to 50%, in alignment with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. The initiative signals a shift towards an industrial model where economic expansion and environmental stewardship progress together.



SRM AP, APDC Sign MoU To Advance Drone Technology

Amaravati, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

SRM University-AP and Andhra Pradesh Drones Corporation (APDC) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen drone technology, research, innovation, skill development and real-world applications in Andhra Pradesh. The MoU was signed in the presence of Union Minister for Civil Aviation K Ramamohan Naidu and Lok Sabha Member Bastipati Nagaraju Panchalingala, highlighting the growing role of drones in the State's technology and innovation ecosystem. SRM University-AP Registrar Dr Vinayak Kalluri said drone technology could transform sectors including agriculture, infrastructure, disaster management and healthcare, adding that the partnership would connect academic capabilities with development priorities. Dean-Research Prof. Ranjit Thapa said the collaboration would provide a platform for interdisciplinary research, component development, testing and technology demonstrations aimed at addressing societal challenges. Vice Chancellor Prof. Ch Satish Kumar described the MoU as an important milestone in building an ecosystem where education, research, innovation and societal needs converge. Centre for Drone Technology Coordinator Dr Pranav R T Peddinti and Centre for Geospatial Technology Coordinator Dr Harish Puppala highlighted the focus on practical applications, training and field-level innovation. APDC MD Geetanjali Sharma; Additional CEO Praveen; Drone Federation of India President Smith Shah; Dr Vinayak Kalluri; Prof. Ranjit Thapa; Dr Pranav R T Peddinti; and Dr Harish Puppala attended the signing ceremony. Through its Centres for Drone and Geospatial Technologies, SRM University-AP is developing capabilities in drone education, training and research. The university offers a Minor Programme in Drone Technology and conducts awareness and skill-development programmes. It is also developing drone-based solutions for agriculture, infrastructure, disaster management, healthcare, medical delivery and advanced aerial mobility.

Govt Plans Drinking Water Security in Rayalaseema

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; Alur in-charge Vaikuntham Jyothi; Mantralayam in-charge Raghavendra Reddy; Adoni TDP in-charge Meenakshi Naidu; Irrigation Advisor M. Venkateswara Rao; Engineers-in-Chief Narasimha Murthy and Vara Prasad; and senior irrigation officials. Rs.200 Crore Compensation for Veligonda Displaced Persons Rama Naidu said the Alliance government would provide Rs.200 crore in the second phase of compensation to 1,600 Veligonda project displaced persons. Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu will distribute the amount in Amaravati on Wednesday. He said Rs.900 crore was due to 7,321 displaced families, while Rs.318 crore had already been distributed to 2,560 families in the first phase. The remaining R&R compensation would be released in phases and completed by August-end. Rama Naidu said the government had resumed pending Veligonda works and would divert Krishna waters to Nallamala Sagar only after compensating eligible displaced persons.

Government Schools Show Signs Of Enrolment Recovery

Continue

in 2025-26, while the subsequent 0.94% rise in 2026-27 reflected improvement in actual enrolments. The Minister said the government was taking measures to strengthen public education and restore confidence in government schools. The absence of school closures, coupled with the latest enrolment growth, was cited as an indication of the impact of ongoing education reforms. However, reversing years of decline will require sustained efforts to improve teaching quality, infrastructure, student retention and learning outcomes. The 2026-27 increase may be modest, but it offers an early indication that government school enrolments could be moving towards stabilisation.

Delhi Seeks AP Expertise in Industrial Policy and Smart Governance

Continue

State's Data Lake initiative, under which information from government departments is integrated into a single repository for real-time analysis and smart governance. Performance is regularly evaluated, public feedback is collected and rankings are assigned across the administration, he said. Industries Minister TG Bharat said the Single Desk Portal was helping investors obtain approvals without hurdles. He highlighted the implementation of Industrial Development Policy 4.0 and said the State was recording positive results through its investment-friendly policies. Sirsa said Delhi had much to learn from Andhra Pradesh, particularly in investment attraction, industrial policy, PPP and data-based governance. Praising the construction of Amaravati, he said the capital was destined to become a world-class city and described Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu as a visionary leader. Sirsa sought AP's cooperation and requested that a State team visit Delhi to explain its policies and governance models. Lokesh assured the delegation of full cooperation. He later felicitated the delegates and presented mementos. Delhi Government Additional Chief Secretary Sajjan Singh Yadav, State Industries Secretary Yuvraj and others participated.

Delhi Minister Praises AP's Transparent Mega DSC

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He congratulated Lokesh for completing the recruitment smoothly. Lokesh said the DSC examination and recruitment of over 16,000 teachers were conducted without scope for even minor errors. He said opposition allegations could not be substantiated or supported with evidence, including in court. He announced that over 3,000 more teachers would be recruited soon. Lokesh said the Education Department was implementing innovative policies, noting that 1.10 lakh students had shifted from private to government schools. He also highlighted the LEEP app for monitoring teacher activities and departmental operations.

Andhra Pradesh Surges To No. 2 In Fresh Investments

Continue

integrated steel project in Rayalaseema. Yet the investment ranking also comes with an important qualification. Business Standard noted that Andhra Pradesh ranked eighth in NITI Aayog's Investment Friendliness Index, despite being second in fresh investment announcements. This suggests that converting announcements into completed projects, jobs and sustained industrial activity will be the next major test.

Nabin Urges Youth to Lead India Towards Viksit Bharat 2047

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become a platform for positive and socially useful ideas. Minister for Medical and Health Y. Satya Kumar Yadav said the programme aimed to gather ideas, advice and suggestions from youth for nation-building. He highlighted State health initiatives, including Sanjeevani and child health programmes. Nabin and Satya Kumar later interacted with the students.



34% BC Reservation Restored in Local Bodies, Says Atchannaidu

Amaravati, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Minister Atchannaidu said social justice for Backward Classes (BCs) was realised only after the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) came to power, asserting that the party had consistently enabled BC representation in legislative bodies. He was speaking in the Legislative Assembly during a discussion on increasing BC reservations in local body elections. Atchannaidu said NTR introduced 20% reservation for BCs in local bodies in 1987, while Chandrababu increased it to 34% in 1995. He alleged that the YSRCP government reduced the quota to 24%, resulting in the loss of 16,800 posts for BCs. He accused the then government of failing to pursue the matter effectively in the Supreme Court after the High Court struck down the increased quota. He said the Alliance government had promised during Nara Lokesh's 'Yuva Galam' padayatra to restore the earlier reservation policy. With local elections required to be held by October to avoid disruption of Central Finance Commission funds, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu convened a special cabinet meeting and



decided to provide 34% reservation for BCs. Minister Savitha said the Alliance government had increased BC budget allocations and introduced benefits for toddy tappers, Vadderas, Nai Brahmins, handloom weavers and fishermen. She said the Assembly had also passed a resolution seeking 33% reservation for BCs in legislative bodies. Minister Kollu Ravindra welcomed the decision, alleging suppression of BC leaders during the YSRCP regime and referring to the killings of TDP BC leaders, including Thota Chandraiah, Nandam Subbayya and Amarnath Goud.

Jagan Urges Intensified Search for Missing Fishermen

Tadepalli, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau



Former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and YSR Congress Party president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy urged the State Government to intensify search operations for eight fishermen missing after their fishing boat from Allavaram mandal in Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema district disappeared at sea. The fishermen are from Odalarevu, Dummalapeta and Vasalatippa villages. Jagan

expressed concern over the prolonged uncertainty faced by their families and urged the government to conduct the search on a war footing using all available resources. He called for coordinated efforts involving the Indian Coast Guard, Navy, Fisheries Department and district administration. He also urged authorities to deploy available technology, communication systems and maritime resources to expand the search area. Jagan appealed to fishing boats and other vessels operating along the Andhra Pradesh coast, particularly around Kakinada and Visakhapatnam, and Paradip in Odisha, to remain alert and assist the search. He urged the government to continue operations without interruption until the fishermen are traced and provide all possible support to their families.

Karunakar Reddy Alleges Political Vendetta by Coalition Government

Tirupati, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) State spokesperson and former TTD Chairman Bhumana Karuna kar Reddy alleged that the coalition government was misusing police machinery to target political opponents under what he termed Nara Lokesh's "Red Book Constitution." Addressing the media at his residence in Tirupati, Karunakar Reddy alleged that YSRCP leaders and workers had faced politically motivated cases since the coalition government came to power. He claimed police records were being manipulated and High Court directions disregarded in matters concerning his family's land. He said the District Collector wrote to the Superintendent of Police on July 22, referring to him as "Karunakar Reddy and goons". Subsequently, Crime No. 253/2026 was registered on August 12, with



the Collector as complainant. He claimed the High Court objected to the language and directed that no further action be taken against him. Karunakar Reddy alleged the FIR later disappeared from online records and claimed a fresh complaint was obtained from Cherukuri Venkata Prasad regarding land in Survey No. 478 at Thanapalli. Questioning how two FIRs could carry the same crime number, he demanded CCTV footage and alleged irregularities in forwarding the FIR to court. He said he would approach the High Court again.

Ramachandra Yadav Opposes 34% BC Reservation



Amaravati, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Bharata Chaitanya Yuvajana Party (BCY) national president Bode Ramachandra Yadav criticised the State Government's proposal to provide 34 per cent reservation for Backward Classes (BCs) in local body elections, calling it an alleged attempt to mislead the community. In a statement on Tuesday, Ramachandra Yadav questioned the basis for fixing the reservation at 34 per cent and demanded clarity on the scientific criteria used. He said the BCY Party had been demanding 44 per cent reservations based on the recommendations of

the Muraleedharan Commission and would not compromise on the demand. He alleged that the BC population in Andhra Pradesh was above 55 per cent and accused the government of using lower figures to justify the reservation percentage. Ramachandra Yadav also questioned why Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu was not speaking about a proposed "BC Protection Act" to safeguard the lives and properties of BC communities. He alleged that political leaders were discussing BC welfare mainly for electoral gains. He criticised BC representatives for felicitating Naidu, alleging that the community had been betrayed by the TDP over several decades. Ramachandra Yadav said the BCY Party would continue its campaign for higher reservations and warned that BC voters would respond to the TDP's policies in the forthcoming local body elections.

Botcha Satyanarayana Demands Lokesh's Resignation



Amaravati, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Leader of Opposition in the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council Botcha Satyanarayana accused the TDP-led coalition government of avoiding a debate on alleged irregularities in DSC teacher recruitment for the second consecutive day. Speaking at the Assembly Media Point, Botcha demanded a CBI

inquiry, a Legislative Council debate and the resignation of Education Minister Nara Lokesh. He questioned appointments under the sports quota without DSC examination and sought clarity on the Government Order providing 3% reservation. He asked whether it was placed before the Cabinet or Legislature. Botcha alleged that changes to the order created uncertainty over 438 selected candidates and questioned why the DSC merit list was not released if there was no question paper leak. He also referred to alleged audio and video clips concerning job negotiations. He challenged the government to order a CBI probe into Group-I examinations conducted under the previous YSRCP government. Botcha said YSRCP would continue its agitation until a comprehensive DSC debate was held.

Chandrasekhar Slams Government Over Ganja Control

Tadepalli, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

YSRCP MLA and State spokesperson Tatiparthi Chandrasekhar criticised the Andhra Pradesh coalition government over alleged rising ganja consumption and trafficking, questioning its claim of adopting an "iron hand" against drugs. Addressing the media at the YSRCP central office, Chandrasekhar alleged that ganja use was spreading across towns and villages, exposing more youth to addiction. He questioned Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha's earlier claim that ganja would be eliminated within 100 days. Referring to a recent Prakasam district incident involving a police vehicle where liquor consumption and ganja were allegedly found, he questioned the police department's functioning and the reported delay by senior officials. Citing figures from the previous YSRCP government, Chandrasekhar said 220



ganja cases were registered by September 2021, with 384 people arrested and around 18,686 kg seized. He also referred to concerns raised by students at Pullalacheruvu KGBV and the death of medico Priyanka in Rajahmundry. He demanded strict action against drugs, illicit liquor and crimes against women.

Venugopala Krishna Questions Government on BC Reservations

Tadepalli, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Former Minister and YSRCP leader Chelluboina Venugopala Krishna accused Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu of repeatedly failing Backward Classes (BCs) on reservation issues and creating another political controversy. Addressing the media at the YSRCP central office, Venugopala Krishna said BCs

constitute nearly 52% of Andhra Pradesh's population across 139 communities. He alleged that the previous TDP government disrupted 34% reservation in local bodies. He claimed that during Chandrababu Naidu's 2014-19 tenure, local body elections were delayed amid legal disputes. He said the Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy government later issued G.O. No. 176 seeking restoration of 34% BC reservation, but legal proceedings reduced the quota to around 24%. Venugopala Krishna demanded immediate release of the Rajiv Ranjan Mishra Committee report and clarity on the reservation policy. He alleged that Naidu had promised to restore 34% reservation before the 2024 elections but failed to fulfil the commitment. He said Jagan provided greater political representation to BCs, including 11 ministers, four Rajya Sabha members, 11 MLCs, six MPs and 48 Assembly candidates.

Lakshisha urges farmers to prioritise dryland crops



NTR District, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

NTR District Collector Dr G. Lakshisha urged farmers to prioritise dryland crops and adopt climate-resilient farming practices in view of changing weather conditions and the possibility of El Niño conditions. Participating in the Polam Pilustondi programme at Morusumilli village in Mylavaram mandal on Tuesday, the Collector advised farmers to plan cultivation in advance and use available water resources efficiently. He highlighted the importance of crop insurance in providing financial protection against losses caused by natural calamities and climate-related changes. Dr Lakshisha said PMDS-based cultivation could help reduce soil temperature, retain moisture for longer periods and improve crop

stability. He also encouraged farmers to take up high-value horticultural crops and livestock activities. Promoting natural farming, he said, could reduce cultivation costs, limit the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides and protect soil fertility. The Collector also inspected a PMDS crop field along with agriculture officials. Later, he inspected the PACS fertiliser supply centre at Morusumilli and reviewed stocks and distribution records. The district has 2,532 metric tonnes of urea at PACS centres and 4,148 MT with private dealers. DAP stocks stood at 591 MT at PACS centres and 586 MT with private dealers. He said the AP e-AIMS app was helping improve transparency in fertiliser distribution and assured continuous monitoring throughout the agricultural season.

AP CMO Special Secretary Visits Kanaka Durga Temple



Vijayawada, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Chief Minister's Office (AP) Special Secretary and senior IAS officer A.V. Rajamouli visited the Sri Kanaka Durga Temple atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada on Tuesday and offered prayers to Goddess Durga. Temple officials accorded a warm welcome to Rajamouli upon his arrival. Temple Executive Officer (EO) V.K. Sheena Naik and Sthanacharya V. Sivaprasad Sharma personally supervised the protocol and darshan arrangements to ensure a smooth visit. Rajamouli first had dar-

shan of Goddess Kanaka Durga and performed special prayers at the temple. Following the darshan, Vedic scholars offered him Veda Ashirvachanam. Temple EO Sheena Naik and Special Grade Deputy Collector and Sthanacharya Sivaprasad Sharma presented Rajamouli with the sacred saree and blouse piece of the goddess, along with Teertha Prasadam and a portrait of Goddess Kana ka Durga. The temple authorities said all necessary arrangements were made to facilitate the senior IAS officer's visit without inconvenience. The visit concluded peacefully after the special prayers and blessings.

Man Sets Himself Ablaze at Police Station

Bantumilli, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

A man allegedly attempted suicide by setting himself on fire at the Bantumilli Police Station in Krishna district on Tuesday after expressing dissatisfaction over a Bolero vehicle seized during police checks. According to preliminary information, the injured man is from Kruthivennu. He reportedly poured petrol over himself inside the police station and set himself ablaze. Police and others immediately responded to the incident and shifted him for medical treatment. As he sustained severe burn injuries and his condition was reportedly serious, he was transported to a hospital in Vijayawada in a 108 ambulance for better treatment. Further details regarding the circumstances that led to the incident are awaited.

School Teacher Accused of Assaulting UKG Student

Gannavaram, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Tension prevailed at Sri Pragna English Medium School in Gannavaram following allegations that a Hindi teacher assaulted a five-year-old UKG student inside the classroom. According to the child's parents, the girl, returned home after school with visible red marks and injuries on her body. Shocked by the condition of their daughter, the parents asked her what had happened. The child allegedly told them, while crying, that her Hindi teacher had beaten her on the cheeks and back. The parents expressed deep anguish over the alleged incident and questioned how such treatment could be meted out to a young child in an educational

institution. They alleged that the assault caused physical injuries as well as fear and distress to the student. The incident has reportedly sparked concern among local residents and student groups, who have demanded immediate action against the teacher if the allegations are established. The parents urged education department officials and police to conduct a thorough inquiry and initiate strict legal action against the teacher. They also sought appropriate action against the school management to ensure the safety and security of students and prevent similar incidents in the future. Authorities are expected to examine the allegations and take necessary action based on the findings of the inquiry.

District Officials Stress Road Safety

Vijayawada, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

NTR District Collector Dr G. Lakshisha and Vijayawada Commissioner of Police S.V. Rajasekhara Babu called for greater public awareness about road safety and the PM Rahat scheme to ensure immediate medical assistance to accident victims. At a district-level road safety committee meeting held at the Vijayawada Collectorate on Tuesday, Dr Lakshisha directed officials to widely publicise the scheme. Under PM Rahat, launched by the Centre on February 13, 2026, accident victims can receive cashless treatment of up to Rs.1.50 lakh for a maximum of seven days from the date of the accident.

The Collector also highlighted the Good Samaritan provision, under which a person who helps an accident victim reach a hospital within one hour may be eligible for a Rs.25,000 incentive. He said Good Samaritans need not fear unnecessary legal complications and can leave after admitting the victim and providing essential information. The district recorded 583 road accidents between January and July 2026, a 13.5% decline compared with the corresponding period last year. Dr Lakshisha directed officials to identify black spots and take immediate measures involving road engineering, lighting, signage and traffic control. CP Rajasekhara Babu said pedestrians, two-wheeler riders and elderly people were



particularly vulnerable. He called for intensified drunk-

driving checks and better lighting in accident-prone areas.

Officials said signal lights were operational at 17 loca-

tions, while work was underway at another 25 junctions.

Lakshisha directs Anganwadi staff to ensure quality nutrition

NTR District, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

NTR District Collector Dr G. Lakshisha on Tuesday reviewed child welfare, nutrition, pre-primary education and Aadhaar services during visits to Morusumilli village in Mylavaram mandal and the Vijayawada Collectorate. The Collector first conducted a surprise inspection of an Anganwadi centre in Morusumilli and examined the facilities, nutrition and educational activities being provid-

ed to children. He interacted with the children, enquired about their lessons and observed their responses to various questions. Dr Lakshisha directed Anganwadi staff to ensure quality nutrition and give special attention to children's physical and mental development. He also stressed the need to maintain a clean, pleasant and safe environment and ensure that all eligible children receive government services without gaps. Later, chairing the district-level Aadhaar Monitoring

Committee meeting in Vijayawada, the Collector urged parents to complete mandatory biometric updates for children within the deadline. Children aged 5-7 years and 15-17 years can get the updates free of cost until September 30, 2026. Officials said biometric updates were pending for 68,654 children, including 31,184 in the 5-7 age group and 37,470 aged 15-17. The district has 206 Aadhaar enrolment centres, while 28,821 enrolment and update process-



es were completed during the past month. Dr Lakshisha directed officials to establish

permanent Aadhaar centres at the Collectorate, RDO and Tahsildar offices and conduct

awareness programmes through schools, Anganwadi centres and junior colleges.

Rs 50 cr to contractors to facilitate faster execution of projects : VMC Chief



Vijayawada, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) Commissioner Dhyana chandra reviewed civic issues and development works in the city during separate meetings with public representatives and municipal contractors on Tuesday. A delegation of opposition leaders and representatives met Dhyana chandra and submitted a representation highlighting various civic problems across three Assembly constituencies in Vijayawada. They criticised previous civic administrations for allegedly neglecting development in several parts of the

city over the past decade. The representatives alleged that civic funds were disproportionately spent in areas inhabited by affluent sections while poorer localities remained neglected. They demanded balanced development and improved basic amenities across the city. The delegation also alleged that Vijayawada's growth had been overlooked due to concerns that it could affect Amaravati's development. Dhyana chandra responded positively and assured the delegation that the issues raised would be examined. Later, the Commissioner held a meeting with municipal contractors at the VMC headquar-

ters to review ongoing development works. He said the corporation was prepared to provide around Rs 50 crore to contractors to facilitate faster execution of projects. Dhyana chandra directed contractors to complete works within stipulated deadlines while maintaining quality standards. He also sought details about difficulties faced during project execution and assured them that genuine concerns would be addressed. Naraharshetty, V. Gurnadham, Basheer Ahmed, SA Ansari, MD Baig, Parashuram and Ramana were present during the meetings.

Maris Stella College to Host Alchemy Fair 2026

Vijayawada, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Maris Stella College in Vijayawada organised "Alchemy Fair 2026" through its Department of Chemistry with the theme "Science for Viksit Bharat @ 2047," highlighting the role of science, research and innovation in nation-building. College Principal Dr. Sr. Innyasamma Gade said science has become an integral part of everyday life and stressed the need for students to develop innovative ideas that can contribute to India's development. She encouraged students to cultivate scientific curiosity and explore new

areas of research to help build a developed India by 2047. The chief guest, Lakshmana Suri, Science Promoter and panel member of the Regional Science Centre, interacted with students and spoke about the importance of research, sustainability and innovation. He said India is rapidly emerging as a growing economy in the fields of science, research and technology, and called upon young people to play a greater role in this progress. The fair featured several competitions, scientific demonstrations and innovative models designed to create interest in chemistry and related sciences. Attractions included an Element Quiz,

Salt Identification, Dancing Balls, Liquid Colour Effects, Chemical Blood, Smoke Without Fire, Food Adulteration tests, a Plant Exhibition and Chemical Bond models. Students from various districts participated in the event, while around 500 students from different schools and colleges visited the exhibition. Dr. Vanilatha, Head of the Department of Chemistry, Ms. Santha Kumari, Intermediate Vice-Principal, and other faculty members were present. The organisers said the fair provided students with an opportunity to showcase creativity and gain practical exposure to scientific concepts.



Junior Doctors Rally for Stipend Hike

Guntur, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Junior doctors of the Guntur Government General Hospital (GGH) staged a major rally on Tuesday, demanding an immediate increase in their stipend and resolution of their long-pending issues. The doctors took out a procession from the Ramesh Hospital Signal Junction to the Guntur Collectorate, carrying placards and raising slogans such as "We Want Justice." The demonstration drew attention to the working conditions and financial concerns faced by junior doctors serving in government hospitals. Representatives of the Junior

Doctors' Association said their workload had increased considerably, but their stipends had not been revised in line with rising living costs. They said junior doctors were providing services to patients round the clock and working under intense pressure, but their concerns were not receiving adequate attention from the government. The protesters primarily demanded an immediate hike in stipends to match the rising cost of living. They also sought measures to reduce excessive workload in hospitals and urged the govern-

ment to address three other key issues related to their duties and working conditions. The junior doctors submitted a memorandum to officials at the Collectorate, urging the government to respond promptly and provide clear assurances on their demands. They warned that their agitation would continue until their issues were resolved and called upon the authorities to initiate immediate steps to address their concerns.

Pattabhiram Directs Swift Removal of Legacy Waste

Gudivada, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Swachh Andhra Corporation Chairman Kommareddy Pattabhiram expressed displeasure over the delay by the agency responsible for removing legacy waste at the Gudivada Municipality dumping yard in Krishna district. The accumulated waste has created difficulties for the municipality in disposing of the town's daily garbage. Responding to the issue, Pattabhiram visited the Gudivada municipal office on Tuesday and reviewed the situation with Municipal Commissioner Simhadri Manohar and other officials. During the review, he found that the problem was primarily due to the agency's delay in clearing the legacy waste. Pattabhiram criticised the agency for its negligent approach while the municipality was struggling to accommodate the daily inflow of garbage.



He directed the agency to take immediate measures to remove the accumulated waste and restore proper waste-management operations at the dumping yard. Pattabhiram warned that strict action would be initiated if the legacy waste was not cleared without further delay.

Drone City to Emerge as National Drone Technology Hub

Kurnool, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Union Minister of Civil Aviation Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu said Kurnool Drone City would become the country's first comprehensive drone hub and transform Orvakal from a stone-quarrying centre into a national destination for drone technology. Speaking after visiting exhibition stalls at Orvakal Drone City near Palakolalu and participating in a round-table with drone industry CEOs, the Union Minister said the initiative was launched under the vision of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu. He said the Drone City would integrate manufacturing, research, testing, certification, training, innovation and services.



Rammohan Naidu said facilities including sandbox and testing centres would be established with the Ministry of Civil Aviation, QCI and DGCA. Special attention would be given to BVLOS technology, UTM systems and digitising approvals and certification through eGCA 2.0.

He stressed increasing domestic production of drone components, including motors, controllers, sensors, batteries and communication systems, noting that current indigenisation stood at only 30-35 per cent. He encouraged drone applications in agriculture, healthcare, logistics, cargo, surveillance and law enforcement.

Calling for stronger industry-government collaboration, the Minister urged youth to convert "Drone Shakti" into "Yuva Shakti" and utilise their talent to develop the sector. He expressed confidence that Orvakal Drone City would drive Kurnool's economic growth.

Police Conduct Cordon and Search Operation in Gundreddipalli

Gundreddipalli, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

A cordon and search operation was conducted in Gundreddipalli village of Komarole mandal under the supervision of Giddalur Rural Circle Inspector (CI) J. Ramakotaiah. Sub-Inspectors (SIs) from Komarole and Racherla, along with circle staff, participated in the operation.

Police inspected various parts of the village and interacted with residents, creating awareness about road safety, cybercrimes and theft prevention. Officials advised people to strictly follow traffic regulations and use helmets and seatbelts while travelling. Residents were cautioned against cyber fraud and advised not to respond to



phone calls, links or messages from unknown persons. Police also urged villagers to immediately inform them about suspicious individuals or activities to prevent thefts. CI J. Ramakotaiah said such inspections and awareness programmes would continue regularly under police supervision to ensure public safety and maintain law and order.

Farmers Demand Godavari Water for Krishna Delta



Eluru, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Farmers staged a protest in front of the Water Resources Department Superintending Engineer's (SE) office in Eluru, demanding the supply of Godavari waters to the Krishna Delta to protect standing crops and facilitate paddy cultivation. The protest was organised by the Andhra Pradesh Rythu Sangham. A representation was submitted to Deputy Superintending Engineer P. Dhanunjayulu. Speaking on the occasion, K. Srinivas, District Secretary of the Andhra Pradesh Rythu

Sangham, said Godavari water could be supplied to Krishna Delta ayacut areas in Pedapadu, Eluru and Denduluru mandals. He sought irrigation water for 10,000 acres in Eluru Rural mandal through the Ponangi Puntha canal. He urged authorities to install motors at the East Locks of the Godavari Main Canal to pump water to the delta. He said paddy nurseries were drying up, leaving farmers unable to transplant crops. Kommanna Sambasiva Rao, Talari Jayaraju and several farmers and tenant farmers participated.

Complete Polavaram Displaced Persons' Colonies by December: Collector

Eluru, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

District Collector K. Vetrivel directed officials to complete construction of colonies for first-phase Polavaram Project displaced persons by December and ensure their relocation. She reviewed rehabilitation, colony construction and land acquisition works through a Zoom meeting from the Collectorate on Tuesday. She said the Chief Minister was giving special priority to rehabilitation and instructed officials to meet the deadline. Vetrivel directed officials to complete houses and basic facilities, including roads, drainage, Anganwadi centres, schools, drinking water and electricity, before relocation. Pending land acquisition and "land-for-land" compensation works must also be completed without delay. She warned of departmental action against officials involved in land acquisition irregularities or negligence in construction.



Joint Collector M.J. Abhishek Gowda, SE officials Z. Ramesh and Vijayaratnam, Housing Department PD Satyanarayana, land acquisition officers and Tahsildars participated.

AITUC, CPI Demand Rs.26,000 Minimum Wage, Oppose Labour Law Changes

Eluru, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

AITUC and CPI leaders demanded that the government retain the existing 44 labour laws and establish welfare boards for unorganised sector workers. The demand was raised during a protest near the Eluru Urban Tahsildar's office on Tuesday, organised following the AITUC State Committee's call. The protest was led by AITUC District General Secretary Reddy Srinivas Dange and CPI District Secretary Mannava Krishna Chaitanya, while AITUC Eluru Area Secretary A. Appalaraju presided. A memorandum was submitted to Deputy Tahsildar Gayatri. The leaders opposed replacing 29 labour laws with four labour codes and sought regularisation of outsourcing, contract



and NMR employees, equal pay for equal work and a minimum monthly wage of Rs.26,000. They also demanded minimum wages for scheme workers, reconstitution of the Minimum Wage Board, announcement of the 12th PRC and 30% Interim Relief. AITUC District Vice-President Bandi Venkateswara Rao, Treasurer Puppala Kannababu, CPI Area Secretary Uppu Juri Hemashankar, D. Lakshmanamurthy and B. Narayana Rao participated.

Arya Vysya Leaders Vow to Build YMVA Hall Lift

Rajamahendravaram, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Rajahmundry Arya Vysya Association and TDP leaders expressed strong displeasure over controversies surrounding the proposed lift at the Rajahmundry Model Young Men's Association (YMVA) Hall. They said the lift, intended to help elderly and differently-abled people, would be constructed despite obstacles, including through legal means if necessary. The 75-year-old YMVA Hall conducts social and cultural programmes, monthly free medical camps, old-age pension distribution and free accommodation for poor students. Association members said the lift was being constructed voluntarily with community funds, after acquiring adjacent land for Rs.11 lakh as per regulations.

TDP leader Yunnamuri Deepu alleged that former MP Margani Bharat was creating political obstacles to the service activities of the Arya Vysya Association and YMVA. He criticised Bharat's alleged opposition and said the association would not remain silent. Leaders said municipal officials were examining the documents and assured compliance with all regulations and applicable fees.

Residents Seek Protection for 6-Acre Burial Ground

Chirala, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Residents of Mariyammapeta and neighbouring localities have urged authorities to take immediate action against alleged encroachments on a six-acre vacant site adjoining the century-old burial ground in Perala Mariyammapeta. Residents submitted a petition at the public grievance redressal forum on Tuesday, seeking protection of the land and its allocation for burial ground purposes. According to the residents, the land was purchased and provided by the RCM Church in 1960 to address the shortage of burial space. At the time, around 100 families lived in the area. Residents alleged that some individuals have recently been dumping soil on the adjoining six-acre vacant land and converting it into plots overnight, allegedly with plans to sell them. They urged officials to conduct a comprehensive land survey, prevent further encroachments and safeguard the land for the burial needs of the four localities.

BKMSU to Stage Protests at Tahsildar Offices on August 21

Eluru, Aug 17 | TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh Agricultural Labourers' Union (BKMSU) has announced protests at all mandal Tahsildar offices in Eluru district on August 21, demanding social justice, land rights and dignity for rural poor and agricultural labourers. BKMSU Eluru district president Kancharla Guravaiah and secretary Bandi Venkateswara Rao said the agitation was being organised as part of the State committee's call under the slogan "Change Should Come - We Should Bring Change." They urged agricultural labourers and poor people across the mandals to participate in large numbers. The leaders demanded distribution of cultivable land to landless poor and issuance of title deeds to those cultivating land for several decades. They also sought pattas for podu lands and individual ownership documents for beneficiaries who were allotted land through VSS. Among other demands, they sought three cents of house-site land for every homeless poor family and Rs.5 lakh financial assistance for house construction. The organisation also demanded continuation of the MGNREGA Act, 2005, in its existing form and called for the withdrawal of the Centre's Viksit Bharat-G RAM G scheme. The BKMSU leaders appealed to people to participate in the August 21 protests in large numbers and make the agitation a success.

CBI Arrests Mines Safety Officer in Rs.2 Lakh Bribery Case

Ongole, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

The CBI arrested Mines Department Safety Officer and Deputy Director Shivashankar in Ongole on Tuesday while allegedly accepting a Rs.2 lakh bribe from a granite quarry owner. According to CBI officials, mine owner Siddha Venkata Suresh and intermediary Subhaskar Reddy were also arrested in connection with the case. The arrests followed an accident at a granite quarry in Chimakurthi, Prakasam district, on June 26. The quarry owners allegedly sought a favourable report from Shivashankar to avoid responsibility for the accident.

The CBI alleged that Shivashankar, who had inspected the quarry after travelling from the Hyderabad office, had already received Rs.1 lakh in June. An agreement was subsequently reached through Subhaskar Reddy for an additional Rs.2 lakh. After learning of Shivashankar's visit to Prakasam district, CBI officials laid a trap and caught him while accepting the bribe.

All three accused were produced before the CBI Court in Vijayawada. Searches were also conducted at their residences in Kadapa, Hyderabad and Prakasam. The CBI registered cases against quarry partner Siddha Sudhir Kumar, manager Surendra and others.

Bandaru Satyananda Rao Seeks Support for Coconut Farmers

Amravati, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Kothapeta MLA Bandaru Satyananda Rao urged the government to extend comprehensive support to coconut farmers in Konaseema and promote industries based on coconut by-products. Speaking during Question Hour in the Assembly, he said farmers were facing financial difficulties due to inadequate income despite the region's importance in coconut cultivation. He requested Agriculture and District In-charge Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaaidu to support rejuvenation of aging coconut plantations through the Agriculture Department and establish a regional coconut office. He welcomed schemes for new saplings and urged promotion of intercrops to increase farmers' income.



Satyananda Rao also welcomed Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu's announcement of Rs.3,000 crore for Godavari Delta modernisation. He said the nearly 150-year-old canals, drains, locks and shutters required urgent improvement. He noted that 36 projects worth Rs.35,555 crore were planned by December 2028, benefiting 19.16 lakh acres. He thanked Chandrababu Naidu and Water Resources Minister Nimmala Rama Naidu.

Education Reforms Needed to Protect Telugu, Says Yarlagadda Venkatrao



Gannavaram, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Gannavaram MLA and Government Whip Yarlagadda Venkatrao said changes in the education system were essential to protect and promote Telugu. Speaking in the Assembly, he thanked Chief Minister for allocating Rs.10 crore for Telugu language development and praised Education Minister Nara Lokesh for education reforms. Yarlagadda highlighted initiatives including Mega DSC recruitment of 16,347 posts, Dokka Seethamma Mid-Day Meal Scheme and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Vidya Mitra. He said AI-

based education, smart classrooms and digital teaching were improving government schools, with the 10th-grade pass percentage reaching 85.25%. However, he expressed concern that 37,679 students failed Telugu in recent 10th-grade examinations. He urged changes in teaching methods, question papers and examination patterns to improve interest and performance. He also sought a committee of educationists and Telugu teachers to recommend reforms and stressed the collective responsibility of preserving the mother tongue for future generations.

Senior Journalist Devulapalli Ramalingam Dies at 60

Kakinada, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Senior journalist and Velugu editor Devulapalli Ramalingam, 60, died at a hospital in Kakinada on Tuesday after nearly four decades in journalism. He is survived by his wife and two daughters. Born in Kirkampudi in the erstwhile East Godavari district, Ramalingam began his career with Andhra Bhoomi in 1985 and later worked with Deccan Chronicle until 1998. He subsequently joined Udayam as a staff reporter and worked across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. In 2002, he launched Velugu in

Rajamahendravaram and served as its editor. Known for his simplicity, honesty, courage and extensive knowledge, he worked for journalists' welfare and reportedly used ancestral property to sustain the newspaper. He maintained close associations with Mudragada Padma nabham, Jakkampudi Rammohan Rao, Gora ntl Butchiah Chowdary, Adireddy Apparao and former MP Undavalli Arun Kumar. Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan condoled his death.

Ongole Municipal Revenue Inspector Caught Taking Rs.15,000 Bribe



Ongole, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) officials caught Srungarapu Venkata Narendra, 53, Junior Assistant, E1 and EE Clerk, and In-charge Revenue Inspector of Ongole Municipal Corporation, while allegedly accepting a Rs.15,000 bribe on Tuesday. Based on a complaint from Dadani Ramesh Reddy, 26, of Indira Colony, Ongole, the ACB registered a case against Narendra under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2018. The trap was conducted around 1.40 p.m. at the Ongole Municipal Corporation office.

Narendra allegedly demanded the bribe to process Ramesh Reddy's pending file concerning enhancement of property tax and change of house title. Narendra joined Ongole Municipality as a Record Assistant in 1994 and became a Junior Assistant in 2001. He had worked in Ongole Municipal Corporation since 2011 and was handling Revenue Inspector duties for wards 23 to 28. The ACB said Narendra was earlier booked in a disproportionate assets case in 2017, which is pending before the ACB Special Court, Nellore. The public can report corruption at 1064 or 9440440057.

34% BC Reservation Restoration Historic: Mahesh Yadav

Eluru, Aug 18 | TPN Bureau

State TDP Secretary and Director of the State Yadav Corporation Penuboyina Mahesh Yadav thanked the Andhra Pradesh government for restoring 34% reservation for BCs in local body elections. He called the decision historic, saying it would strengthen the political and social empowerment of the BC community. Mahesh Yadav thanked Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu for

safeguarding BC representation, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan for supporting BC rights, and IT and Education Minister Nara Lokesh for promoting the community's education, employment and political future. He said the restored reservation would create opportunities for BC leaders to advance socially and politically. He added that BC communities across Andhra Pradesh would remain grateful to the coalition government for the decision.

Editorial

The World's Costlier Money

The global economy is confronting an uncomfortable new reality: borrowing is becoming expensive again. Long-term government bond yields in the United States, Japan and Germany have climbed to levels not seen in many years, signalling that investors are demanding greater compensation for holding long-dated debt. The US 30-year Treasury yield touched its highest level since 2007, while Japanese and European yields have also surged. This is more than a bond-market story. It is a warning about the price of accumulated debt. Governments emerged from the pandemic with enormous borrowing burdens. Instead of allowing debt to fall substantially, many economies are now facing fresh spending pressures - from defence and energy security to infrastructure and the costly race to build artificial-intelligence capacity. The OECD estimates that governments and companies will borrow \$29 trillion from bond markets in 2026, 17% more than in 2024. The danger is a difficult cycle. Higher borrowing costs increase governments' interest bills. Larger interest payments can widen fiscal deficits, requiring still more borrowing. Heavy issuance, in turn, can push yields higher. Inflation adds another layer of risk. Geopolitical tensions and elevated oil prices can revive price pressures just as central banks are trying to restore monetary stability. The IMF has warned that higher commodity prices could raise inflation and unsettle inflation expectations. Yet declaring the arrival of a permanent debt-and-inflation era would be premature. Inflation is not rising everywhere, and higher yields can also reflect healthier market pricing after years of exceptionally cheap money. The real problem is whether governments use expensive capital wisely. For India, the lesson is particularly relevant. A world of higher global yields can influence capital flows, currency markets and financing costs. Fiscal prudence, credible monetary policy, deeper domestic capital markets and productive public investment will therefore matter more than ever. The era when governments could borrow almost effortlessly is fading. The challenge is not to fear higher interest rates, but to recognise their message: debt must ultimately be supported by growth, productivity and fiscal credibility. The world may not be entering a permanent inflationary age. But it is certainly entering an age in which money has regained a price - and governments can no longer afford to ignore it.

Editor

The Midnight That Chose India's Destiny



India's freedom hour was more than a political deadline-it was a moment invested with history, symbolism and traditional astrological significance. India became independent at the stroke of midnight on August 15, 1947. At first glance, midnight may seem a strange hour for the birth of a nation. It is associated with darkness, not daylight; with endings, not beginnings. Yet India's midnight carried a deeper symbolism: one era was ending and another was beginning. There was also a traditional Indian dimension to the choice of that hour. According to accounts of the period, the timing of independence was examined through the principles of muhūrta, the ancient practice of selecting an auspicious time for an important undertaking. An Auspicious Hour

Prominent astrologers, including Pandit Hardev Sharma Trivedi of Solon and Pandit Suryanarayan Vyas of Ujjain,

are traditionally associated with the selection and confirmation of India's independence muhūrta. The midnight moment was reportedly considered in relation to Pushya nakshatra and the auspicious Abhijit period/lagna. For a civilization that has long given importance to choosing the right moment for a marriage, a journey, a housewarming or a sacred ceremony, the birth of an independent nation was hardly an ordinary event. The timing, therefore, may be seen not merely as a matter of political convenience but also as a culturally meaningful beginning. Why Midnight? Midnight was a perfect symbolic threshold. At one instant, British sovereignty ended; at the next, India stood as a free nation. Darkness itself became metaphorical: the night represented the long colonial past, while the coming dawn represented the promise

of freedom. Jawaharlal Nehru's celebrated "Tryst with Destiny" speech captured precisely this sense of national awakening. India did not wait for sunrise to become free. It entered freedom at midnight and awaited the sunrise as a free nation. The Pakistan Contrast The story becomes more intriguing when the founding moments of India and Pakistan are compared. According to traditional accounts, Muhammad Ali Jinnah wanted Pakistan's independence to be proclaimed a few hours before India's, with the timing associated with Mesha Lagna, or Aries ascendant. Pakistan consequently marked its independence on August 14, while India formally entered independence at midnight leading into August 15. Astrologers and believers in national horoscopes have subsequently pointed to the con-

P Subba Rao

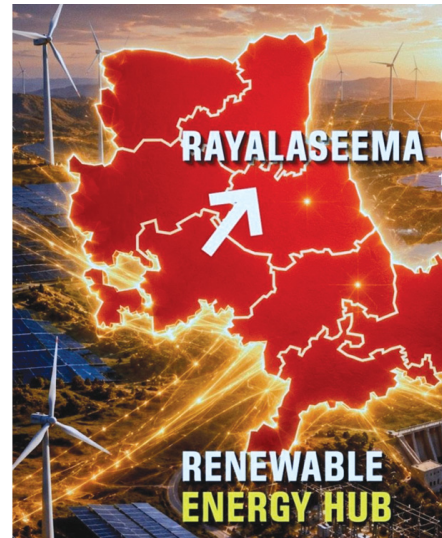


Veteran Journalist

trasting founding moments of the two countries. But history offers a more tangible comparison. Pakistan Divided in 1971 Pakistan encountered serious political and constitutional difficulties soon after independence. The geographical separation of East and West Pakistan was compounded by linguistic, economic, cultural and political differences. These tensions eventually culminated in the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, resulting in the creation of Bangladesh. Thus, within only 24 years of independence, Pakistan had lost its eastern wing. It would be simplistic to say that an astrological muhūrta caused this outcome. The historical causes are well established: political instability, unequal representation, regional disparities, linguistic conflict and the failure to build an enduring political compact. Yet the contrast remains fascinating for those who believe that the founding moment of a nation carries symbolic astrological significance. India: Tested but Intact India, too, faced formidable challenges. Partition brought terrible violence and mass displacement. The new country inherited poverty, illiteracy, communal tensions and the enormous task of integrating princely states. Later came wars, separatist movements, insurgencies, linguistic agitations and repeated political crises. Yet India remained intact. Its linguistic diversity did not lead to its disintegration. Instead, linguistic states were accommodated within the federal structure. Regional aspirations were often negotiated

through elections, constitutional mechanisms and democratic politics. India's achievement, therefore, has not been uniformity but unity in diversity. Muhūrta and the Larger Lesson Astrology cannot replace history, nor can a horoscope alone explain the destiny of a nation. Nations survive through institutions, leadership, social cohesion, democratic participation and the ability to accommodate differences. Yet the midnight muhūrta remains an intriguing part of India's independence story because it reflects an ancient civilizational belief: the beginning matters. The real miracle, however, was not simply being born at an auspicious hour. It was surviving the hours that followed. India's independence began at midnight, but the nation had to build its future through decades of struggle, adaptation and democratic endurance. The Final Paradox Pakistan was born alongside India, yet its eastern half broke away in 1971. India, despite its extraordinary diversity and repeated challenges, remained one Union. Perhaps the enduring message of August 15, 1947, is therefore not that astrology predetermined India's destiny. It is that an auspicious beginning gains meaning only when a nation possesses the wisdom, resilience and unity to honour it. India was born at midnight-but its real achievement was learning how to remain together until dawn. (Based on literary luminary Dr Tekumalla Venkatappayya's eye-opening Telugu article in Andhra Jyothi Telugu daily)

"From Drought to Gigawatts: Rayalaseema's Billion-Dollar Rebirth"



For generations, Rayalaseema was synonymous with drought, agrarian distress, migration, and economic deprivation. Its harsh climate was viewed as a structural disadvantage that constrained growth and compelled millions to seek livelihoods elsewhere. Today, however, the region stands at the threshold of one of India's most remarkable economic reversals. The relentless sunshine that once symbolized hardship is emerging as its most valuable natural resource. With renewable energy proposals exceeding ₹1.32 lakh crore, over 20.7 GW of confirmed capacity in the pipeline, and an estimated long-term potential of nearly 80 GW, Rayalaseema is rapidly transforming from a water-scarce hinterland into one of India's most strategic clean-energy frontiers. The region is no longer asking how to survive; it is preparing to define the future of India's energy economy. Few regions in Asia possess such a powerful convergence of renewable resources. The districts of Kadapa, Kurnool, Nandyal, and Anantapur combine exceptional solar irradiation, favourable wind corridors, abundant topography for pumped-storage hydropower, and vast land availability. Current investment proposals alone account for approximately 20,731 MW of renewable capacity involving investments of nearly ₹1,32,939 crore, with the potential to generate close to 40,000 direct jobs and several times more indirect employment. Kadapa is emerging as India's pumped-storage powerhouse with more than 12 GW of planned capacity, while Kurnool contributes nearly 6 GW through integrated solar and wind projects. Nandyal is evolving into a major hub for Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), creating a diversified clean-energy ecosystem rather than isolated power projects. The momentum is already visible on the



ground. The 600 MW Sael Solar Project has demonstrated that globally competitive renewable infrastructure can be executed rapidly in Rayalaseema. International investors are responding with confidence. Evren, the Brookfield-Axis Energy joint venture, plans nearly 9 GW of renewable assets. The Hinduja Group has announced investments of around ₹20,000 crore, while ReNew has proposed projects worth nearly ₹60,000 crore. These investments align with Andhra Pradesh's ambitious target of achieving 72 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2029, positioning Rayalaseema as the state's principal engine of green growth. This is not merely capital flowing into infrastructure; it is global confidence flowing into a region once considered economically peripheral. The true significance of renewable energy lies not in electricity generation alone but in its ability to catalyse industrial transformation. Affordable, reliable, and carbon-free power is rapidly becoming the world's most valuable industrial input. The ₹16,350 crore JSW Green Steel Plant at Kadapa exemplifies this new industrial paradigm, where renewable electricity powers low-carbon steel manufacturing using Electric Arc Furnace technology. Such projects can trigger an industrial ecosystem spanning green hydrogen, battery manufacturing, semiconductor packaging, electronics assembly, electric mobility components, fertilizers, advanced materials, and artificial intelligence-enabled data centres. Instead of exporting raw electricity, Rayalaseema can export high-value manufactured products, integrating itself into global supply chains driven increasingly by sustainability and carbon-neutral production standards. The economic consequences extend well beyond industrial output. For decades, Rayalaseema export-



ed its most valuable resource-its people. Migration became an economic necessity rather than a choice. The renewable economy offers the opportunity to reverse this historic trend. Construction, operations, engineering services, logistics, equipment manufacturing, digital monitoring, maintenance, hospitality, and technical consulting together create a broad employment ecosystem. Farmers gain stable, long-term lease income while retaining land ownership. Universities and technical institutions can evolve into centres of excellence for renewable engineering, energy storage, hydrogen technologies, and grid management. Local entrepreneurs gain opportunities in fabrication, transportation, maintenance, and specialized services, allowing prosperity to spread through multiple layers of the regional economy

Dr Arja Srikanth, IAS



Special Commissioner, Andhra Pradesh Bhavan, New Delhi

instead of remaining confined to large corporations. Yet ambition alone will not guarantee success. Renewable generation without robust transmission infrastructure risks creating stranded assets. The proposed ₹28,436 crore Green Energy Corridor is therefore as important as the power plants themselves. Efficient evacuation infrastructure linking Rayalaseema with coastal industrial clusters and the national grid will determine whether renewable capacity translates into economic value. Equally important are investments in Battery Energy Storage Systems, more than 12 GW of pumped-storage facilities, smart-grid technologies, artificial intelligence-based forecasting, and modern transmission architecture. Land governance also requires decisive reforms to ensure that allotted projects achieve timely financial closure and execution, preventing speculative land holding from obstructing serious investment. Global

importance of transparent approvals and time-bound project implementation. Rajasthan has successfully institutionalized farmer-friendly land lease models that combine investor confidence with rural prosperity. Andhra Pradesh has the opportunity to synthesize these international best practices with its Integrated Clean Energy Policy, creating perhaps India's most efficient and globally competitive renewable investment ecosystem centred in Rayalaseema. Rayalaseema's renewable transformation is therefore not simply an energy story; it is a civilizational shift in regional development. It represents the replacement of scarcity with abundance, migration with opportunity, and climatic adversity with strategic advantage. Clean energy can become the foundation upon which advanced manufacturing, green steel, hydrogen, electronics, artificial intelligence infrastructure, and climate-resilient industries flourish simultaneously. Future



lease income while retaining land ownership. Universities and technical institutions can evolve into centres of excellence for renewable engineering, energy storage, hydrogen technologies, and grid management. Local entrepreneurs gain opportunities in fabrication, transportation, maintenance, and specialized services, allowing prosperity to spread through multiple layers of the regional economy

experience offers a clear roadmap. California has demonstrated how large-scale battery storage can stabilize renewable-rich grids. China has shown the transformative role of pumped-storage hydro in balancing intermittent energy generation. Germany has pioneered digital forecasting systems that optimize renewable integration, while Gujarat has illustrated the

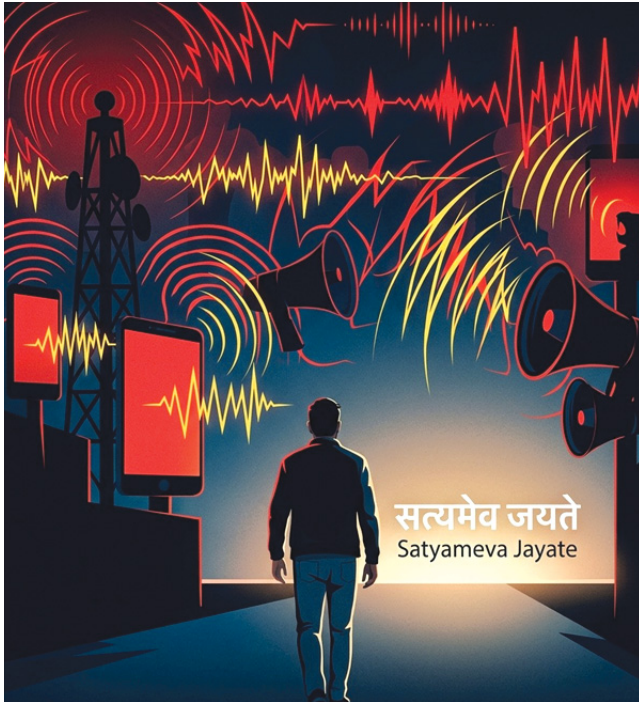
historians may conclude that Rayalaseema's greatest natural resource was never hidden beneath its soil but shining above it every day. If visionary policy, world-class infrastructure, and disciplined execution converge, the region will not merely illuminate Andhra Pradesh-it will power India's green industrial revolution and emerge as one of Asia's defining clean-energy economies.

The 'Panic Industry' is Trying Its Best to Derail Democracy

Winston Churchill once remarked to Joseph Stalin that, in wartime, truth is so precious it should always be attended by a "bodyguard of lies". As a prelude to today's reflections, allow me to share another of Churchill's quotes from his war memoirs: "Truth is incontrovertible. Panic may resent it, ignorance may deride it, malice may distort it, but there it is". Every citizen in India is aware that the Modi government operates on a singular, proclaimed agenda: "SabkaSaath, Sabka Vikas". If we, as citizens, help this administration turn this visionary statement into a reality, India will swiftly achieve the status of a developed nation, effectively consigning poverty to the history books. As far as my understanding, we do not have time to slay or send out any of our citizens just because they belong to minority. The land's 1000s of years history confirms it. But why this Panic is in manufacturing? The Illusion of a "Democratic Slide" Yet, what is the ground reality? India currently possesses a stable, mindful government, but it is confronted by a power-hungry opposition. This opposition daydreams that their falsehoods will soon masquerade as truth, forcing the current government to step down so they can return to power and plunder the country once again. I wager that few of my

readers hold a differing opinion. However, should anyone harbor doubts, let us recall some of the darkest chapters of Indian history authored by the present opposition when they held the reins of power. Are we experiencing now, anything like the below? Consider this a ruthless investigation into the popular narrative that Indian democracy has been on a downward slide since 2014. We are currently undertaking an expansive historical review to challenge what I term the "manufactured panic industry". The reality is that the most egregious violations of India's democratic fabric were normalized decades before the current political era. If you can be convinced that everything before 2014 was a democratic paradise, you can be steered in whichever direction they desire. But India's 80-year democratic history is not so ancient that the generations who lived through it have forgotten. The evidence is heavily documented, often cemented in court verdicts. The self-proclaimed "angels of democracy" sitting on the opposition benches—who were explicitly denied power by the voting masses—now wield their smartphones like magic wands to spread white lies and panic. Even, VandeMataram full version now is portrayed as a tool to bring panic to the marginalized society.

A Lineage of Censorship and State Overreach Let us take aim at the fallacy that institutional erosion is a recent phenomenon. The current atmosphere of falsehood meticulously masks a long lineage of censorship, state overreach, and political violence, beginning with the very First Constitutional Amendment in 1951. Championed by India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, this amendment actively restricted free speech after the Supreme Court interpreted liberties far too generously for the government's liking. Let's recall the 1949 2-year-jailing of the famous lyricist MajroohSultanpuri simply because he refused to apologize for calling Nehru a "slave of the Commonwealth". Seventy-seven years later, I ask the reader to reconcile that history with the question of whether or not we are enjoying true freedom of speech today. If Modi takes every offensive comment against him and his mother said recently by activists in the manner of Nehru, what we could witness in the streets. But he pardons all of them and requested to follow our culture. The messiahs of deception, who actively seek to trigger panic among non-Hindu communities by claiming a loss of independence and free will, must revisit the 1975 Emergency under Indira



Gandhi. This was not a "brief unpleasantness," but the near-death of the Republic. Over 110,000 citizens were detained without trial, the fundamental writ of habeas corpus was stripped away alongside severe press censorship. The brutal forced sterilization campaign spearheaded by Sanjay Gandhi—who held no official office—must be categorized as one of the largest absolute injustices of its kind globally. In one of the incidents during emergency, men were cornered at 3:00 a.m. in Haryana to be sterilized; among the

victims was a 16-year-old boy. He might still be alive today to bear witness to these atrocities, even as today's "angels of peace" shout panic over fabricated lies. Political Violence and Manufactured Narratives Furthermore, has anyone missed the manufactured narrative of "Hindu Terrorists" and the fear-mongering that minority religions are at stake under the RSS-advised NDA government? Over the 100 years of RSS, can you spot one. Let us draw chilling parallels between the 1948 anti-



Ram Kamal

Social Engineer

Chitpavan Brahmin (Godse's community) massacres following Mahatma Gandhi's assassination and the 1984 anti-Sikh massacres in Delhi. Both were orchestrated by the peaceful political ancestors of today's opposition. In both instances, an organized political machinery systematically targeted specific communities while the state stood down. As it has been rightly noted in recent reviews, Rajiv Gandhi's infamous justification of the 1984 massacres was not a slip of the tongue; it was a doctrine. Gandhi justified the violence following Indira Gandhi's assassination by stating, "when a mighty tree falls, it is natural for the surrounding ground to shake". To genuinely protect Indian democracy, we require a powerful judicial body capable of reconciling the white lies spread to the public and penalizing the panic creators. This body should ensure that our national motto is reflected in every action of a public servant. Our motto is "Satyameva Jayate", which translates to "Truth alone triumphs". It is the fundamental duty of every citizen to abstain from propagating lies that inflict harm upon the nation's

pride. One critical question remains. Did the government truly "bow" to the recent student protests? As an independent observer, I argue the answer lies in the science of statecraft. A visionary government understands Gustave Le Bon's Contagion Theory, which dictates that crowds exert a hypnotic, volatile influence over their members. Like a virus, irrational behaviors and aggressive impulses spread rapidly within a mob, completely overriding individual reason. This engineered hysteria was weaponized during the protests. Young minds were deliberately manipulated by fabricated narratives and a bogus hunger strike, even after the administration flawlessly reconducted the NEET exams in record time. Faced with this orchestrated chaos, the government's decision to withdraw was not submission, but a preemptive strike against mob mentality. It takes immense political courage to execute a tactical retreat. Only the truly brave leaders step back to prevent calamity, paving the way for future action with clear and unyielding resolve. *Tomorrow: When will our democracy mature?*

Gujarat CM Woos US Tech Giants for Investments

San Francisco: Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel has pitched the state as a global technology and innovation hub during his official visit to the United States, holding discussions with major industry leaders and investors in Silicon Valley. Patel, leading a high-level state delegation, met more than 100 executives from sectors including semiconductors, artificial intelligence, deep-tech, HealthTech, EdTech, gaming and cybersecurity. He is the first Gujarat Chief Minister to visit the United States in 25 years. During roundtable discussions and one-on-one meetings, Patel urged global companies to look beyond traditional investments and consider Gujarat as a long-term strategic partner for supply chains, research and development, and emerging technologies. He highlighted the strong connection between Silicon Valley's innovation ecosystem and Gujarat's



industrial infrastructure. Patel said his government was committed to providing end-to-end support to companies, covering research and development, manufacturing facilities and international expansion. The Chief Minister said the success of a next-generation technology hub depends on several key factors, including land, reliable power, global connectivity, capital, skilled talent and policy stability. He said Gujarat was prepared to

provide these requirements to companies looking to expand their operations. The delegation also invited leading technology companies to participate in the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit scheduled for January 2027. During discussions with Analog Devices, the delegation focused on manufacturing requirements, including stable operating conditions and uninterrupted power supplies for advanced wafer fabrication facilities. The semiconductor company, which already employs more than 300 professionals in Gujarat in collaboration with Tata Electronics, reaffirmed its commitment to expanding its technology footprint in India. Talks with Modutek Corporation focused on opportunities to establish wafer-fab support equipment, advanced manufacturing facilities and research and development centres at Sanand and GIFT City. The delegation also met represen-

tatives of Applied Materials to explore opportunities in talent development, process innovation and bringing the company's wider value-chain partners to Gujarat. Gujarat's established chemical manufacturing sector was highlighted as an advantage for producing specialty chemicals and advanced materials required for semiconductor fabrication. TDK Ventures discussed potential collaborations with Gujarat-based startups in advanced materials and artificial intelligence. The delegation also held discussions with the Wadhvani Foundation on plans to establish a dedicated Wadhvani Innovation Centre and strengthen vocational training across institutions in the state. The meetings are part of Gujarat's wider effort to attract high-technology investments and strengthen its position as a destination for advanced manufacturing, research, innovation and global technology partnerships.

Vijay Office Shift Plan Sparks Tender Row

Chennai: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay's plan to shift the Chief Minister's Office from Fort St. George to Namakkal Kavingar Maaligai in Chennai has triggered a political controversy, with the BJP alleging irregularities in the tender process. Vijay is planning to move his office to the new location to provide more workspace for officers and staff. Construction work is reportedly already underway, while the government has floated a tender worth around Rs 5.5 crore for the proposed shift. The BJP has raised questions over the timing of the tender, alleging that it was issued nearly a month after construction work had already begun. BJP leader CR Kesavan described the controversy as the first major corruption allegation against the three-month-old TVK government. Kesavan said the reported irregularities were contrary to the government's claims of ensuring transparency in public tenders. He alleged that the tender process had come under scrutiny even within the first 100 days of the new government taking office. DMK MLA EV Velu also sought clarification from the government over the tender controversy. He said shifting the Chief Minister's Office was Vijay's personal choice and that there was no reason to oppose it. Velu, however, said reports of irregularities in the tender process needed to be addressed. He pointed to reports claiming that the tender was not floated online and that the process began only after work had already started at the proposed office site. Tamil Nadu Minister Aadhav Arjuna rejected the allegations, calling the reports false. He said the decision to temporarily shift the Chief Minister's Office was primarily aimed at providing better working conditions for Vijay's officers and staff. According to Arjuna, some members of the Chief Minister's team are currently working in offices measuring less than 100 square feet. He said the proposed arrangement would provide them with a more comfortable and functional workspace. Arjuna also defended Vijay's personal style, describing him as a simple and flexible leader who could work from modest surroundings during election campaigns. The minister further said former chief ministers M Karunanidhi and J Jayalalitha had considered plans to establish a new Secretariat but could not implement them because of political circumstances. He argued that the existing administrative complex has served the state for more than a century and needs to be updated to meet the requirements of modern governance. Arjuna assured that the tender process for the new office would remain transparent. He said the government would prevent the involvement of benami companies and ensure that public money was protected. The controversy is now likely to put the government under greater scrutiny over proposed office relocation and the Rs 5.5-crore tender.



Stolen Antique Idol Returns to Tamil Nadu After Nearly 50 Years

Chennai: A 16th-century bronze idol of Thirumangai Alwar, one of the 12 poet-saints of the Vaishnavite tradition, has returned to Tamil Nadu nearly five decades after it was stolen from the Soundararajaperumal Temple near Kumbakonam. The idol was presented to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay at the Secretariat on Tuesday by Director General of Police Mahesh Kumar Agarwal. The 60-cm-tall bronze idol had been taken from the temple along with three other idols - Kalinganarthanar Krishna, Vishnu and Sri Devi. The temple authorities reported the idols missing in February 2020, following which the Idol Wing-CID of the Tamil Nadu Police launched an investigation. The probe traced the Thirumangai Alwar idol to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, while the other three idols were located in museums and collections in the United States.

The Kalinganarthanar Krishna idol was traced to the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, the Sri Devi idol to the Florida-based Hill Auction Gallery and the Vishnu idol to the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas. The idols are suspected to have been stolen from the temple around 1967. The Ashmolean Museum had acquired the Thirumangai Alwar idol through a Sotheby's auction in 1967. At the time, the idol was reportedly owned by Swiss private collector J R Belmont, who had visited India during the 1950s. The Idol Wing-CID presented evidence establishing the Indian origin and temple connection of the bronze idol to the Ashmolean Museum. Officials also worked with the Union Ministries of Home Affairs, External Affairs and Culture, as well as the Archaeological Survey authorities, to facilitate its repatriation. After prolonged efforts, the idol



was formally handed over to Indian authorities on March 3 at a ceremony held at the Indian High Commission in London. The bronze idol arrived in Tamil Nadu on August 16 and was subsequently taken to the Secretariat by DGP Mahesh Kumar Agarwal and Additional DGP, Idol Wing-CID, D Kalpana Naik. The return of the antique idol marks a significant achievement for Tamil Nadu's efforts to recover

temple artefacts that were taken out of the country decades ago. Authorities are continuing efforts to trace the remaining idols and facilitate their return to India. After completion of the required legal and administrative formalities, the recovered Thirumangai Alwar idol is expected to be restored to the temple, where it will be preserved and worshipped as part of its religious and cultural heritage.

Rahul Gandhi Hits Back at Rijiju Over Protest Remarks

New Delhi: Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi has hit back at Union Minister Kiren Rijiju over his remarks on the student protests in Delhi, accusing the government of denying injuries suffered during the demonstrations. Gandhi, in a post on X on Tuesday, shared a video of Rijiju's comments and said he had personally met several students who



were injured during the protests. He alleged that excessive force was used when students marched towards Parliament on July 20 while demanding the resignation of then Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. "Ministers of the Modi government are saying that the Delhi Police should be praised," Gandhi said, alleging that pellet guns were fired at peaceful protesters and that police used lathis studded with nails. He further claimed that one child lost an eye and a girl suffered a serious ear injury. Gandhi said thousands of videos showing the protest action had been circulated across the country and argued that the government could not erase what had happened by denying the allegations. "The truth is that the biggest danger to this country comes from these empty-headed people, who neither see their own mistakes nor admit them," Gandhi alleged. He also accused the government of first using force against students and then claiming that no serious incident had occurred. "Don't lie to the children of this country. They have eyes and memories too," he said. Rijiju Defends Police Action Rijiju, who holds the Minority Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs portfolios, defended the Delhi Police during an interview with news agency ANI. He said no protester had died or suffered a broken bone during the demonstrations and claimed that no protester had been admitted to hospital with serious injuries. Rijiju said thousands of people had participated in the protests and alleged that individuals from various political groups had joined the demonstrations and attempted to provoke violence. He contrasted the incident with protests held when the Congress was in power, claiming that thousands of people had been killed during such demonstrations in the past. The minister said the Delhi Police and administration deserved praise for handling the large gathering without any deaths or serious injuries. Rijiju also rejected claims that excessive force had been used, saying the protesters were stopped only after they attempted to march towards Parliament. He maintained that the police acted to maintain order and protect public safety. The exchange has intensified the political dispute over the July student protests, with the Opposition challenging the government's account of the police action and the Centre defending the conduct of security personnel.

Dipke Seeks Mandatory Government Schooling for Officials' Children

Hingoli: CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke has called for making it mandatory for children of education department officials to study in government schools, arguing that such a move would force authorities to address the problems facing the state's public education system. Speaking to reporters at Limbala in Maharashtra's Hingoli district on Tuesday, Dipke criticised the state government for failing to provide adequate transport facilities for students in rural areas. He said ministers, MLAs and MPs should also send their children to village schools for at least one day so they

could understand the difficulties faced by rural students. Dipke said many children in remote areas are forced to walk between seven and 10 kilometres to reach school. The situation becomes more difficult during the monsoon, when roads are often muddy and waterlogged. He was speaking after launching the "School Thik Karo" campaign last week to highlight problems in government schools. Earlier, Dipke had shared a video allegedly showing the headmaster of a Zilla Parishad school drinking and sleeping inside a classroom. Authorities suspended the teacher



on Tuesday. However, Dipke said the teacher would remain in the village until a replacement was appointed. He said the school required four teachers but currently had only two and demanded that the government immediately fill the vacancies. Dipke also alleged that villagers had complained about

the headmaster's conduct nearly two years ago, but education department officials failed to take action. He demanded accountability from officials responsible for supervising government schools. He argued that education officials often send their own children to private schools while failing to ensure proper facilities, adequate teachers and discipline in government schools. Dipke also criticised political leaders for arranging buses and trains to transport supporters to election rallies while failing to provide transport for poor students who struggle to reach school.

Infosys Signs AI Deal With Germany's Knorr-Bremse

Infosys has entered into a strategic, long-term partnership with Germany-based Knorr-Bremse AG to modernise the company's enterprise IT operations using next-generation artificial intelligence. The partnership will be managed under Knorr-Bremse's Tech4Value (T4V) IT transformation programme. Under the agreement, Infosys will provide end-to-end managed services across Knorr-Bremse's enterprise application ecosystem, covering both its Rail and Commercial Vehicle divisions. The partnership is aimed at simplifying and modernising the company's technology landscape while creating a more value-driven and future-ready IT operating model. According to Infosys, the programme will cover the full business application stack, ranging from enterprise resource planning (ERP) and data platforms to engineering applications and product lifecycle management systems. The companies expect the transformation to improve service quality for Knorr-Bremse's global workforce while strengthening operational resilience, compliance and IT service governance. The

modernised technology environment is also expected to support faster innovation cycles, improve employee experience and strengthen collaboration among engineering teams. Infosys said the partnership will help Knorr-Bremse scale its international Rail and Commercial Vehicle businesses more efficiently. The technology transformation is also expected to provide a stronger foundation for future digital initiatives across the organisation. As part of the engagement, Infosys will combine its expertise in SAP, data, engineering and Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) with AI-powered capabilities from Infosys Topaz. The companies plan to use generative AI and agentic AI technologies to move beyond conventional managed services. The focus will be on AI-led automation aimed at delivering measurable business outcomes and sustained productivity improvements. By integrating AI into enterprise applications and IT operations, the partnership seeks to reduce manual processes and improve the efficiency of critical technology systems.



Satheeskaran Navaratnam, Chief Digital Officer and VP of Transformation & Governance IT at Knorr-Bremse, said the company's Tech4Value programme is designed to create a more agile, efficient and scalable IT environment. He said the partnership with Infosys would help optimise and strengthen Knorr-Bremse's technology estate so that it can keep pace with changing business requirements. Jasmeet Singh, Executive Vice President and Global Head of Manufacturing at

Infosys, said resilient, efficient and high-performing enterprise applications are essential for global manufacturers operating in safety-critical industries. The partnership comes as manufacturers increasingly turn to AI and digital technologies to modernise operations, improve productivity and strengthen competitiveness. For Knorr-Bremse, the programme is expected to create a technology foundation capable of supporting long-term growth and innovation across its global operations.

Markets Extend Losing Streak as Nifty Ends Near 24,150



Indian benchmark indices extended their losing streak on August 18, closing lower for the sixth consecutive session as broad-based selling pressure, weakness in IT stocks and rising crude oil prices weighed on investor sentiment. The Sensex declined 492.70 points, or 0.63 per cent, to close at 77,235.46, while the Nifty fell 132.75 points, or 0.55 per cent, to settle at 24,154.90. The Nifty slipped below the 24,200 level and remained under pressure through most of the session. The market opened on a weak note and selling intensified as the day progressed. The Nifty touched an intraday low of 24,154.90. Although buying emerged at lower levels and helped the index recover some losses, the gains did not sustain and the benchmark eventually closed near the day's low. Investor sentiment remained cautious amid a sharp rise in crude oil prices and growing tensions between Iran and the United States. Higher crude prices can raise concerns over inflation and corporate costs, particularly for an oil-importing economy such as India. Broader markets also remained weak. The Nifty Midcap index declined 0.4 per cent, while the small-cap segment also came under pressure. Sectoral performance was mixed. Auto, media and oil and gas stocks ended higher, providing some support to the broader market. However, the IT index was the biggest drag, falling 1.9 per cent. The FMCG index declined 0.7 per cent, while the Realty index dropped 1.4 per cent and the Metal index slipped 0.6 per cent. On the Nifty, Asian Paints, Infosys, HCL Technologies, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles and Wipro were among the top losers. Axis Bank, Max Healthcare, Grasim Industries, M&M and Power Grid Corporation were among the notable gainers. Around 180 stocks touched their 52-week highs during the session, including Welspun Living, Action Construction, Aether Industries, Lenskart Solutions, Bosch, Chennai Petroleum, Craftsman, HEG, Netweb, Balrampur Chini, Welspun Corp, Solar Industries, Ajanta Pharma, Radico Khaitan, KEI Industries and Neuland Laboratories. Among individual stocks, Sigma Advanced Systems gained 5 per cent after securing a Rs 155 crore order from the Home Ministry. Magellan Cloud jumped 7.5 per cent after its subsidiary Provigil Surveillance received an Rs 8.89 crore Letter of Acceptance. Biocon rose 1.4 per cent after its US subsidiary received supplemental USFDA approval for Yesintek. Ceigall India, however, declined 3 per cent despite its joint venture receiving four Letters of Acceptance worth Rs 2,149 crore. Paytm fell 2 per cent after around 1.92 crore shares, representing nearly 3 per cent of its equity, changed hands in the market.

PSBs to Offer Free No-Frills Accounts to Youth



Public sector banks (PSBs) will offer no-frills bank accounts to young customers without any charges as part of an effort to bring more young Indians into the formal banking system, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Tuesday. Speaking at the PSB Confluence in New Delhi on August 18, Sitharaman announced a month-long "Banking for Youth" campaign that will be launched by public sector banks from October 2. The campaign will target young people aged 16 and above, including students and young professionals, with the aim of encouraging greater participation in formal banking services. Sitharaman said PSBs should become an important part of the financial journey of young Indians. She stressed that the youth banking initiative should not remain limited to a one-month campaign but should develop into a continuous effort to connect with younger customers. The Finance Minister also urged banks to create greater awareness among young people about the formal credit ecosystem. With the country's younger population increasingly relying on digital financial services, she said PSBs must keep pace with changing expectations and provide banking products suited to tech-savvy customers. The two-day PSB Confluence was organised by the Department of Financial Services (DFS) in New Delhi. Senior officials and leaders from public sector banks and public financial institutions participated in discussions on next-generation banking reforms and the long-term vision of "Viksit Bharat 2047". Sitharaman said banks should look beyond traditional banking products and consider lifestyle-linked benefits to attract young customers. She suggested that banks could offer benefits such as vouchers for fitness centres, yoga facilities and mental wellness services as part of their customer propositions. Highlighting the growing role of young Indians in the digital payments ecosystem, Sitharaman pointed to data showing that people in the 18-to-29 age group account for 66 per cent of all UPI transactions. She said this represented a significant opportunity for public sector banks to deepen their engagement with the younger generation. The Finance Minister's remarks come at a time when India's banking sector is undergoing rapid digital transformation. Young customers are increasingly seeking convenient digital services, instant payments and products that fit their lifestyles. The proposed "Banking for Youth" campaign is expected to help PSBs strengthen their relationship with this growing customer base while improving financial awareness and access to formal banking and credit. Sitharaman said PSBs must prepare for the next phase of banking reforms and align their services with the broader objective of building a developed India under the "Viksit Bharat 2047" vision.

Pony.ai Plans Major Overseas Robotaxi Expansion

Chinese autonomous driving company Ponyai is preparing for a major international expansion, with more than 4,000 robotaxis in its pipeline for planned and potential deployments outside China. The company announced the plans as demand for autonomous ride-hailing services grows globally and competition intensifies in China. Ponyai said its overseas push will focus on markets where partnerships and regulatory developments can support the expansion of robotaxi services. A major part of the pipeline involves a deal with Uber to deploy more than 2,000 robotaxis across five European cities. The partnership is also expected to extend to four additional European cities that have not yet been named. Ponyai already has a commercial operation in Zagreb, Croatia. Autonomous driving companies are increasingly looking beyond their domestic markets for new revenue opportunities. Europe, the Middle East and parts of Asia are emerging as key destinations as robotaxi technology develops and competition among Chinese autonomous driving firms increases. Ponyai is targeting a



robotaxi fleet of 3,500 vehicles by the end of this year. However, the company has not provided a specific timeline for completing all of its planned international deployments. It also has not disclosed how many robotaxis it currently operates outside China. Last week, Ponyai announced plans to deepen its partnership with Uber and deploy more than 2,000 robotaxis across Europe. The expansion is expected to strengthen the company's international presence and create a larger commercial platform for autonomous mobility

services. Rival Chinese autonomous driving company WeRide is also expanding its international focus. Potential markets under consideration include Australia, South Korea, Japan and Southeast Asia, highlighting the growing competition among Chinese firms to establish a global presence. Ponyai's financial results also showed strong growth in its robotaxi business. The company reported second-quarter revenue of \$36.2 million, representing a 68.8 per cent increase from the same period a year earlier.

Robotaxi revenue surged 691.2 per cent year-on-year and accounted for about one-third of Ponyai's total revenue for the first time. The company expects full-year robotaxi services revenue to exceed three-and-a-half times its 2025 level. Ponyai CEO James Peng said the company remains confident about achieving and potentially exceeding its full-year robotaxi services revenue target. Beyond robotaxis, the company is also expanding its autonomous trucking business. Robotruck revenue increased 40 per cent year-on-year during the second quarter. Ponyai plans to significantly increase its driverless light-duty truck fleet, targeting 100,000 vehicles by 2030. The company also plans to deploy between 500 and 1,000 autonomous heavy-duty trucks in China over the next two to three years. The expansion reflects the broader shift in the autonomous vehicle industry, with companies increasingly seeking commercial scale through international partnerships, fleet deployment and diversified autonomous mobility services.

President Approves Tax and Payment System Amendments

President Droupadi Murmu has given her assent to two important pieces of legislation aimed at supporting foreign investment, electronics manufacturing and the digital payments ecosystem in India. The Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Act, 2026, and the legislation further amending the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, received presidential assent on August 17, according to a gazette notification issued by the Ministry of Law. Both bills were passed by Parliament on August 10. The taxation law is aimed at attracting foreign capital, encouraging domestic electronics manufacturing and providing greater certainty for foreign cloud service companies using data centres in India. One of the key provisions relates to foreign portfolio investors (FPIs). The new law replaces an ordinance issued on June 5 that provided income-tax exemptions on interest income and capital gains earned by FPIs from investments in government securities. The legislation also seeks to make

it easier for global fund managers to relocate their operations to India. It reduces the number of conditions such funds must meet to ensure that their global income is not subject to taxation in India. The Act also provides a longer-term tax incentive for electronics manufacturing. The income-tax exemption available to foreign companies that use contract manufacturers in India for producing specified electronic goods has been extended until 2040-41. The specified products include mobile phones, laptops, personal computers, tablets, servers and key components and accessories. The legislation further proposes a 15-year income-tax exemption, until 2040-41, for eligible foreign companies that store electronic components in customs warehouses before supplying them to contract manufacturers in India. The measure is intended to strengthen the component supply chain and encourage more companies to establish manufacturing operations in the country. The second law amends the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, and provides a legal



framework for modifying the zero-MDR system applicable to digital payments such as UPI and RuPay transactions. Under the amended framework, the government can notify which electronic payment modes or transactions will remain exempt from merchant discount rate (MDR) charges. At present, banks and payment-system providers cannot charge customers for payments made through UPI and RuPay debit cards. The UPI and Services Steering Committee, headed by the National Payments

Corporation of India (NPCI), will play a role in determining MDR charges. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had clarified during parliamentary discussions that UPI payments would remain free for consumers. Any future MDR, she said, would apply only to specified categories of merchant transactions. The amendments are expected to provide greater policy certainty while supporting investment, manufacturing and the continued expansion of India's digital payments infrastructure.

Meta Faces Trillion-Dollar Risk in Landmark Social Media Trial

Meta is facing a potentially historic legal battle as a coalition of attorneys general from 29 US states takes the company to trial over allegations that Facebook and Instagram were deliberately designed to encourage compulsive use among young people. The jury trial began Tuesday in federal court in Oakland, California, amid growing global concerns about the impact of social media on children and teenagers. The states are seeking financial penalties as well as court orders that could force Meta to make significant changes to how its platforms operate. The case focuses on alleged violations of state consumer protection laws and federal privacy rules. Penalties under the laws can reach \$20,000 per violation, potentially creating enormous financial exposure because of the millions of young users involved. Meta has estimated that the maximum

theoretical penalties could reach \$1.4 trillion. However, lawyers representing the states have suggested the actual figure being sought could be closer to \$193 billion. Even that amount would rank among the largest litigation payouts ever and would be comparable to the \$206 billion tobacco settlement reached by US states in 1998. The attorneys general leading the case, including officials from California, Colorado, Kentucky and New Jersey, allege that Meta knowingly developed features that encouraged prolonged and compulsive use by young users. They also accuse the company of misleading consumers about safety measures. The broader group of states alleges that Meta collected personal information from children under 13 in violation of the federal Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. The states are seeking measures that could restrict younger users and



require Meta to remove or modify features they describe as addictive, including infinite scrolling and content recommendation systems. Meta has rejected the allegations, calling the financial demands disproportionate. The company argues that the states have failed to show that consumers were misled and says they are attempting to hold Meta responsible for challenges affecting the entire social media industry. Although a jury will hear the evidence, it will serve only in an advisory role. US District Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers will ultimately determine whether Meta is liable and decide any penalties

or remedies. The trial is expected to last about five weeks. Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Instagram head Adam Mosseri are among those expected to testify, alongside current and former employees and experts in technology and psychology. The case follows a major ruling in New Mexico, where Meta was ordered to pay roughly \$942 million over allegations involving harm to young users and to make changes including limits on usage and push notifications. The Oakland trial could have implications far beyond Meta. Other technology companies, including Google, Snap and TikTok, face thousands of separate lawsuits alleging that their platform designs have contributed to harm among young people. The outcome could ultimately influence how social media companies design their products, verify users' ages and protect children online.

sophisticated nervous systems give them remarkable control over their arms, allowing them to react quickly when threatened. That combination can make an octopus surprisingly difficult to handle, particularly when it feels trapped. The Philippines has extensive coastal waters and coral reefs that support numerous octopus species. These include coconut and mimic octopuses, along with the highly venomous blue-ringed octopus. For Cervantes, however, the encounter was less a lesson in marine biology and more a frightening reminder that sometimes the catch can fight back.

morning, so I returned the favour with his desktop avatar in the afternoon," one user joked. Another summed up the appeal by saying that workers might not dare to "flip the table and quit", but could at least use a mouse to fight back.

However, AI pets are not being created solely for revenge. Some people are also using the technology to recreate digital companions based on pets that have died, giving owners a way to preserve memories in an interactive form. Virtual pets themselves are nothing new. They became popular on computers and messaging platforms in the early 2000s, when tiny digital characters entertained users with simple movements. AI is now giving the old idea a bizarrely modern makeover turning the office boss into a pet that can be ordered around from the corner of a computer screen.

Healthcare was another area that caught his attention. He said access to specialised treatment can be difficult or expensive in Zimbabwe, whereas India has developed a strong reputation as a destination for international medical care. The country's large network of hospitals and specialists, he suggested, offers another example of India's growing global appeal.

However, it was Indian food that appeared to leave one of the most memorable impressions.

Describing Zimbabwean meals, Mwale said staples such as sadza, rice and

opposition. At the same time, companies such as Anthropic cannot claim the right to govern AI simply because they possess specialised technical knowledge. Their responsibility, the argument goes, is to inform democratic institutions and warn the public about serious risks - not replace elected governments in making policy. The Anthropic-Pentagon confrontation therefore highlights a fundamental challenge of the AI era. The future of democracy may depend not only on controlling what artificial intelligence can do, but also on preserving enough independent human beings willing and able to say no when technology is misused.

Rishabh Pant's Banter Keeps Bowlers on Their Toes

Rishabh Pant's lively presence behind the stumps once again became a talking point during India's dominant first Test against Sri Lanka in Galle. Known for his constant chatter, the Indian wicket-keeper entertained viewers while also keeping the batters and his teammates engaged throughout the game.

Former India batter Ajinkya Rahane, who has shared the dressing room with Pant for several years, revealed that the wicket-keeper's nonstop comments can sometimes test the patience of India's own bowlers.

Rahane explained that Pant's banter is entertaining, but there are moments when it can become distracting for the fielders. Since Sri Lankan batters may not understand Hindi, Pant often directs his comments at them without worrying too much about whether they understand every word.

"He is always like this. He is very entertaining," Rahane said while speaking on Sony Sports.

According to Rahane, Pant's chatter can affect the concentration of



players stationed close to the bat. Fielders in the slips and at short leg need to remain completely focused, particularly when fast bowlers or spinners are searching for an edge.

Rahane recalled that bowlers such as Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja had sometimes become frustrated with Pant's antics when they played together for India.

"You had to tell him to disturb the

batter and not our own players," Rahane said.

Pant's entertaining nature was again on display during the third day of the Test. A conversation involving Pant and substitute fielder Sarfaraz Khan was picked up by the stump microphone and quickly became one of the lighter moments of the match.

India were in a commanding position at lunch after their bowlers reduced Sri Lanka to 99/5. Manav

Suthar played a key role in the attack, while Jadeja had not yet entered the bowling action. Sarfaraz jokingly told Jadeja to remain patient, suggesting that the Indian bowlers would share the wickets among themselves.

"Lamba game hai Jaddu bhai. Mil baat ke khaayenge," Sarfaraz was heard saying, meaning that it was a long game and the team would share the spoils.

Pant immediately added to the joke by referring to Jadeja's famous sword-swinging celebration.

"Aur sab talvaar chalayenge!" Pant said.

The exchange perfectly captured Pant's personality behind the wickets. While his constant chatter can occasionally irritate bowlers, it also adds energy and entertainment to India's matches. For Pant, keeping wicket is clearly about more than collecting catches and stopping deliveries. His lively commentary has become an unmistakable part of his presence on the cricket field.

Sri Lanka Lose Four Wickets Chasing 372 Against India



Galle: Sri Lanka lost their fourth wicket in the second innings of the first Test against India while chasing a target of 372 runs.

Sri Lanka were reduced to 49/4 after 22 overs, with Dhananjaya de Silva and Sonal Dinusha at the crease. Lahiru Udara was the latest batter to depart, scoring 16 runs before being dismissed by Manav Suthar.

Udara attempted to play the delivery but found an edge, with wicket-keeper Dhruv Jurel completing an excellent catch to send him back to the pavilion. Suthar's dismissal further strengthened India's grip on the match. Sri Lanka had made a poor start to their chase, losing three wickets for just 21 runs. Mohammed Siraj provided India with the first breakthrough by dismissing Nishan Madushka for six.

Suthar then struck again when Pasindu Sooriyabandara was trapped lbw for a duck off the first ball he faced. Prasadh Krishna added to Sri Lanka's problems by removing Kamindu Mendis for two.

At one stage, Sri Lanka were struggling at 23/3 after 12 overs, with Udara and Dhananjaya attempting to rebuild the innings. However, Suthar's dismissal of Udara left the hosts in deeper trouble.

Earlier, India were bowled out for 193 in their second innings. The visitors had already secured a significant advantage from their first-innings performance and carried a 178-run lead into the second innings.

India added 193 runs to their advantage, taking their overall lead to 371 runs and setting Sri Lanka a challenging target of 372.

With four wickets already down, Sri Lanka now face a difficult task to stay in the contest. India's bowlers have kept the pressure on the hosts, while the visitors remain firmly in control of the Test. Dhananjaya de Silva was unbeaten on 20, while Sonal Dinusha was batting on one when Sri Lanka reached 49/4 after 22 overs.

No Khel Ratna Award This Year, 17 Athletes Get Arjuna Awards

Athletics: Tejaswin Shankar Divya Deshmukh

The Central Government announced the National Sports Awards for 2025 on Tuesday, with 17 athletes selected for the prestigious Arjuna Award. However, the country's highest sporting honour, the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award, was not given to anyone this year.

The selection committee, headed by former Supreme Court judge Justice Arun Kumar Mishra, had reportedly considered hockey star Hardik Singh for the Khel Ratna. However, Singh eventually withdrew from consideration, and no other athlete was selected for the top honour.

Among the prominent names receiving the Arjuna Award are chess stars Divya Deshmukh and Vidit Santosh Gujrathi, badminton players Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand, and hockey players Lalremsiami and Rajkumar Pal.

Divya Deshmukh's selection comes after a landmark year in which she created history by becoming the first Indian woman to win the FIDE Women's World



Cup. Her achievement at a young age established her as one of the leading talents in Indian chess.

The Arjuna Award winners from athletics include Tejaswin Shankar, Mohammed Afsal V and Priyanka Goswami. In badminton, Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand were honoured.

Boxer Narender Berwal was also selected, while kabaddi players Surjeet and Pooja received the award. Shooter Akhil Sheoran,

rower Arvind Singh and para-athlete Ekta Bhan are among the other recipients.

The full list of Arjuna Award winners is:

- Athletics: Tejaswin Shankar, Mohammed Afsal V, Priyanka Goswami
- Badminton: Treesa Jolly, Gayatri Gopichand
- Boxing: Narender Berwal
- Chess: Vidit Santosh

Gujrathi, Divya Deshmukh
- Para Shooting: Dhanush Srikanth, Rudransh Khandelwal
- Hockey: Lalremsiami, Rajkumar Pal
- Kabaddi: Surjeet, Pooja
- Para Athletics: Ekta Bhan

- Rowing: Arvind Singh
- Shooting: Akhil Sheoran

The Arjuna Award for Lifetime Achievement has been awarded to Arumai Nayagam for football.

Three coaches have been selected for the Dronacharya Award: Chhote Lal Yadav for boxing, Parveer Singh for athletics and Neha Nandkumar Chavan for shooting.

In the Lifetime category, Dharmendra Singh Yadav has been recognised for boxing, while Virender Kumar has been honoured for wrestling.

The awards recognise athletes and coaches who have made significant contributions to Indian sport and are expected to further highlight the country's growing strength across Olympic, para-sport and other disciplines.

Pullela Gayatri Follows Her Father's Footsteps

Pullela Gayatri is rapidly emerging as one of India's promising stars in women's doubles badminton. Partnering with Treesa Jolly, Gayatri has consistently impressed at the international level. Her performances have now earned her the prestigious Arjuna Award, adding another major milestone to her growing career. Gayatri is the daughter of Indian badminton legend Pullela Gopichand, but she has steadily created an identity of her own on the court. Her breakthrough moment came at the 2022 All England Open, where she and Treesa Jolly reached the women's doubles semi-finals. Since then, the pair has continued to climb the international rankings with a series of strong performances.

Growing up in a family closely associated with badminton, Gayatri developed an interest in the sport at an early age. She trained at the Pullela Gopichand Badminton Academy, where she had the opportunity to watch and train alongside leading players such as Saina Nehwal and PV Sindhu. The experience helped her



develop both her skills and competitive mindset.

Gayatri made her mark in junior badminton as well. She performed strongly at several international junior tournaments and became India's No. 1 player in the Under-17 category at just 15.

Her rapid progress also earned her a place in India's badminton squad for the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta when she was only 15. A year later, she stepped into senior-level competition and won a silver

medal in the women's singles event at the South Asian Games in Nepal.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted her progress in 2020, but 2021 became a turning point. Until then, Gayatri had primarily focused on singles. Encouraged by her father and coach Arun Vishnu, she decided to explore doubles. That decision changed her career. At the Gopichand Academy, she found the perfect partner in Treesa Jolly. The duo won gold at

the India International Challenge in 2021 before claiming silver at the Welsh International.

In 2022, Gayatri and Treesa reached the final of the Syed Modi International and then captured their first BWF World Tour title by winning the Odisha Open. Their partnership continued to flourish, with the pair winning the Syed Modi International title in consecutive years in 2024 and 2025.

Gayatri's achievements are particularly significant given her father's illustrious legacy.

Gopichand has won the Arjuna Award, Khel Ratna, Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan for his contribution to Indian badminton.

However, Gopichand has always maintained that choosing badminton was Gayatri's decision. He has said he gave her complete freedom to choose her career and was happy that she developed a strong interest in the sport herself.

With her talent, consistency and growing confidence, Gayatri is now proving that she is not merely following her father's legacy but building a successful badminton journey of her own.

Premier League to Broadcast Referee Conversations



The English Premier League is set to introduce referee-player conversation audio into its match broadcasts from the upcoming season, marking a major step towards giving fans greater insight into key decisions during games. According to a report by The Guardian, the move will be part of the expansion of the league's RefCam system, which is expected to become a permanent feature in the English top flight. However, fans will not hear referee conversations live during matches. Instead, audio from one or two significant incidents will be selected and included in the broadcast after the moments have taken place.

The audio will be captured through head-mounted cameras worn by match referees. The RefCam system was previously introduced to provide viewers with a referee's point-of-view during important moments and offer a different perspective on incidents occurring on the pitch.

The new addition is expected to provide viewers with more clarity about how referees communicate with players during crucial situations. It could also offer greater understanding of the discussions surrounding important decisions made during matches. Despite the expansion of the system, the broadcast audio will have certain limitations. Conversations involving the match referee and assistant referees will not be included. Similarly, discussions between the on-field referee and Video Assistant Referee (VAR) officials will remain outside the scope of the feature.

The Premier League has increasingly explored technology aimed at improving the viewing experience and helping supporters understand decisions made by match officials. The RefCam initiative is part of those efforts, offering viewers a closer look at the action from the referee's perspective. The decision to include selected referee-player conversations could add a new dimension to football broadcasts. While supporters will not have access to a continuous live feed of referee communications, hearing selected exchanges from important incidents could provide additional context around controversial or decisive moments.

The feature is expected to attract considerable attention as the new Premier League season gets underway, particularly during matches involving contentious decisions, penalties, disciplinary actions and other major incidents.

With RefCam becoming a permanent part of Premier League coverage, the introduction of selected referee audio represents another step towards making the sport's officiating process more transparent and engaging for viewers.

Hyderabad to Host Three Major Shooting Events

Hyderabad is set to become the centre of national shooting activity as the Telangana Rifle Association (TRA) hosts three major shooting competitions from August 18 to 21 at the OCTOPUS Shooting Range in Ibrahimpatnam.

The four-day event is expected to attract talented shooters, experienced coaches and members of the shooting fraternity from across the country. The competitions will provide athletes with an opportunity to test their skills and gain valuable competitive experience. The three events being conducted are the Second Telangana Big Bore Shooting Competition, the Deccan Elite Open Big Bore Grand Prix and the Second Super Big Bore Open Shooting Competition.

Speaking ahead of the competitions, Amit Sanghi, senior vice-

president of the National Rifle Association of India, president of the Telangana Rifle Association and vice-president of the Telangana Olympic Association, welcomed athletes and coaches to Hyderabad.

"Every competition is an opportunity for an athlete to test their preparation, strengthen their confidence and move one step closer to excellence," Sanghi said.

He encouraged participants to make the most of the three competitions and use the events as a platform to assess their preparation ahead of future challenges.

Big Bore and Super Big Bore competitions require athletes to demonstrate a high level of discipline, technical ability and mental strength. Precision and complete control are particularly important in these events, where small differ-

ences can have a major impact on results.

Sanghi said the competitions had been designed to provide shooters with a strong and competitive environment where they could challenge themselves and learn from fellow athletes.

"These competitions have been planned to offer athletes a strong and competitive platform where they can challenge themselves, learn from one another and experience the true spirit of shooting sport," he said.

The OCTOPUS Shooting Range at Ibrahimpatnam will provide the venue for the competitions, bringing together shooters from different parts of the country.

For emerging athletes, the events are expected to be particularly useful as they provide exposure to high-level competition and an



opportunity to compete alongside more experienced shooters. Coaches will also have the chance to assess their athletes under competitive conditions.

The TRA's decision to host three competitions together highlights Hyderabad's growing role as a venue for shooting events. With athletes, coaches and officials expected to participate, the competitions are likely to provide four days of intense sporting action.

As the events begin on August 18, all eyes will be on the shooters as they compete for top honours and look to strengthen their credentials in the demanding Big Bore and Super Big Bore disciplines.

Ram Pothineni Shoots 24 Hours for RaPo23



Telugu actor Ram Pothineni is reportedly pushing himself to the limit for his ambitious directorial debut, RaPo23. According to industry sources, the actor-director recently shot for nearly 24 hours at a stretch on the outskirts of Pondicherry as part of the film's ongoing schedule.

The effort is particularly notable as Ram is simultaneously handling the dual responsibilities of lead actor and director. Sources say he has been closely involved in every aspect of the production while also preparing for and performing his role in front of the camera.

A massive set was constructed in Pondicherry for the schedule, which continued for nearly nine days. However, unexpected rains disrupted the shoot, forcing the team to temporarily halt filming and return to Hyderabad. The unit is expected to travel back to Pondicherry soon to complete the remaining portions on the same elaborate setup.

The upcoming schedule is expected to include a visually striking song choreographed by popular dance master Brinda. The team is also planning to shoot several high-energy action sequences designed by stunt choreographer Vikram Mor, known for his work on films including KGF: Chapter 1, Kantara and Karuppu.

Conceived by Ram Pothineni, RaPo23 is being positioned as a unique psychological action thriller set against a gripping neo-noir backdrop. The project was officially announced on the occasion of Ram's birthday, with the actor playing a character named Veera.

The film is being produced by Krishna Pothineni under the Rapo Cinematics banner and is being mounted on a lavish scale. The makers are reportedly aiming for a visually rich cinematic experience while blending psychological elements with intense action.

The technical team includes National Award-winning cinematographer Thirunavukarasu, popularly known as Thirru, who is handling the camera work. The action department brings together Vikram Mor and acclaimed stunt choreographer Peter Hein.

A S Prakash is serving as the production designer, adding further scale to the film's ambitious visual world.

With Ram taking charge both behind and in front of the camera, expectations are building around RaPo23 and its distinctive neo-noir treatment.

Ravi Teja's 'Irumudi' Gets U/A Certificate



Ravi Teja and Priya Bhavani Shankar-starrer Irumudi has received clearance from the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), with the upcoming film being awarded a U/A certificate. Directed by Shiva Nirvana, the emotional family thriller is set to arrive in cinemas on August 21, 2026. Production house Mythri Movie Makers confirmed the certification on Tuesday through its social media platforms, urging audiences to get ready for the film's theatrical release. The announcement also put to rest recent speculation that Irumudi could be postponed from its scheduled release date. The makers had earlier released a new poster reaffirming that the film would reach theatres on August 21. With the CBFC clearance now in place, the team is continuing its final promotional activities ahead of the release. Ravi Teja, who is said to be placing considerable expectations on the project, began dubbing for his portions during the second half of July. The makers had also released a video from the dubbing studio in which the actor delivered the powerful line, "I've only one daughter, and her name is Manamma." Baby Nakshathra and director Shiva Nirvana were also seen in the video. According to industry sources, the shoot was nearing completion at the time, with only a few days of filming remaining. Post-production work was being carried out simultaneously to keep the film on track for its August 21 theatrical release. Music director GV Prakash Kumar has composed the film's soundtrack and has also begun work on the re-recording. Interest in Irumudi increased significantly following the release of its glimpse video last month. The footage presents Ravi Teja as a loving father who shares a close bond with his daughter. However, the story appears to take a darker turn when tragedy strikes, pushing his character towards violence and alcoholism. The glimpse further shows his daughter urging him to give up alcohol. His character eventually embraces the path of an Ayyappa devotee, wears the sacred mala and attempts to regain control of his life. The film marks Ravi Teja's 77th project and was earlier referred to as RT77. The title Irumudi has a strong spiritual association with the Ayyappa pilgrimage, referring to the sacred offering carried by devotees as an expression of devotion and surrender. With the U/A certification secured, Irumudi is now gearing up for its worldwide theatrical release on August 21.

Nidhhi Agerwal's Next Is a Mythological Thriller

Actress Nidhhi Agerwal is set to headline an intriguing new project that promises to present her in a completely different avatar. According to industry sources, her upcoming film is being developed as a mythological thriller with a female-centric storyline. The film is being produced under the Varaha Films banner and marks the production house's first project. Suneeth Padolkar is producing the movie, while Tantra fame director Srinivas Gopishetti is at the helm. The project was formally launched with a grand pooja ceremony on Nidhhi Agerwal's birthday. The makers also began shooting on the same day, signalling an early start to production. P. Ashok and P. Renuka switched on the camera for the first shot at the launch ceremony. Nidhhi also attended the event along with the film's team. Sources suggest that the story revolves primarily around Nidhhi's character, with the actress expected to take on a role unlike anything she has portrayed so far. The combination of mythology, thriller elements and a female-led narrative is expected to give the project a distinctive flavour. The makers have already unveiled Nidhhi's first look from the film, further adding to the curiosity surrounding the project. In the poster, the actress is seen holding a lamp in one hand while shielding its flame with the other. A mysterious divine figure with multiple hands can be seen in the background, hinting at the film's mythological setting. The striking visual has sparked interest among movie buffs, with fans keen to know more about the story and Nidhhi's character. Nidhhi Agerwal recently received attention for her performances in Prabhas-starrer The Raja Saab and Pawan Kalyan's Hari Hara Veera Mallu. With her new project, the actress appears to be exploring another unconventional genre and a character-driven role. Director Srinivas Gopishetti is reportedly working on a strong screenplay built around the female protagonist, blending mythology with suspense and thriller elements. The makers are expected to announce the film's title and reveal more details about the cast and crew soon. With production already underway, the upcoming project is shaping up to be one of Nidhhi Agerwal's more distinctive ventures.

Toxic Set for a Grand Opening in AP



Yash's highly anticipated pan-Indian film Toxic is gearing up for a massive theatrical release on August 21. Directed by Geetu Mohandas, the gangster action drama has created strong buzz among audiences and is expected to witness a big opening across the country.

In Andhra Pradesh, the makers are reportedly seeking permission for a ticket price hike for Toxic, similar to the arrangements made for Kantara Chapter 1. If approved, the film could have special early-morning shows from 6 AM, with ticket prices reportedly fixed at Rs. 500. Regular show ticket prices may also be increased by around Rs. 50 to Rs. 100. The proposed hike comes at a time when theatres

across Andhra Pradesh have been attracting good crowds with comparatively reasonable ticket prices. Whether audiences will be willing to pay higher prices for Toxic remains to be seen. The film's strong promotional buzz and Yash's popularity are expected to play a key role in driving audiences to theatres during the opening weekend.

Toxic features a notable ensemble cast, including Nayanathara, Kiara Advani, Huma Qureshi, Tara Sutaria and Rukmini Vasanth in important roles. With its gangster backdrop, action elements and star power, Toxic is expected to be one of the major releases of the season. The film's opening-day response in Andhra Pradesh will be closely watched, particularly if the proposed ticket price hikes receive approval.

Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu recently gave fans a candid glimpse into her current lifestyle, joking that compression socks have become her latest fashion statement. The actress shared a picture on her Instagram Stories showing her legs and feet covered in compression socks.

Alongside the picture, Samantha wrote, "What I call fashion now: compression socks." Her light-hearted caption quickly caught attention, with fans interpreting the post as a glimpse into her current health and lifestyle routine.

Compression socks are commonly used to support blood circulation and manage swelling, particularly during pregnancy. Samantha's post comes amid reports about her personal life and expectations surrounding her growing family.

The actress had earlier confirmed that she and filmmaker Raj Nidimoru are expecting their first child. She made the announcement in June 2026 during the success celebrations of her film Maa Inti Bangaaram. Samantha also revealed that she would take a temporary break from acting following the film.

Speaking about her plans, the Yashoda actress said she would take maternity leave after Maa Inti Bangaaram and return to work with another project for her fans. Her announcement generated considerable interest among her followers and the film industry. Samantha and Raj Nidimoru reportedly got married in an intimate ceremony on December 1, with around 30 guests attending the private event. The couple first worked together on The Family Man 2, where Samantha played the intense and fierce character Raji. The series was created by Raj Nidimoru and Krishna DK.

Their professional association continued with Citadel: Honey Bunny, the Indian chapter of the global Citadel franchise. Samantha and Raj worked closely on the project, and reports suggested that their relationship grew stronger during the making of the series.

Although Citadel: Honey Bunny received mixed reactions from viewers and critics, Samantha's performance attracted attention. The actress has continued to remain active in the entertainment industry while carefully choosing her projects.

Her latest Instagram post, meanwhile, offered a more personal and humorous moment. By describing compression socks as her "new fashion," Samantha appeared to take a relaxed approach to the changes in her routine, turning an everyday necessity into a playful fashion statement.

Samantha Ruth Prabhu Calls Compression Socks Her New Fashion Statement

