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CM Naidu Pushes Constituency Vision Plans To Drive AP's Growth

Amaravati, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has directed officials and public representatives to implement Constituency Vision Action Plans effectively and work towards achieving targets aimed at placing Andhra Pradesh among the leading States in all sectors.

Addressing a video conference with ministers, MPs, MLAs, collectors, Young Professionals, Knowledge Partners and other officials as part of a review of the Vision Action Plans, Naidu said Andhra Pradesh was the first State in the country to formulate and implement constituency-wise Vision Plans. He said the initiative had earned national recognition.

Naidu stressed that ministers, MPs and MLAs had a crucial role in achieving the identified Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). He directed them to regularly review implementation and ensure that field-level monitoring was transparent and accountable rather than a mere formality.

P3

Mauritius Minister Meets CM Naidu



Amaravati, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Mauritius Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms Lachmuna (Raj) Pentiah, who recently assumed office as a Cabinet Minister, paid a courtesy call on Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu. They discussed bilateral matters and administrative reforms.

Sri Lankan Deputy High Commissioner Meets CM Naidu



Amaravati, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Sri Lankan Deputy High Commissioner in Chennai Dr. Ganeshanathan Gaitheeswaran paid a courtesy call on Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu. They discussed bilateral relations and matters concerning Sri Lanka's engagement with Andhra Pradesh and other southern States.

AP To Clear 150 Lakh Tonnes Of Legacy Waste By October 2



Amaravati, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh government is working on a comprehensive plan to address the State's waste management challenges while accelerating urban infrastructure development across municipalities. Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister Ponguru Narayana reviewed legacy waste removal and new waste processing facilities on Friday and later inspected the Kondapalli Municipality area. Legacy Waste To Be Fully Cleared Minister Narayana said nearly 150 lakh tonnes of legacy waste accumulated during the previous government was being cleared. While the waste lying on the surface had already been removed, he directed officials to ensure that the remaining sub-surface waste was completely cleared by October 2. He instructed officials

P3

Jagan's No-Unanimous Poll Call Puts YSRCP Leaders In A Fix

Ravi Podili
Senior Journalist

YSRCP chief and former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's directive to field party candidates in every seat in the upcoming local body elections has put constituency-level leaders in a difficult position. His firm stand against uncontested victories and warning of action against in-charges where unanimous elections occur have triggered intense discussions within the party.

Following its defeat in the 2024 general elections, the YSRCP is seeking to demonstrate its organisational strength through the local body polls. Jagan has held several internal meetings over the past two months and instructed leaders to strengthen the party at the grassroots and prepare candidates for every constituency. Party leaders say the directive has revived enthusiasm among sections of the cadre. However, former MLAs and ministers reportedly view the task as challenging, particularly when the party is out of power. Contesting every seat requires considerable financial resources, organisational effort and the availability of candidates willing to enter the electoral fray.



Cadre Reluctant In Some Areas

YSRCP leaders are also discussing ground-level difficulties in several constituencies. They contend that the current political environment, including cases and arrests involving party leaders and activists, has made some cadres reluctant to contest. In certain areas, local leaders believe agreements for unanimous elections could be considered, especially where villagers feel such arrangements may help ensure development.

At the same time, questions are being raised over whether the party can realistically prevent unanimous elections everywhere while taking local circumstances into account. Leaders also recall controversies surrounding previous local body elections during the YSRCP government, when opposition candidates were allegedly obstructed, intimidated or prevented from contesting. The unanimous election of all wards in Macherla municipality, which critics attributed to the alleged intimidation tactics of former MLA Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy, continues to be cited in political discussions. Analysts believe leaders of the present Alliance government could seek political retaliation over such past incidents.

Jagan's Warning Creates Anxiety

Jagan's ultimatum has consequently created anxiety among constituency in-charges. Though meetings are being held with cadres to implement his instructions, leaders in several areas are reportedly finding it difficult to mobilise candidates.

Another concern is the disconnect between some constituency leaders and their cadres. Party sources say several leaders have remained largely away from their constituencies for nearly two years and interacted with workers only occasionally. They now face doubts over whether the cadre will respond when asked to contest elections.

The YSRCP's current position also contrasts with its approach while in power, when unanimous elections were reportedly encouraged, and incentives were announced for such victories. The contrasting stand has left constituency leaders caught between following Jagan's directive and confronting the ruling Alliance.

With local elections traditionally favouring the party in power, Jagan's warning that constituency in-charges could lose their ticket if seats are won unanimously has added pressure on aspirants and intensified the political debate.

Nagababu Takes Charge As AP Green Chairman

Mangalagiri, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Jana Sena Party MLC Konidela Nagababu assumed charge as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Andhra Pradesh Society for Greening and Reforestation for Ecological Enrichment (AP Green) at Aranya Bhavan in Mangalagiri on Friday. He performed special rituals in the presence of Vedic scholars and was accompanied by his wife, Padmaja.

The State government has accorded Nagababu Cabinet rank and entrusted him with advancing the AP Green initiative, which aims to increase the State's combined forest and tree cover to 50 per cent of its geographical area by 2047. Speaking to the media, Nagababu thanked Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan for reposing confidence in him. He said environmental conservation should become a people's movement rather than remain confined to a government programme. Nagababu said the State's present forest cover stood at 22.96 per cent and stressed that greenery must be expanded beyond forests to agricultural lands, villages,



urban areas, roadsides, canal bunds, institutional premises, industrial areas and suitable wastelands. He said achieving the target would require coordination among Agriculture, Horticulture, Panchayat Raj, Education, Industries, Revenue, Water Resources, Transport and Forest departments. Farmers, students, youth, voluntary organisations, CSR entities, entrepreneurs and citizens would be encouraged to participate.

Emphasising that planting saplings alone was insufficient, Nagababu said their survival, protection and healthy growth would receive equal attention, with a dedicated monitoring system proposed for their maintenance.

PCCF P.V. Chalapathi Rao, Additional



PCCF Rahul Pandey, Forest Department Advisor Mallikarjuna Rao, CCF (Wildlife) N. Nageswara Rao, CCF (Guntur) Y. Srinivasa Reddy, PCCF (Vigilance) Revathi and AP Green CEO B.N.N. Murthy were among those who congratulated him.

Later, Nagababu and Padmaja called on Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu at his camp office. The Chief Minister felicitated Nagababu and conveyed his best wishes. In an X post, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan congratulated Nagababu and expressed confidence that he would effectively implement AP-Green and transform environmental conservation into a people's movement. He also thanked Naidu for appointing Nagababu with Cabinet rank.

• Threads That Bind Hearts



On Rakhi Purnima, women leaders and Brahma Kumaris tied Rakhis to Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu at his camp office and conveyed their affection. The CM reciprocated with greetings. Minister Savitha, former Minister Peethala Sujatha, NTR District TDP President Gadde Anuradha and TDP State Secretary Achanta Sunitha were among those present.

Coolphabets App Launches To Help Children Learn Their Mother Tongue

K Kalyan Krishna Kumar

Boston: Coolphabets, an AI-powered learning application designed to help children read and write their mother tongue, was launched globally at 12 midnight Indian Standard Time on Friday, coinciding with World Telugu Language Day. The app was launched simultaneously in Boston, US, and India on Android and iOS platforms.

Developed by co-founders Ranjit Kollu and Venkat Yeleti, Coolphabets targets children aged three to eight and teaches languages progressively, from letters to words and sentences. It is initially available in Telugu, Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Kannada and English, with more languages planned.

The app's key technology, Coolpha Sense, is described as a patent-pending AI system that analyses how children write letters, including shape, stroke order, direction and neatness, and provides real-time guidance. Its three learning levels-Gentle, Standard and Strict-are designed to support children according to their writing ability.



Speaking to True Point, co-founder Ranjit Kollu said the launch marked the fulfilment of a dream he had pursued for 10 years. "Holding back a lot of emotions, I waited for ten long years to realise this dream. I am proud of my team, who worked relentlessly and believed in our vision. We gave it our all," he said. Coolphabets operates offline, keeps AI processing on the device, carries no advertisements and does not sell children's data. It also provides parents with progress reports and allows them to record their voices for personalised learning.

CM Naidu Launches AI-Based Pramaan Operating System



Velagapudi, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday launched the "Pramaan Operating System," an AI-based accounting and statutory compliance application developed by Pramanique Infotech Private Limited, at the Chief Minister's Office in the Andhra Pradesh Secretariat.

The platform is designed to simplify accounting processes and automate statutory compliance requirements for businesses, Chartered Accountants and accounting professionals. Company representatives explained its key features, including AI-powered automation, data analytics, compliance generation, information protection and data security. During the launch, Naidu enquired about the application's technological capabilities, AI-driven accounting processes, compliance management, security fea-



tures and potential for future expansion. The company team explained that the platform uses advanced technologies to provide faster and more efficient accounting and compliance services compared with conventional solutions. The representatives said the initiative aims to integrate artificial intelligence with financial management, governance and the business ecosystem. They added that the company

Veligonda Moves Closer to Fulfilling a Three-Decade-Old Dream

K Kalyan Krishna Kumar

For nearly three decades, the Pula Subbaiah Veligonda Project has remained a symbol of hope for the drought-prone and fluoride-affected areas of Prakasam, Nellore and Kadapa districts. Conceived to provide irrigation and drinking water security, the project is now entering a crucial phase, with major Stage-I components completed and the government focusing on both the remaining works and the rehabilitation of displaced families.

The project has a long history. The idea was conceived in 1989, following the vision of engineer Kuditaipudi Srirama Krishnaiah, and the then Chief Minister Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao had directed preparations to address drinking water needs in the fluoride-affected western region of Prakasam. Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu performed the Bhoomi Puja in 1996. After assuming office in 2024, the Alliance government set an August 2026 target for completion of the key Stage-I works.



Water Resources Minister Nimmla Ramanaidu said the government's objective was not merely to complete an irrigation project but also to ensure justice for those who sacrificed their lands and homes. "Justice will be ensured for every displaced person, even at an additional cost of ₹169 crore," he said, stressing that genuine claims would be considered even where official records contain discrepancies. The project comprises the

Nallamalasagar reservoir, twin tunnels and feeder canal. The two tunnels, among the longest in Asia, extend about 18.8 km each. According to project authorities, excavation and lining of both tunnels have been completed. The feeder canal has also seen substantial progress, including 21.8 km of excavation and 5.3 km of concrete retaining wall. Ramanaidu said more than RS.2,250 crore had been spent on project works during the two years of the Alliance government,



with construction accelerated through round-the-clock operations. He said RS.5,460 crore had been sanctioned for the feeder canal and major works were being expedited. The human side of the project remains equally significant. Eleven villages fall within the submergence zone, with 7,321 displaced families to be relocated to seven rehabilitation centres. The government has released an additional RS.905.56 crore for rehabilitation compensation. Of

the pending cases, compensation worth ₹756 crore has been paid to 6,110 families, while payments to the remaining 1,115 are scheduled during August 2026. The project is designed to ultimately irrigate 4.473 lakh

acres and provide drinking water to 15.25 lakh people across 30 mandals. Stage-II, which accounts for 3.283 lakh acres, still requires substantial distributary works and is targeted for completion by March 2029 under the Integrated Horticulture Development Plan with World Bank assistance. For the region, Veligonda is therefore more than an engineering project. Its completion represents the possibility of lasting water security, while its rehabilitation measures will determine whether the benefits of the long-awaited project are matched by justice for the families who paid the price for it.

Project At A Glance

Total irrigation potential	4.473 lakh acres
Drinking water	15.25 lakh people
Krishna water allocation	43.50 TMC
Project outlay	₹10,783 crore
Stage-I expenditure	₹6,260.23 crore
Displaced families	7,321

Purandeswari's New BJP Role Fuels Speculation Over Union Cabinet Berth

CH Raju @ Rajamahendravaram

The appointment of Rajahmundry MP Daggubati Purandeswari as a National Vice-President of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has triggered fresh speculation in the political circles of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana over whether she could also find a place in the Union Cabinet. While BJP leaders and cadres have welcomed her elevation to the national organisation, questions are being raised over whether the new organisational responsibility could affect her prospects of becoming a Union Minister. Does National Role Affect Cabinet Chances? One section of political

analysts believes that Purandeswari's appointment to the BJP's national team could temporarily reduce her chances of securing a ministerial berth. Their argument is based on the party's reported emphasis on the "One Person, One Post" principle, under which holding a key organisational position could influence decisions regarding ministerial responsibilities. There is also speculation that Andhra Pradesh already has representation in the Union Cabinet and that the BJP leadership may have chosen to give Purandeswari a prominent organisational role while maintaining regional balance. Administrative Experience Keeps Hopes Alive However, another section

of political observers and senior BJP leaders believes that her chances of entering the Union Cabinet remain strong. Purandeswari has considerable administrative and parliamentary experience, having served as a Union Minister of State with portfolios including Human Resource Development and Commerce and Industry during the UPA regime. Her supporters point to her long political career, parliamentary experience and ability to articulate issues effectively as factors that could work in her favour. They also recall that the BJP has, on several occasions, inducted leaders holding organisational responsibilities into ministerial positions when the

political situation and administrative requirements warranted it. Purandeswari's supporters believe her experience could be particularly useful in strengthening coordination between Andhra Pradesh and the Centre. As the Rajahmundry MP, she is also expected to play an important role in raising issues concerning the development of the Coastal Andhra region. BJP Leadership's Next Move Key The real picture is expected to emerge during the next Union Cabinet expansion or reshuffle. The BJP leadership could either continue to utilise Purandeswari's experience at the national organisational level or recognise her administrative and parliamentary credentials by



inducting her into the Union Cabinet. For now, her elevation as National Vice-President has strengthened her position within the BJP. Whether the new responsibility

marks the beginning of a larger national role or becomes a stepping stone to a Union Cabinet berth will depend entirely on the decision of the party's central leadership.

AP Information Commissioner To Issue RTI Orders In Telugu

Mangalagiri, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Ahead of Telugu Language Day, State Information Commissioner Gajula Adenna has decided to issue orders and judgments in Right to Information (RTI) cases in Telugu to make them easily understandable to applicants, officials and the public. Adenna said the dominance of English in RTI proceedings often makes it difficult for ordinary citizens to understand decisions and directions concerning their cases. Issuing orders in Telugu would enable petitioners to know the outcome of their appeals without depending on others for translation or explanation. He said the initiative was aimed not only at promoting Telugu but also at strengthening transparency, accountability and citizen empowerment. More than 15 orders have already been issued in Telugu. In Appeal No. 2263/SIC-



GA/APIC/2025, the appeal was closed through a Telugu order after the appellant opted to withdraw it. In Appeal No. 7366/TSIC/2018/TC6626/2021, directions were issued to the Public Information Officer, and the appeal was later closed after the Commission verified that the information had been provided. Telugu Language Day is observed on August 29 to mark the birth anniversary of Gidugu Venkata Ramamurthy Pantulu. Adenna urged people to use Telugu in homes, educational institutions and government offices. "Let us speak Telugu, preserve Telugu and pass it on to future generations," he said.

APJAC Amaravati Announces Phased Agitation On 29 Employee Demands



Vijayawada, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

The APJAC Amaravati State Committee has announced a phased agitation demanding that the State Government address long-pending issues of government employees and implement pre-election promises. The decision was taken at a state-level meeting at Makineni Basavapunnai Auditorium near Raghavaiah Park in Vijayawada on Friday. APJAC Amaravati Chairman Bopparaju Venkateswarlu said employees had exhausted appeals, representations and discussions with the government. Recalling that employee rights, including the 11th PRC, were secured through sustained agitation, he said the present movement was aimed at protecting employees' legitimate rights and self-respect. The committee has raised 29 key demands, including appointment of a PRC Commissioner, immediate announcement of Interim Relief (IR), release of pending Dearness Allowance (DA), and inclusion of outstanding arrears in employees' pay slips. Bopparaju said the movement was not against the government but sought payment of dues exceeding ₹40,000 crore, including PRC arrears, DA, surrendered leave payments, gratuity and leave encashment.

APJAC Amaravati State Secretary General Paliseti Damodara Rao said the agitation sought implementation of commitments in the alliance government's election manifesto. Movement Committee Chairman T.V. Phani Perraju said employees were disappointed over delays in resolving their financial issues. Two-Phase Agitation Chairpersons from 28 districts unanimously resolved to continue the struggle. The first phase, from August 31 to September 11, includes submitting notices to Collectors, wearing black badges, lunch-hour protests, outreach programmes and round-table meetings. The second phase, from September 15 to 26, will feature "Work to Rule", meetings with public representatives, social media campaigns, human chains and dharmas. A third phase involving non-cooperation, relay hunger strikes, Chalo Vijayawada and an indefinite strike will be announced later. AITUC State President R. Ravindranath, State General Secretary S. Venkatasubbaiah, and CITU State General Secretary A.V. Nageswara Rao extended support. Y.N.V. Suresh Kumar and G.V. Narasayya also expressed solidarity. A delegation led by Bopparaju submitted the agitation notice at the Chief Secretary's office.

World's First Book On Polyglotism Launched At MR Deemed University



Tirupati, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Malla Reddy (MR) Deemed to be University, Tirupati, organised a one-day workshop on "The Power of Languages in the Age of AI: From Polyglotism to Prompt Intelligence", highlighting the importance of language skills, foreign languages and artificial intelligence in the global employment landscape. The event featured the launch of "Polyglotism - Level 1", authored by polyglot and writer Venkat Poolabala and edited by Dr. Yuvaraju Chinnam, Pro Vice-Chancellor of the university. Dr. Chinnam and Poolabala jointly unveiled the book. Dr. Chinnam said language skills

were increasingly important in the AI era, particularly for framing effective prompts. He stressed asking precise questions and using clear language to obtain meaningful responses from AI tools. He also encouraged students to develop analytical and computational thinking rather than merely rely on AI applications. He highlighted foreign-language learning as a pathway to international education and employment and announced Poolabala's appointment as adjunct faculty for the university's forthcoming Foreign Languages Centre. Poolabala, who has authored 60 books in six languages, demonstrated his proficiency in French,

German, Spanish, Italian, English and Japanese, drawing enthusiastic applause from students. He explained that speakers of one, two and three languages are termed monolinguals, bilinguals and trilinguals, while those speaking four or more languages are generally called polyglots. The workshop reflected Founder Chairman Ch. Malla Reddy's vision of integrating emerging technologies with education and enhancing students' AI literacy, language proficiency and global employability. Dean Dr. Madhusudan Reddy, Workshop Coordinator Dr. Devender Reddy and Professor of English Dr. Murthy attended.

Grid Connections Fast-Track for PM-KUSUM Solar Plants

Tirupati, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

APSPDCL Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) Sivashankar Lotheti directed officials to accelerate grid connectivity for solar power plants being developed under the PM-KUSUM scheme within the APSPDCL jurisdiction. He issued the directions during a review meeting in Tirupati on Friday. The CMD said measures were being taken to

promote renewable energy while ensuring quality and reliable nine-hour daytime power supply to the agriculture sector. He said construction of four solar plants in Kuppam, Kadapa and Anantapur districts had been completed. Officials were instructed to speed up works to connect the plants to nearby 33/11 kV substations. Sivashankar Lotheti said increased solar generation would promote renewable energy



and help meet future electricity requirements. APSPDCL Director (Technical) K. Guraiah, Director (Projects & IT) P. Ayub Khan, Chief General Managers Ram

ana Devi and K. Sampath Kumar, General Manager T. Raja Shekhar Reddy and representatives of Mega Engineering & Infrastructure Limited participated.

CM To Inaugurate Polavaram Left Canal On September 2



Payakaraopeta, Aug 29 | TPN Bureau

Preparations are underway for the inauguration of the Polavaram Left Canal and 'Jalaharathi' programme at Payakaraopeta on September 2, with Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu scheduled to inaugurate the canal bringing Godavari waters to North Andhra. State Minister for Mines, Geology and Excise Kollu Ravindra and Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha inspected the public meeting venue and helipad at PL

Puram and reviewed arrangements with officials. They directed authorities to ensure adequate parking, traffic management and security arrangements in view of the expected turnout. A review meeting was held with District Collector Vijayakrishnan, Madugula MLA Bandaru Satyanarayana Murthy and Chodavaram MLA K.S.N.S. Raju. The ministers directed officials to complete all arrangements in advance and conduct the 'Jalaharathi' ceremony on a grand scale. They said September 2 would be a festive day for farmers as

Godavari waters reach North Andhra through the canal, benefiting farmers in Anakapalli and other districts. The ministers described Polavaram as a decades-old dream and said Chandrababu had treated it as a sacred mission. Referring to Amaravati and Polavaram, they said, "A stands for Amaravati and P stands for Polavaram." Oilfield Chairman Gandhi Babji, Bathula Tataiah Babu, Peela Govinda Satyanarayana, Pragada Nageswara Rao, Kotni Balaji, Chintakayala Rajesh and officials were present.

Medical Council To Probe Yarragondapalem Abortion Death

Amaravati, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh Medical Council will conduct an inquiry into the death of a woman following an alleged botched abortion in Yarragondapalem of Prakasam district. The Council took note of reports that the procedure was allegedly performed by staff members while a doctor provided instructions over the phone. Council Chairman Dr. Garlapati Nanda Kishore said the facts would be verified through the Council's Anti-Quackery Committee and appropriate action would be taken within its jurisdiction. He described the incident as deeply tragic and stressed that unauthorised medical practice would not be tolerated. Dr. Nanda Kishore said Dr. Subba Naidu

heads the Anti-Quackery Committee, which works with the Medical and Health Department, district administration and police to identify persons involved in unauthorised or illegal medical practice and facilitate legal action. He said practising modern medicine, prescribing medicines or performing procedures such as abortions requires the prescribed medical qualifications and valid registration. Under Section 20 of the Andhra Pradesh Medical Council Act and Section 34 of the National Medical Commission Act, 2019, practising modern medicine without the required qualifications and registration is illegal. "We will not tolerate quackery or illegal medical practice that endangers people's lives," Dr. Nanda Kishore said.

PG Doctors Cannot Be Made To Work Beyond 24-Hour Shifts

Amaravati, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Director of Medical Education (DME) Dr. Vishnuvardhan directed government medical college principals and teaching hospital superintendents to strictly implement existing rules on duty hours, leave and welfare of postgraduate (PG) medical students. PG doctors must not be assigned more than 24 consecutive hours of duty or work beyond 74 hours a week. Each student must receive one full weekly off, while those performing night duty should be given the following day off, with the provision recorded in duty rosters. Duty schedules may include 24-hour or 10-hour shifts, with at least 30-minute meal breaks excluded from duty hours.

Rosters should ensure 7-8 hours of sleep daily, while regular counselling and stress-management programmes must be conducted. Each PG student is entitled to 20 days of paid casual leave, five days of academic leave and 52 weekly offs annually. Dr. Vishnuvardhan directed colleges to appoint PG Registrars and nodal officers and submit monthly compliance reports by the 10th of the following month. He warned of action against Principals, Superintendents and HODs for violations. Colleges were also instructed to provide drinking water facilities for junior doctors within a month using CSR, HDS or CDS funds where necessary. The orders followed representations from the Junior Doctors' Association.

NMA Seeks G.O. on 58 Ayurveda Surgeries

Vijayawada, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

The National Medical Association (NMA), Andhra Pradesh, has urged Health Minister Satya Kumar Yadav to expedite the issuance of the Government Order (G.O.) permitting Ayurveda PG doctors in Shalya and Shalakya to perform 58 specified surgical procedures. NMA State President Dr. Vemula Bhanu Prakash and State General Secretary Dr. B. Venkata Ramana said nearly nine months had passed since the government announced the proposal, while the G.O. was still pending. They noted that the Minister had announced about 20 days ago that the

order would be issued shortly, but said there had been no visible progress. The NMA leaders stated that the delay was affecting the legal clarity, professional security and opportunities of qualified Ayurveda doctors, while also limiting access to specialised services for the public. They also sought immediate action to commence Shalya and Shalakya PG courses at the Government Ayurveda College. They urged the Minister to review the file personally, direct AYUSH officials to submit necessary proposals and ensure decisions are implemented within a definite timeframe. They said government assurances should translate into concrete action.

AP Police To Build Transit Accommodation, Central Canteen In Mangalagiri

Amaravati, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh Police Department has taken steps to strengthen welfare facilities for police personnel visiting Mangalagiri on official duty, with State DGP Harish Kumar Gupta laying foundation stones for transit accommodation buildings and an Integrated Central Police Canteen on Friday. Transit Accommodation For 240 Personnel The 'Vihara' building for men and 'Vihari' for women will be constructed at the 6th Battalion ASPSP premises. Each ground-plus-two-floor building will cover around 13,603 square feet and accommodate approximately 120 personnel. The facilities will serve personnel visiting Mangalagiri for meetings, training programmes, security duties and other official assignments. The department said the accommodation would provide safe and affordable lodging while reducing the need for outside accommodation and additional expenses. 20,000-Sq-Ft Integrated Canteen An Integrated Central Police Canteen will be constructed at the Mangalagiri Police Headquarters over approximately 20,000 square feet using the Pre-



Engineered Building (PEB) method. It will cater to personnel and their families attached to the headquarters and nearby units, including CID, Police Communications, PCS&S, OCTOPUS and PTO. The existing canteen at the 6th Battalion ASPSP premises has become inadequate due to increased demand. The new facility will provide essential commodities and welfare services under one roof. DGP Harish Kumar Gupta said personnel welfare was a top priority and directed officials to maintain construction quality and complete all three projects within the stipulated timeframe. Additional DGP (Law & Order) N. Madhusudan Reddy, IGP M. Ravi Prakash, B. Rajakumari, Ch. Srikanth and K.V. Mohan Rao, and DIGs Anburajan and R.N. Ammi Reddy were among those present.

BJP Focuses On Women's Safety And Empowerment

Tirupati, Aug 29 | TPN Bureau

Tirupati District BJP Mahila Morcha activists celebrated Raksha Bandhan with BJP State President PVN Madhav on the occasion of Rakhi Purnima. Mahila Morcha leaders tied Rakhis to Madhav and conveyed their greetings, highlighting the traditional bond of brotherhood. Speaking on the occasion, Madhav said the BJP attached high importance to women's safety, dignity and empowerment. He said the Narendra Modi-led Central Government was implementing several welfare and empowerment programmes to help women progress across sectors. Madhav said Rakhi Purnima symbolised affection, love and mutual protection between brothers and sisters in Indian culture. He urged Mahila Morcha activists to actively work towards resolving women's issues and take the party's ide-



ology to the people. He said the BJP was committed to strengthening women's safety, dignity and financial self-reliance and expressed hope that the spirit of unity and brotherhood would grow stronger in society. Tirupati District President Samanchi Srinivas, Kola Anand, Muni Subramanyam, Jalli Madhusudan and others participated.

Lokesh Challenges Jagan To Debate, Sets Local Poll Target For TDP



Ongole, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) Working President Nara Lokesh on Friday challenged former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to a public debate, asking him to fix the date, time and venue. Addressing a TDP workers' coordination meeting for the Ongole Assembly constituency, Lokesh said he was ready to travel to Pulivendula or Tadepalli for the debate.

Lokesh alleged that Jagan did not know the difference between the Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC) and District Selection Committee (DSC). He said the government successfully completed the DSC recruitment process despite 150 cases

being filed against it and filled teacher vacancies. He added that DSC recruitment would continue for the next three years. Referring to the Group-1 examination conducted during the previous government, Lokesh said a court-supervised inquiry was underway into alleged irregularities. Veligonda Project And Development Lokesh said Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu had laid the foundation for the Veligonda project and would soon inaugurate it. He alleged that the previous government had claimed credit without completing the project, while the present government was completing pending works, including rehabilitation and resettlement. He assured party workers that funds would



be allocated in the upcoming Budget for the Ongole Pothuraju Canal and Nallakalva, with other works to be taken up based on priority. Focus On Local Elections Lokesh called upon TDP workers to work unitedly for the upcoming local body elections and expressed confidence that the party would secure a vote share two percentage points higher than in the 2024 elections. He urged workers to maintain direct contact with people and said the 'My TDP' app was monitoring 4 lakh leaders. Lokesh said the TDP-led alliance had won 94 per cent of seats in the last elections and stressed the need to maintain unity among TDP, Jana Sena and BJP. He said three consecutive terms

were necessary to put the State back on track. Ongole Development Plans Ongole MLA Damacharla Janardhan said AMRUT 2.0 works were being taken up to permanently address the city's drinking water problem. He said \$78 crore had been sanctioned for drains and other development works and that the DJR Trust was providing education to 500 underprivileged children from Classes 6 to 10. Satyanarayana Raju, constituency party observer J.D. Siva Prasad, North Andhra party coordinator Damacharla Satya, MLC Kancharla Srikanth and Ongole Parliamentary constituency General Secretary Kothari Nageswara Rao participated.

Rayalaseema in Drought, Government in Deep Slumber: YSRCP

Anantapur, Aug 28, 2026 | TPN Bureau

YSR Congress Party leaders Ananta Venkatarami Reddy and former Minister Sake Sailajanath alleged that the coalition government had failed to address the severe drought in Rayalaseema, leaving farmers without adequate irrigation, drinking water and fodder. Addressing the media at the YSRCP district office in Anantapur on Friday, they said kharif cultivation had fallen to 39-40%, groundwater levels had declined by 12-20 metres and milk production had dropped nearly 75% due to fodder shortages. Ananta Venkatarami Reddy alleged that the government had failed to prepare a contingency plan despite warnings about El Niño and rainfall deficits. He questioned the continued release of Srisailem water for power generation while Rayalaseema faced a crisis. Sailajanath warned that declining Srisailem storage could severely affect Rayalaseema projects and Handri-Neeva. He demanded diversion of 30-40 TMC through Pothireddypadu towards Telugu Ganga, Handri-Neeva, drinking-water systems and other projects.

The leaders demanded compensation for affected farmers, urgent measures to address drinking-water and fodder shortages, and restraint on water releases for power generation. They warned that YSRCP would intensify its agitation, including a protest at Srisailem, if the government failed to act.

Debt, Extravagance Unstoppable Under Coalition Rule: Karumuri

Tadepalli, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

YSRCP spokesperson Karumuri Venkata Reddy alleged that welfare and development have stalled during the coalition government's 26-month rule, while borrowing, corruption and wasteful expenditure continue unchecked. He claimed the government had burdened the state with Rs. 3.86 lakh crore debt, borrowing an average of Rs. 14,859 crore monthly. Karumuri said the coalition borrowed Rs. 2.18 lakh crore within the Budget, Rs. 1.20 lakh crore through corporations and Rs. 47,000 crore for Amaravati, sur-

passing the Rs. 3.31 lakh crore added during the previous YSRCP government's five-year tenure. He questioned the absence of funds for promised welfare schemes. He said the previous government spent Rs. 4.58 lakh crore through DBT and non-DBT welfare and developed schools, hospitals, medical colleges, ports and village secretariats. Karumuri alleged that public money was now being spent on publicity and luxury, citing crores for residences, vehicles, aircraft, advertisements and events, while welfare needs remained unmet.

Janasena to Strengthen Grassroots Organisation: Kandula Durgesh

Mangalagiri, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Minister for Tourism, Culture and Cinematography Kandula Durgesh said Janasena would strengthen its grassroots organisation in line with the vision of party chief and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan. He said leadership would be nurtured and cadre prepared for the upcoming local body elections.

Durgesh participated in the Janasena Athmeya Samavesham at CK Conventi on Hall, Mangalagiri, on Friday. Earlier, he attended a special committee meeting on local body elections chaired by Minister Nadendla Manohar, Chairman of the Janasena Party Political Affairs

Committee. Manohar briefed members on Pawan Kalyan's message and election guidelines. Durgesh said he would soon tour the field, meet party workers, boost their confidence and prepare them for the elections. He said alliance principles would be upheld impartially while considering local conditions. He added that September would focus on strengthening the organisation with everyone's participation, transcending caste, religion and regional barriers. Leaders and activists from East Godavari, NTR district and Nidadavole constituency interacted with him.

Senior CPI Leader Palla Suryarao Passes Away



Vijayawada, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Senior Communist Party of India (CPI) leader and prominent labour movement figure Palla Suryarao, 78, passed away at his residence on Friday morning. He is survived by his wife and two daughters. His son had earlier died due to illness. City Party Secretary G. Koteswara Rao visited the mortal remains, draped the CPI flag and paid floral tributes. CPI State Secretary G. Eswaraiah and National Executive Committee member Akkineni Vanaja also attended the funeral rites. Suryarao, a carpenter by profession,

joined the youth federation inspired by Communist leaders Tammina Potharaju and Uppalapati Ramachandra Raju. He played a key role in mobilising construction workers and served as Secretary of the Vijayawada Construction Workers' Union for several years. He served as Corporator of the 5th Division from 1981 to 1986 and later became Vijayawada City Party Secretary following the death of Koraganji Sekhar Babu. Several CPI, CPM, TDP, YCP and Janasena leaders paid their respects during the funeral procession to Krishnalanka cremation grounds.

Jana Sena Begins Local Body Poll Preparations



Uday Banavath @ Mangalagiri

Jana Sena Party has intensified preparations for the upcoming local body elections, with Political Affairs Committee (PAC) Chairman and Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar urging the cadre to remain prepared and work towards a 100% strike rate. Speaking at an Atmeya Samavesham in Mangalagiri on Friday, Manohar conveyed Party President and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan's message to the local body election committee members. The party felicitated 1,000 candidates who contested the 2021 local body elections. Manohar said the programme reflected Pawan Kalyan's respect for those who stood by the party during difficult circumstances. He recalled that Jana Sena won two ZPTC seats, 182 MPCT seats, 1,209 Sarpanch posts and 4,456 ward member positions in the 2021 elections, despite allegations of forced unanimous victories. Manohar said Pawan Kalyan had prepared a 30-day action plan for the local body polls. Committee members will study constituencies, assess local strengths, weaknesses and reservations, tour parliamentary constituencies, meet Jana Sainiks and Veera Mahilas, build confidence among the cadre and submit feedback to the party's central office. He said local body election strategies would differ from Assembly and other elections, with candidate selection to be undertaken according to party guidelines. Alliance coordination committees

would function at state, district and constituency levels. He urged leaders to uphold the alliance spirit and take the government's welfare and development initiatives to every household. Manohar alleged that YSRCP resorted to high-handedness and harassment against Jana Sena candidates during the 2021 polls, and said the struggles of that election laid the foundation for the change in government in 2024. He asserted that Jana Sena would demonstrate its strength in genuinely democratic elections. He also announced that the Jana Sena Youth Wing would be formally launched in every constituency on September 2, coinciding with Pawan Kalyan's birthday. The wing would focus on encouraging youth participation in politics under the motto "The Nation First, Everything Else Later." Manohar said the party would recognise those who made sacrifices during the 2024 elections and strengthen its organisation towards the 2029 polls. He called for constructive use of social media and greater leadership development. Committee members Mandali Buddha Prasad, T. Siva Shankar, Kandula Durgesh, Vallabhaneni Balashowry, Boliseti Srinivas, Deva Varaprasad, Ch. Vamsi Krishna Yadav, Lokam Madhavi, Patamatla Dharma Raju, Chilakam Madhusudan Reddy, Kotikalapudi Govinda Rao, Samineni Udayabhanu, Yanamala Bhaskar, Korikana Ravi Kumar and State General Secretary Ram Talluri participated.

Jana Sena Prepares Cadre for Local Body Elections



Mangalagiri, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

A special Jana Sena Party committee meeting was held in Mangalagiri on Friday to formulate the party's strategy and guidelines for the upcoming local body elections. Party Political Affairs Committee Chairman and Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar conveyed the message of Party President and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan to committee members. The party honoured 1,000 candidates who contested the 2021 local body elections following Pawan Kalyan's directions. Manohar presided over the felicitation programme, describing it as a mark of respect for the party's grassroots workers.

YSRCP Questions Naidu's Claim Over Veligonda Project

Tadepalli, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

YSRCP SC Cell State President and former MLA TJR Sudhakar Babu alleged that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu was attempting to take credit for the Poola Subbaiah Veligonda Project, despite its major progress under former Chief Minister Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy and YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. Speaking at the YSRCP Central Office on Thursday, Sudhakar Babu said the project was designed to provide irrigation to 4.47 lakh acres and drinking water to 15.25 lakh people across 30 mandals in Prakasam, Nellore and YSR Kadapa districts. He said YSR revived the project

under Jalayagnam, introduced the second tunnel and developed key components. He claimed 20.33 km of tunnelling was completed between 2004 and 2014, while only 6.6 km was excavated during Naidu's 2014-19 tenure. Under YS Jagan, tunnel works progressed faster, with over 85% of the project works completed, he said. Sudhakar Babu questioned Naidu's proposed inauguration of the project after Jagan dedicated the twin tunnels on March 6, 2024. He also demanded ₹112 crore compensation for 758 eligible displaced families and challenged Naidu to make Veligonda a referendum issue in five constituencies.

Debt Mounts, Welfare Stalls Under Coalition Rule

Tadepalli, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

YSRCP spokesperson Karumuri Venkata Reddy alleged that welfare and development had stalled during the 26 months of the coalition government, while borrowing, corruption and wasteful expenditure continued unchecked. He claimed the government had burdened the people with \$3.86 lakh crore in debt, borrowing an average \$14,859 crore a month. Karumuri alleged that the government borrowed \$2.18 lakh crore within the Budget, \$1.20 lakh crore through corporations and \$47,000 crore in the name of Amaravati, while funds were unavailable for promised schemes such as Aadabidda Nidhi and unemployment allowance. He contrasted this with the previous YSRCP government, claiming \$4.58 lakh crore reached beneficiaries through DBT and non-DBT welfare, while schools, hospitals and hostels were modernised and 17 medical colleges initiated. Karumuri alleged that the coalition government was spending heavily on publicity and luxury, citing expenditure on residences, vehicles, aircraft, helicopters and advertisements. He said public money was also being spent on consultants, advisers, events and political promotion while welfare commitments remained unfulfilled.

Naidu Hijacking Veligonda Credit : TJR Sudhakar Babu

Tadepalli, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

YSRCP SC Cell State President and former MLA TJR Sudhakar Babu accused Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu of trying to claim credit for the Poola Subbaiah Veligonda Project, which he said was largely developed under Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy and YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. He said the project was designed to irrigate 4.47 lakh acres and provide drinking water to 15.25 lakh people across 30 mandals. Sudhakar Babu said Chandrababu laid the foundation stone in 1996 but made little progress until 2004. Under YSR's Jalayagnam, the project was revived, while major tunnel and reservoir works progressed. He said YSR and Jagan together completed over 85% of the project, with Jagan dedicating the twin tunnels on March 6, 2024. Questioning plans for another inauguration, Sudhakar Babu demanded Rs. 112 crore compensation for 758 displaced families and challenged Naidu to make Veligonda the sole referendum issue in five constituencies.

AP To Clear 150 Lakh Tonnes Of Legacy Waste By October 2

Continue

and contracting agencies to accelerate the construction of fresh waste processing plants and ensure that all newly generated waste was transported to designated facilities from October 2. Narayana said six Waste-to-Energy plants were being established to convert daily municipal waste into electricity on the same day it was generated. Fresh waste plants would also be established to manage waste during the interim period. The Minister said the government was working towards making Andhra Pradesh a dumping-yard-free State, stressing that a permanent solution to waste management was being pursued.

RS.32,000 Crore Urban Development Works

Speaking to the media after touring Kondapalli Municipality, Narayana said development works worth RS.32,000 crore were being undertaken across municipalities in the State. He said basic infrastructure was being strengthened in urban areas with funds from both the Central and State governments. Accompanied by local MLA Vasantha Krishna Prasad, the Minister inspected the dumping yard and reviewed municipal development requirements. Narayana said 796 crore had been allocated to Kondapalli Municipality under various schemes, with funds being distributed to municipalities based on population. Despite the State's difficult financial position, he said the government was ensuring that development works continued without interruption. He said large-scale municipal development works worth thousands of crores were being undertaken on an unprecedented scale and thanked Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu for allocating the funds. The government, he added, was targeting completion of all major development works within the next two years. Swachh Andhra Corporation MD Sunil Kumar Reddy and representatives of contracting agencies participated in the review.

CM Naidu Pushes Constituency Vision Plans To Drive AP's Growth Continue

The Chief Minister called for development plans based on local resources and the specific needs of each constituency. He said Young Professionals, Knowledge Partners and Swarna Office staff should adopt innovative approaches and use the Data Lake to analyse information and improve public services. Naidu said the government's objective was not merely to provide financial assistance but to make beneficiaries economically self-reliant. Through the P4 project, he called for support to poor families and greater encouragement for entrepreneurs. He also directed officials to increase per capita income and ensure industries receiving approvals are actually grounded in the respective districts and constituencies. He highlighted initiatives such as Sanjeevani and Thalliki Vandanam to reduce the financial burden of education and healthcare on poor and middle-class families. Improved standards and skills in government schools had resulted in one lakh additional students joining them, he said. Recalling the public response to the inauguration of Bhogapuram Airport, Naidu said people had voluntarily promoted the "Wings to the Dreams of North Andhra" campaign. He also cited the successful completion of the transparent Mega DSC recruitment process despite criticism and attempts to create obstacles. "If the government can win the confidence of the people, their cooperation will also be forthcoming on the same scale," Naidu said. Minister Payayavula Keshav, Principal Secretary, Finance and Planning, Piyush Kumar, and APSDP Executive Director V.R. Alaparthi were present.

CM Naidu Launches AI-Based Pramaan Operating System Continue

intends to expand the platform nationwide and contribute to the "Viksit Bharat @ 2047" vision through AI-powered digital solutions. Naidu appreciated the team's efforts and expressed interest in the application's performance and future possibilities. The launch was attended by Pramanick Infotech Chairman Lanka Dinakar, CEO Avinash Raina, Executive Member Ashish, Chartered Accountants Meghana and Durga, and other team members. As the launch coincided with Dinakar's birthday, he described receiving the Chief Minister's blessings on the occasion as a memorable experience. He said the company would continue developing the platform and expanding its reach across India. "We will work towards further developing this platform, which uses AI-based technology to provide modern solutions in accounting and statutory compliance," Dinakar said, adding that the team would continue exploring emerging digital technologies to transform the accounting, compliance and business ecosystem.

Vijayawada Development Slows As Amaravati Gains Pace

Kumar Chand Pullagura @ Vijayawada

The pace of urban development in Vijayawada and Guntur, the twin cities supporting Amaravati, has emerged as a growing political talking point in Andhra Pradesh. While Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has placed Amaravati at the centre of his development vision, questions are being raised over whether the momentum is equally visible in the neighbouring cities and whether the delay could have political implications. Chandrababu Naidu made Amaravati's development a key plank of his political campaign and led the alliance to a decisive victory in the 2024 elections. The previous YSRCP government's approach towards Amaravati was widely debated during the election campaign. The alliance government subsequently projected the development of Amaravati as central to the State's overall progress. In Guntur, MP Pemmasani is being credited by political circles with actively pursuing development works, raising issues in Delhi and securing funds for his con-



stituency. His efforts have reportedly earned appreciation from Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu. However, development in Vijayawada is being perceived as comparatively slow. MP Kesineni Chinni had initially displayed considerable momentum after the alliance government came to power, but critics now argue that the pace has weakened. They also allege that his focus has been largely on sports

infrastructure, including cricket grounds and stadiums, instead of addressing broader urban development requirements. Kesineni Chinni has strongly rejected such criticism, alleging that YSRCP corporators in the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation council are deliberately obstructing the approval of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) prepared for development works.

Meanwhile, differences between Kesineni Chinni and Tiruvuru MLA Kolikapudi have reached the party high command. Kolikapudi has publicly levelled corruption allegations against the Vijayawada MP, adding to the political friction surrounding the constituency. The controversy intensified further following allegations by former MP Kesineni Nani against Kesineni Chinni. In a series of social media posts tagging Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, Kesineni Nani raised serious allegations concerning police harassment, alleged black-money transactions and an acid attack, triggering a political debate. Political observers believe the pace of urban development could influence the forthcoming corporation elections. Visible improvements in roads, infrastructure and civic amenities could strengthen the alliance, while continued delays may create political challenges. With Vijayawada and Guntur playing a crucial role in supporting Amaravati, the focus is now on whether authorities and elected representatives can accelerate development and deliver visible results.

NTR District Sets 1.01 Lakh Crore Annual Credit Plan



Vijayawada, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

District Collector Dr. G. Lakshminsha unveiled the Annual Credit Plan (ACP) of ₹1,00,648 crore for NTR district for 2026-27, an increase of ₹1,148 crore over the previous financial year. Speaking at the District Consultative Committee (DCC) and District Level Review Committee (DLRC) meetings held at the NTR District Collectorate on Friday, Lakshminsha urged banks to fully achieve

the targets and support government welfare and development programmes. The plan includes ₹14,736 crore for agriculture, ₹20,614 crore for MSMEs, ₹38,173 crore for the priority sector and ₹62,475 crore for the non-priority sector. Another ₹2,823 crore has been proposed for the other priority sector. The Collector called for coordinated efforts to improve the district's performance indicators to the A+ category and ensure timely delivery of banking services. He urged banks to support women entrepreneurs under the 'One Family, One Entrepreneur' initiative and expand market access for products made under the 'Swayam' brand. He also directed banks to expedite PM Surya Ghar loans and conduct extensive digital and financial literacy programmes in rural areas.

Buvana Vijayamu To Be Staged In Memory Of Y.V. Krishneswara Rao

Vijayawada, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Drusya Vadhika, a cultural service organisation based in Vijayawada, will organise its August monthly programme, "Buvana Vijayamu," on Sunday, August 30, at the Velidandla Hanumantharaya Grandhalayam (A/C) in Gandhinagar. The programme will begin at 6:30 p.m. and is being held in memory of film and theatre artist and writer Y.V. Krishneswara Rao. Prof. Dr. Sri Konda Ramesh, Director of the School of Planning and Architecture, Vijayawada, will attend the event as the chief guest. The programme is dedicated to Sri Y.S. Krishnaeswara Rao, a noted playwright, director and actor associated with Drusya Vadhika. The event is sponsored by Happy Resorts & Recreations, with Ambati Madhumohan Krishna serving as



president of Drusya Vadhika. The organisers invited art enthusiasts, theatre lovers and cultural patrons to attend the programme and encourage local theatre, dance and music.

Those unable to attend in person can watch the programme through a live stream on the official Drusya Vadhika YouTube channel.

CPM Calls Youth To Draw Inspiration From Bashirbagh Martyrs



Vijayawada, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

CPM State Secretary V. Srinivasa Rao called upon the younger generation to draw inspiration from the Bashirbagh martyrs and participate actively in people's movements. A meeting marking their 27th death anniversary was held at Lenin Centre in Vijayawada on Thursday under the aegis of Left parties. Srinivasa Rao paid tributes to Ramakrishna,

Vishnuvardhan Reddy and Balaswamy, who died in police firing during the 'Chalo Assembly' protest at Bashirbagh on August 28, 2000. He recalled statewide protests against electricity tariff hikes and privatisation policies during the then TDP government. He alleged that reforms were enabling private and foreign companies to gain control over national resources and urged youth to oppose such policies through democratic movements. He said rising prices, the agrarian crisis, drought, inadequate crop prices and unemployment were affecting people. Srinivasa Rao urged Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu to review administrative policies and adopt pro-people measures. He called on youth to unite for equality, democracy and public welfare. CPM leaders and activists attended.

Special Campaign Days to Correct Voter List Errors

Vijayawada, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner and Deputy District Election Officer Dhyanaachandra said voters need not worry about errors or missing names in the draft electoral roll, as special campaign days will be held on Aug 29 and 30. He said Booth Level Officers (BLOs) would be available at all polling stations from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. with the draft voter list. Voters were advised to verify their names, addresses, mobile numbers and photographs and submit applications for corrections wherever necessary. Dhyanaachandra said eligible voters whose names were missing from the draft list could apply for new registration and secure their voting rights. He noted that similar special campaign days were held



on Aug 22 and 23, with the latest dates providing another opportunity. He urged all eligible voters to make use of the campaign days for verification, corrections, additions and fresh registration. For assistance, voters can contact the NTR District helpline at 9154970454.

Collector Inspects EVM Warehouse



Machilipatnam, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

District Election Officer and District Collector DK Balaji inspected the EVM warehouse at the Collectorate premises on Friday as part of routine checks under Election Commission guidelines. During the inspection, Balaji examined the stor-

age arrangements of EVMs, verified seals, reviewed security measures and checked the functioning of CCTV cameras. He also signed the inspection register and instructed security personnel to remain vigilant and ensure strict security at the warehouse. Deputy CEO and State EVM Nodal Officer S. Anjaneyulu, Assistant Collector Namrata Agarwal, District Revenue Officer K. Sridhar Reddy and Election Department staff accompanied the Collector during the inspection. The officials reviewed the overall security and monitoring arrangements to ensure that the electronic voting machines remain securely stored in accordance with prescribed Election Commission procedures.

ITI Admissions Open For Vacant Seats In Krishna

Krishna, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Online applications have been invited for vacant seats in government and private Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) in Krishna district for the 2026-27/28 academic year. According to K.D.L. Government ITI, Gudivada, candidates who have passed

SSC or Class 8 are eligible to apply. Applications can be submitted through the official website itiadmissions.ap.gov.in by August 31. The institute said admissions and counselling would be conducted as per prescribed procedures. Eligible candidates were urged to register before the deadline and utilise the opportunity.

Indrakeeladri Witnesses Grand Giri Pradakshina



Vijayawada, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

A large number of devotees participated in the Giri Pradakshina of Indrakeeladri on the occasion of Sravana Purnima on Friday. The procession began at the Sri Kamadhenu shrine near the Ghat Road entrance. Temple Executive Officer V.K. Sheena Naik inaugurated the event by performing special prayers and breaking a coconut, while Sthanacharya V. Siva Prasad Sharma and others conducted the rituals. The procession passed through Sri Ammavari Temple, Kummariapalem Centre, Vidyadharapuram, Milk Factory, Chittinagar, Kothapeta and Brahmana Veedhi before returning to Indrakeeladri. Vedic scholars chanted mantras and cultural groups performed Thappettu, Kolatam and Bhajans. Women performed Harathi and offered coconuts as the vehicle carrying Sri Durga and Malleswara passed. Temple authorities distributed Kumkuma and Prasadam.



Pavitrotsavams

Special Vedic rituals, including Homas in the Yagashala, were performed on the second day of Pavitrotsavams. The temple was decorated with flowers and lights. EO V.K. Sheena Naik inspected darshan facilities, queue lines, drinking water, parking, security and Durga Ghat facilities and directed officials to ensure sanitation and uninterrupted amenities. Free Prasadam and continuous Anna-Prasadam were provided.

Dasara Plans

Naik reviewed preparations for Devi Sarannavaratri Mahotsavams-2026 and directed departments to prepare plans for the expected rush. Proposals covering sheds, lighting, cultural programmes, security, sanitation, drinking water, Prasadam and medical facilities will be submitted to the Endowments Commissioner.

The Trust Board will consider them on September 3.

Hebah Patel Inaugurates R Studios In Vijayawada



Vijayawada, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Popular film actress Hebah Patel inaugurated R Studios, a newly established facility at Vijayadurga Colony near Novotel Hotel, Vijayawada, on Friday. Senior BJP leader Somu Veerajulu and senior politician Vangaveeti Santan Kumar also attended the inauguration as chief guests.

Speaking at the event, Hebah Patel appreciated studio proprietor Rama Raviteja for bringing a modern studio facility to

Vijayawada, similar to those available in major cities. She said the facility would be useful for interviews, short films, editing, Instagram reels and brand promotions. Somu Veerajulu welcomed the initiative, stating that R Studios would benefit brand promotions, political and celebrity interviews, model shoots, dubbing and podcasts.

He expressed hope that it would provide a platform for emerging artists and content creators. Rama Raviteja said the studio was established primarily to encourage local talent.

He said R Studios is equipped for short films, cover songs, content creation, dubbing, movie promotions and media press meets. The facility will also host live events and awareness programmes on drug-free society and women's safety. Film and political personalities, studio representatives and residents attended the programme.

APSRTC Officials Told To Improve Passenger Facilities

Machilipatnam, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Krishna District APSRTC District Public Transport Officer (DPTO) Kodamanchili Venkateswarlu directed officials to improve cleanliness and passenger facilities across bus stations and buses. He held a district-level review meeting at his Machilipatnam office on Aug 27 with Depot Managers, Traffic Supervisors and Mechanical Supervisors. As part of the Swarna Andhra-Swachh Andhra initiative, he stressed cleanliness of bus sta-

tions and restrooms, availability of clean drinking water and passenger amenities. Officials were instructed to complete self-assessment on the SASA website by Aug 31 and remain prepared for inspections from Sept 1 to 8. Venkateswarlu also directed officials to maintain bus schedules, improve vehicle maintenance and provide benches and fans. In view of increased passenger traffic under the Stree Shakti scheme, buses must stop at designated bus stops and staff should behave courteously with passengers.

Raksha Bandhan Celebrations at Vijayawada Police Commissionerate



Vijayawada, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Admin DCP K.G.V. Saritha and several women police officers conveyed Raksha Bandhan greetings to City Police Commissioner S.V. Raja Sekhara Babu at the City Police Commissionerate office on Friday.

Marking the festival, Saritha tied a Rakhi to the Commissioner and extended her greetings. Several women police officers and school students also tied Rakhis to Raja Sekhara Babu and conveyed their wishes.

Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner said Raksha Bandhan symbolizes the bond of brotherhood and mutual support. He assured that the city police force remained firmly committed to ensuring the safety and protection of women across Vijayawada.

Raja Sekhara Babu thanked the women officers, staff and students for their greetings and extended his festival wishes. Several police officers and personnel from the Commissionerate participated in the celebrations.

Mauritius Minister Offers Prayers At Durga Temple

Vijayawada, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Mauritius Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms Lutchmanah Pentiah visited Goddess Sri Kanaka Durga Temple atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada on Friday.

He received a traditional welcome from Vedic scholars, priests and temple chairman Borra Radhakrishna (Gandhi). After darshan, scholars offered blessings and



presented him prasadam and a portrait of the Goddess.

Odisha High Court Chief Justice Visits Indrakeeladri



Vijayawada, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Odisha High Court Chief Justice Harish Tandon arrived to participate in the 'Pancha Harathi' seva at Indrakeeladri. Temple Chairman Borra Radhakrishna and Executive Officer V.K. Sheena Naik welcomed him. After darshan, Vedic scholars offered blessings and prasadam. Temple authorities also presented Goddess's prasadam and a portrait to him.

VMC Steps Up Public Health Measures, Farmers Get Water Relief

Vijayawada, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Biologist Suryakumar urged residents to observe 'Dry Day' every Friday to prevent dengue, malaria and chikungunya. Following Commissioner

Dhyanaachandra's directions, officials conducted awareness activities in Kandrika. Suryakumar said canal desilting, fogging, anti-larval spraying, drone-based ML oil spraying and release of Gambusia fish were being undertaken. Residents were advised to empty stagnant water from buckets, drums, flower pots, tyres, coolers and refrigerator trays. Biologists, sanitary inspectors, malaria staff and ASHA workers participated.

Food Safety

VMC Public Health Department staff inspected hotels, restaurants, chicken shops, juice shops and RO plants in Rajarajeswaripeta, Ramalingeswarapeta, Patamata and One Town. Officials checked hygiene, meat storage, refrigeration, waste disposal, drainage and pest control. Chicken vendors were instructed to protect meat from dust, flies and insects.



Deficiencies were ordered to be rectified, while fines were imposed on some violators. Sanitary Supervisors Somaraju, Salim Ahmed and Ramesh participated.

Water Relief

At Lakshimpuram sluices in Kruthivennu Mandal, high-capacity motors were inaugurated to pump drainage water into the Ryves Canal, helping address water shortages affecting agriculture and aquaculture.

Pedana MLA Kagitha Krishna Prasad facilitated two transformers for the project. Farmers spent about ₹50 lakh on the motors. APIIC Chairman and West Godavari District TDP President Mantena Rama Raju, alliance leaders, officials and farmers participated. Kagitha assured continued support to farmers and optimal utilisation of available water resources.

NTR District Police Create Awareness On Astram Citizen App



Vijayawada, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

NTR District Police conducted an awareness session at Loyola College in Vijayawada on Friday to educate students about the 'Astram Citizen App' and traffic regulations.

The programme was organised under the directions of Police Commissioner S.V. Raja Sekhara Babu and supervision of In-charge Traffic DCP K. Thirumaleswara

Reddy. Traffic ACP Vamsidhar Goud, Traffic Inspector Ravi Kumar, police personnel and the Astram team participated.

Officials explained that the app, recently launched by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, was designed to improve traffic management and public safety. They highlighted features including 'Track My Auto', 'Be A Cop', 'My Routes', 'Event Calendar', 'Advisory & News', 'Event Permit Form', 'Why Am I Stuck?', 'Black Spot Alerts', 'Parking Registration, Green Channel Requests and Parking Details'. Officials also explained the 'Rahaveer' scheme, which offers a ₹25,000 reward to those who promptly take accident victims to hospitals.

The PM Rahat scheme provides cashless treatment up to ₹1.5 lakh. Students were shown road-safety videos produced by Police Khaki Studio and guided on using the app.

Barla's Bombshell Puts Rajahmundry Politics on Edge

CH Raju @ Rajamahendravaram

Political tensions in Rajahmundry have intensified following Telugu Desam leader Barla Baburao's allegations that the Jakkampudi brothers are linked to "Blade Batch" and cannabis gangs and that the local MLA is allegedly supporting them.

The allegations, made at a press conference at the Rajahmundry Press Club, have triggered a fresh political debate. Baburao targeted the Jakkampudi family and the local MLA, questioning alleged political patronage to groups accused of criminal activities. His allegations have added a new dimension to political developments in Rajahmundry.

Silence Raises Questions

The absence of an immediate response from the Jakkampudi faction or supporters of the local MLA has become a talking point in political circles. Leaders who usually respond strongly to allegations have so far maintained silence, prompting speculation over the reasons. Baburao also



referred to the alleged inauguration by the MLA's father of a pub established by the Jakkampudi brothers in Rajahmundry. He questioned the political significance of the association and raised concerns over alleged links between political figures and those he accused.

From Rajanagaram to Rajahmundry Baburao's focus on Rajahmundry has attracted attention.

His political activities had largely been confined to Rajanagaram constituency, where he raised issues through social media videos. His decision to hold a press conference in Rajahmundry and directly target prominent political figures has trig-



gered speculation about his political strategy.

The political equation has also changed. The Jakkampudi brothers and former MP Bharat had earlier been involved in political differences, but those tensions have reportedly eased. Against this backdrop, Baburao's allegations have raised questions about whether changing political equations are influencing developments.

Who Is Backing Barla?

The key question being discussed in political circles is: "If the MLA is behind the Jakkampudi camp, then who is backing Barla?"

Whether Baburao's allegations are based

solely on his political assessment or form part of a larger strategy remains unclear. His decision to link political allegations with law-and-order concerns and "Blade Batch" activities has given the issue wider significance.

Meanwhile, Baburao displayed CCTV footage, claiming that followers of the Jakkampudi camp visited his residence carrying petrol bottles and attempted to attack him. He also lodged a complaint at Prakash Nagar police station against a Jakkampudi follower who allegedly brought a petrol bottle.

Following the complaint, Prakash Nagar CI Baji Lal visited Baburao's residence on Thursday evening. According to reports, Baji Lal advised him to park his vehicles inside the premises and assured him of security. The allegations have placed the spotlight on Rajahmundry's political equations. The response from the Jakkampudi camp and the local MLA, and whether the controversy develops into a larger confrontation, remains to be seen.

Women Celebrate Raksha Bandhan With Minister Subhash



Ramachandrapuram, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Thousands of women participated in grand Raksha Bandhan celebrations organised by Labour Minister Vasamshetti Subhash at Ramachandrapuram Town Hall under the theme "A Day with Brother". Women tied Rakhis to the Minister, who assured them of his support as a brother during difficult times. Subhash said ₹250 crore had been secured and utilised for constituency development over the past two years. He announced plans to transform Ramachandrapuram and expressed confidence that the Kotipalli-Mukteswaram bridge would be constructed soon.

He said the Alliance government, under Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan and Minister Nara Lokesh, was focusing on women's welfare, entrepreneurship and economic self-reliance. He urged people facing hardships not to lose hope or resort to suicide, assuring support. Subhash said he entered politics to serve people and declared Ramachandrapuram his permanent address, dismissing speculation about shifting to Amalapuram. Women participated in games, singing, Antakshari, tug-of-war and musical chairs. Prizes were distributed, while Vasamsetti Satyam provided new clothes to participants. Jasti Vijayalakshmi and others attended.

Lokesh Launches Hotel Project And Honours Ongole Icons



Ongole, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Minister Nara Lokesh laid the foundation stone for a Radisson five-star hotel at Chadalavada with an investment of ₹100 crore on Friday. Developed jointly by the Ravishankar Group and Ravi Priya Hospitalities LLP, the international-standard hotel will be the first international branded five-star property near Ongole. The hotel will feature 151 luxury rooms, a multi-cuisine restaurant, premium bar, lounge, swimming pool, spa and fitness

centre. Banquet halls and conference facilities spread across 2,100 sq m will promote MICE and business tourism. Located beside NH-16, the project is expected to boost tourism and create employment for local youth. Earlier, Lokesh received a grand welcome from thousands of TDP workers and fans led by MLA Damacharla Janardhan at the KIMS Hospital flyover. He unveiled statues of 20 eminent personalities who contributed to Ongole's development, along with an Ongole Bull statue marking the city's 150th anniversary. He paid floral tributes to the personalities from social, cultural, educational, political and literary fields. The statues aim to preserve their contributions for future generations, while the Ongole Bull symbolises Prakasam's livestock heritage and globally renowned Ongole cattle breed. Later, Lokesh interacted with party workers, received petitions and women cadres tied Rakhis to him.

Eluru Secures Second Place in Electoral Roll Revision



Eluru, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

District Electoral Roll Observer and APCPDCL CMD Loteti Shivashankar said Eluru district secured second place in Andhra Pradesh in the progress of the Special Summary Revision of Electoral Rolls (2026). He congratulated the district administration and political party representatives. Shivashankar, along with District Collector K. Vetriselvi, reviewed the revision process at the Collectorate's Gautami Hall on Friday. He said he had inspected polling stations and Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and expressed sat-

isfaction with their performance. He stressed the need for an accurate and error-free electoral roll before publication of the final list on October 3. He said August 30 was the deadline for filing objections. Collector Vetriselvi attributed the achievement to dedicated efforts and appreciated political parties for their cooperation. She said those aged 18 could register through Form-6. Assistant Collector Shravan Kumar Reddy, DRO Sridevi, Sub-Collector Vinunthna, RDO Lakshmi Prasanna and representatives of TDP, YSRCP, BJP, Janasena, CPM and BSP attended.

ECMO Saves 23-Year-Old Woman After Heart Stops During Childbirth

Rajahmahendravaram, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

A medical team from Yashoda Hospitals, Hitech City, Hyderabad, successfully saved a 23-year-old woman whose heart stopped during childbirth following severe peripartum cardiomyopathy and multi-organ failure. Her condition became critical during delivery when her heart suddenly stopped and other vital organs were affected.

A team led by Interventional Cardiologist Dr. Damodar Reddy Gouni immediately initiated ECMO, a life-support technology that oxygenates blood outside the body and supports vital functions. The patient was treated through coordinated efforts by the Cardiology, Critical Care, Vascular Surgery, Obstetrics & Gynecology and



Nephrology departments.

Dr. Damodar Reddy Gouni, with over 11 years of cardiology experience, played a key role in the emergency intervention. Both the mother and baby recovered and were discharged safely. Dr. Damodar Reddy Gouni and V. Sai Kiran, Marketing Executive, Andhra Pradesh, shared details of the rare case at a press conference in Rajahmundry, highlighting ECMO's role in managing life-threatening emergencies.

4,000 Women Join Varalakshmi Vratam Led By Minister Anitha

Nakkapalli, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Varalakshmi Vratam was celebrated grandly in Nakkapalli under the leadership of Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha, with around 4,000 women participating in the special rituals on Friday. Women from all four mandals of the Payakaraopeta constituency attended the programme in large numbers.

The Varalakshmi Vratam ceremony was conducted according to scriptural traditions under the guidance of Vedic scholars. Special prayers and rituals were performed seeking the blessings of Goddess Varalakshmi for the well-being and prosperity of the people.

Speaking on the occasion, Home Minister Anitha expressed hope that the divine blessings of Goddess Varalakshmi



would always remain upon the people of Andhra Pradesh. She prayed for abundant crops and dairy production across the state and wished for people to lead healthy, happy and prosperous lives. She also prayed for wealth, peace and prosperity to flourish in every household and for the state to progress towards greater abundance.

SP Pratap Siva Kishore Inaugurates New Cyber Cell Building



Eluru, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

District SP K. Pratap Siva Kishore inaugurated the new building of the Eluru District Cyber Cell Police Station on Friday. He said the facility would strengthen efforts to prevent cybercrimes, conduct investigations and improve services to victims. The SP directed officials to use modern technology for efficient

investigations and ensure speedy tracing and recovery of money and assets lost by victims. He said immediately reporting cyber fraud through the 1930 helpline would improve the chances of freezing stolen funds. He called for extensive cyber awareness programmes and advised people not to share bank details, OTPs, ATM information or passwords with strangers. He also urged the public to remain alert to social media scams, fake links, investment fraud and fraudulent job offers. "The goal is to ensure speedy justice for victims," he said. He later inspected the CCS station premises. Additional SP Y. Prasad Rao, DSP D. Sravan Kumar, Cyber Cell Inspector Dasu and other police officials attended.

Police Receive Special Training



Eluru, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Under the directions of District SP K. Pratap Shiva Kishore and DSP D. Sravan Kumar, a special training programme was conducted for Denduluru police personnel under the leadership of Pedavegi Inspector Ch. Rajasekar. Denduluru SI Venkata Kumar conducted the session.

A drill was organized at the Zilla Paris had High School grounds to improve physical fitness and morale. Practical training on crime scene inspection under

Section 194(1) of the BNSS was also provided using a simulated crime scene. The SI explained accurate inspection report preparation, rough sketching with measurements, and proper collection and preservation of physical evidence. Dr. Sundar Babu, Superintendent of Denduluru Government Hospital, conducted CPR training and explained emergency response during cardiac emergencies. The SI said the programme aimed to strengthen the technical and legal standards of criminal investigations.

Women, Students Tie Rakhi to MP



Eluru, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

A festive atmosphere prevailed at Eluru MP Putta Mahesh Kumar's office on Friday on the occasion of Rakhi Purnima. Women and female students arrived in large numbers and tied Rakhis to the MP, conveying their greetings and seeking his blessings. ZP Chairperson Ghanta Padmasri also met Putta Mahesh Kumar and tied a Rakhi. The MP offered sweets

to the women and students, thanked them for their affection and extended his wishes. Later, several leaders and party activists met the MP at his newly constructed residence and camp office in Sitapuram Colony, Raghava Estates, Vaturlu Panchayat. Putta Mahesh Kumar received representations from the public and party leaders from various constituencies and mandals and coordinated with officials to address their grievances.

Bapatla to Be Made Drug-Free

Bapatla, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

District Collector Dr. Vinod Kumar and Additional SP Sudhakar directed all departments to work together to make Bapatla district drug-free. At a Narcotics Coordination review meeting on Friday, District Crime DSP Jagadeesh Naik said special attention was being given to interstate drug trafficking gangs. He revealed that 11 kg of Ganja was seized from two persons in Chirala One Town limits on Aug 24 and cases were registered. Additional SP Sudhakar said joint teams would conduct continuous checks on trains and surprise inspections under Operation Vajraprahara. Collector Vinod Kumar instructed officials to identify cannabis users through drug test kits and intensify awareness programmes in schools and colleges.



He directed teachers to prevent tobacco sales within 500 metres of educational institutions and establish complaint boxes displaying toll-free number 1972. He also called for strengthening Eagle Clubs and providing counselling and rehabilitation through de-addiction centres. The Guntur Eagle Cell CI, SI Rajasekar and others attended.

MLA Malakondaiah Holds Housewarming Ceremony

Chirala, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Chirala MLA Madduluri Malakondaiah and his wife Balakondamma performed a grand housewarming ceremony at their new residence in Kothapeta, Vetapalem Mandal, on Friday. Family members, including their sons Madduluri Gowri Amarnath and Madduluri Mahendra Nath, daughter Devi, son-in-law Trinath Kumar, and their families, participated in the celebrations.

Amid Vedic chants, the family performed Paalu Ponginchadam and Go-puja as part of the housewarming rituals. Later, Ganapati Homam and Sri Satyanarayana Swamy Vratam were conducted with



devotion before the family formally entered the new house. Several prominent persons conveyed their wishes to the MLA and his wife and presented them with new clothes. Public representatives, alliance leaders, party supporters, and well-wishers attended the ceremony and extended their greetings to the family.

Sravana Lakshmi Adorned in Flowers



Vetapalem, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

Grand collective worship was held at the Sri Mahalakshamma Temple in Anumallipeta, Vetapalem, on Friday on the occasion of Sravana Friday.

The presiding deity, Sri Mahalakshamma, was beautifully decorated with 11 varieties of flowers as part of the special celebrations. A large num-

ber of local women and devotees participated in the 'Sravana Lakshmi' festival and performed collective Lakshmi Puja with devotion.

The temple premises were adorned with colourful floral decorations, creating a spiritual atmosphere throughout the celebrations.

Women devotees offered prayers seeking the blessings of Goddess Lakshmi for the prosperity and well-being of their families. Temple women's wing representatives Rajyalakshmi, Satyavathi, Bharati, Ananthalakshmi, Sravanthi, and Bandhavi participated in the programme and supervised the arrangements. Devotees expressed happiness over the grand floral decoration and the opportunity to participate in the special prayers.

Senior Accountant Caught Taking 30,000 Bribe

Narsipatnam, Aug 28 | TPN Bureau

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) caught Narava Vijaya Bhaskar, 45, Senior Accountant at the Divisional Sub-Treasury Office, Narsipatnam, Anakapalli district, while accepting a ₹30,000 bribe on Friday. The case was registered based on a complaint by Parvatham Srinivasa Rao, 63, a retired Tahsildar from Yelamanchili.

According to the ACB, Vijaya Bhaskar initially demanded ₹40,000 to process Srinivasa Rao's pending increments arrears bills for 2023, 2024 and 2025, besides an ensuing EL bill. He later reduced the demand to ₹30,000 and allegedly warned that the bills would not be processed without payment.

The ACB laid a trap at about 12.25 pm at the Narsipatnam treasury office and caught Vijaya Bhaskar red-handed while accepting the amount. A case was registered under Section 7 of the Prevention of



Corruption Act, 1988, as amended in 2018. The ACB urged the public to report corruption through toll-free number 1064 or mobile number 9440440057.

Editorial

Government Employees Deserve Fair Treatment, Not Delayed Benefits

The concerns raised by Andhra Pradesh government employees at the Amaravati JAC meeting deserve attention. Their central question is simple and lawful: when Ministers, MLAs, IAS officers and IPS officers receive their entitled benefits and facilities without delays, why are the legitimate financial benefits of employees being postponed? Employee unions have strongly questioned the government over pending Dearness Allowance (DA) payments and other long-overdue benefits. The issue is not merely about money. It is about fairness, dignity and the confidence employees place in the administration. If financial constraints are cited as the reason for delaying employee benefits, the government must explain why similar constraints do not appear to affect the privileges and entitlements available to political leaders and senior officials. The government cannot expect efficiency, discipline and commitment from its workforce while simultaneously allowing legitimate dues to remain pending for extended periods. Employees have families, financial commitments and rising costs. Delaying their lawful benefits affects their household security and morale.

Another troubling issue is the treatment of outsourcing employees. In many departments, outsourcing personnel are carrying heavy workloads, yet concerns about excessive work, inadequate compensation and job insecurity continue to surface. A workforce that performs essential public functions should not be treated as a source of inexpensive labour. Governments may face genuine financial pressures, but fiscal difficulties cannot become a permanent justification for unequal treatment. Transparency about pending payments, a clear timetable for settlement and consistent application of benefits are essential.

Government employees are not a burden on the state. They are among its primary functionaries, responsible for translating policies into services for citizens. The government should therefore change its approach: respect employees, address their grievances promptly and ensure that those who keep the administration running are themselves treated fairly and responsibly.

- Editor

Dr. Janaki Ammal: The Scientist who made sugarcane sweeter in India



At a time when higher education and scientific careers were largely considered the preserve of men, Dr. Edavaleth Kakkat Janaki Ammal emerged as one of India's most remarkable scientists. She is India's First Botanist, Cytogeneticist, Plant Breeder and Conservationist broke several barriers through scholarship, determination and scientific excellence. Her pioneering research on sugarcane chromosomes has revolutionized the sweetness of Indian Sugarcane. Today, India is the world's largest consumer and the second-largest producer of sugar, contributing approximately 19% to 20% of global sugar production and accounting for about 15% of global consumption. Because of its massive scale, trends in the Indian sugar industry directly dictate global market dynamics and international pricing. Her contribution reflects today with 541 operational sugar mills (out of over 700 installed factories) in India and the total extent of sugarcane cultivation covers approximately 58.31 lakh

hectares (5.83 million hectares) as of the August 2026 Kharif season. The industry supports approximately 50 million sugarcane farmers and provides direct employment to around 5 lakh mill workers. Because of Dr Janaki Ammal's inventions, sugarcane is now one of the important crops in states like Uttar Pradesh, Mah arashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Her genetic maps allowed breeders to precisely pick variants that boosted the sucrose content of local cane up to 16% to 20%. Born on 4 November 1897 at Tellicherry, present-day Thalassery in Kerala, Janaki Ammal grew up in a progressive family that encouraged education. In the early twentieth century, when opportunities for women in higher education were extremely limited, she chose science as her career. She studied at Queen Mary's College and Presidency College in Madras, earning an Honours degree in Botany. She later travelled to the United States and



studied at the University of Michigan, where she specialized in Plant Cytology and Genetics. She earned her doctorate in 1931, becoming the first woman of Indian descent to receive a PhD in Botany from the University of Michigan. She wanted science to solve practical problems and contribute to agriculture and society. **The scientist who made sugarcane sweeter** One of her most important contributions came through her work at the Sugarcane Breeding Institute in Coimbatore, where she worked from 1934 to 1939. At that time, India had indigenous sugarcane varieties that were hardy and well adapted to local conditions, but many had relatively low sugar content. Foreign varieties were often sweeter but did not necessarily perform well under Indian climatic conditions. Janaki Ammal applied the emerging science of Cytogenetics, the study of chromosomes and their relationship to heredity, to sugarcane breed-

BVS Kumar



An Alumnus of
Agriculture College
Bapatla

ing. She studied chromosome numbers and used hybridization to combine desirable characteristics from different varieties and related grasses. Her research included interspecific and intergeneric crosses involving sugarcane and related plants. Her work became an important part of the effort to develop sugarcane varieties that were both productive with more sucrose content and better suited to Indian conditions. Returning to serve India After years of research abroad, Janaki Ammal returned to India at a time when the country was building its scientific institutions. She was invited to help reorganize the Botanical Survey of India and served in important scientific positions, including as Head of the Central Botanical Laboratory, Howrah. She later worked in Jammu and Kashmir and at other research institutions. Her approach to Botany was broad. She studied not only agricultural and horticultural plants but also medicinal plants and species of economic importance. Her interest gradually extended from plant genetics to ethnobotany, the study of the relationship between people and plants and the conservation of India's biological wealth. **Recognition and legacy** The Government of India honored her with the Padma Shree in 1977, recognizing her outstanding contribution to science. Janaki Ammal passed away on 7 February 1984, but her scientific legacy continues. Her work connects several

areas that are extremely relevant today in food security, crop improvement, genetics, biodiversity, medicinal plants and environmental conservation. An inspiration for generations Dr. Janaki Ammal's life offers a powerful lesson: scientific progress is created not merely by sophisticated laboratories but by courage, curiosity and perseverance with commitment and dedication. She entered science when women had very few opportunities, succeeded on the international stage, returned to serve India and used her knowledge for agriculture and conservation. Today, when India is looking towards sustainable and profitable agriculture, climate-resilient crops, biodiversity conservation and greater participation of women in science, Janaki Ammal's work has renewed relevance. She was much more than India's pioneering woman Botanist. She was a Scientist who understood the intimate connection between plants, people, agriculture and the environment. Her story deserves to be told not merely as a chapter in the history of Indian Science, but as an inspiration to every young woman and man who dreams of using knowledge to make the world better. Dr. Janaki Ammal proved that a determined Scientist can transcend the boundaries of gender, geography and convention, leaving behind a remarkable legacy that continues to flourish. She should be remembered by our farmers alongside Sir Arthur Cotton or Mokshag undam Visvesvarayya.

World's Largest Real-Time Payment System: UPI



Ten years ago, sending money digitally was still not a part of every Indian's life, but today, we are paying for a cup of tea, for vegetable vander street-side, for any purchase without hard cash in purse, paying in seconds using smart phone. UPI works by connecting multiple bank accounts to a single mobile app, letting people send money, pay to merchants, and manage banking tasks round the clock. Security is built in through two-factor authentication and encryption, which is part of why the system gained trust so quickly across the country, both in urban and rural areas.

Decade of Digital Payments History

The Unified Payments Interface (UPI), launched on 25 August 2016 by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) under the regulatory oversight of the RBI completed 10 years of transforming digital payments in India. UPI has emerged as the backbone of India's digital payments ecosystem and a critical driver of financial inclusion. UPI had emerged as one of the most successful pillars of India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), providing an interoperable, real-time payments platform that enables seamless person-to-person and

person-to-merchant transactions

Prof Burra
Madhusudhan Reddy



Education Expert
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through a single application. However, person-to-person transactions dominate in value, accounting for 71 percent, reflecting its utility in personal transactions.

UPI Transaction Volume and Value:

Over a decade of operations, UPI has demonstrated extraordinary scale and momentum. Annual transaction volume expanded from just 1.78 crore transactions in FY 2016-17 to over 24,162 crore transactions in FY 2025-26, representing an almost 13,000-fold surge in transaction volume. Transaction value rose sharply from 0.07 lakh crore in FY 2017 to approximately 7314 lakh crore in FY 2026, translating into a more than 4,000-fold increase in transaction value, according to the ministry. Monthly transaction volumes crossed 2,300 crore for the first time in May 2026, reaching 2,320 crore transactions and rising to 2,366 crore transactions recorded in July 2026. Today, UPI is the most preferred mode of transac-

tion for millions of users, transforming the way India transacts through a single operation. By bridging the digital divide, advancing financial inclusion, and expanding access to digital financial services, UPI has empowered individuals and communities across the country while driving broad-based economic participation. The UPI payment system processes an average of over 66 crore transactions every single day. These digital transactions account for nearly 49 percent of the world's real-time transaction volume. The cross-border acceptance is active in 11 countries, including the UAE, France, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Qatar, Cambodia, and the Maldives. This step further strengthens bilateral digital financial connectivity between India and partner nations.

The unprecedented scale, reliability, and interoperability achieved by UPI have received global recognition, with the IMF acknowledging it as the world's largest real-time payment system by transaction volume, underscoring India's leadership in building scalable, inclusive, and innovative digital public infrastructure.

When Rain Was Our Playground



My childhood days in the rainy season were as beautiful and enjoyable as a rainbow. In fact, rains are a special attraction that nature offers as a counter to the harsh summer. Months of hot days would vanish like a magician's trick with the arrival of the monsoons. The first spell of rain would bring enormous joy and relief to parched throats and scorched lands. It would bring a dramatic change to the landscape, making it more colourful. All living beings would feel younger and more energetic.

The rains are many things to many people. But for farmers, it is time to shed their summer lethargy and get ready to produce gems from the soil. For children, it is time to play. Unlike now, there were no weather forecasts or rain predictions. If it rained incessantly for a few days, people were unaware of whether it was due to the monsoon or some cyclonic effect. Floods or famines, people took everything in their stride. They never complained against anyone or anything and simply moved on. During my school days, rain coming from the sky always puzzled me. Was there any reservoir up in the sky? Where did the clouds go to drink water? Who was sending down the rain? Later, these doubts were cleared while studying the 'Water Cycle' topic in Science class. Once dense clouds gathered in the sky and opened up, we siblings

and cousins would run into the front yard of our house to enjoy the rain. Only after much shouting and yelling would we retreat. Sometimes, we were literally dragged back into the house, completely soaked to the skin. Our elders feared that we would catch a cold or develop a fever. But we did not care. When we caught a cold or developed a fever, our par-

Doing such things was a joy forever. After the rain stopped, our next bout of water games would commence. We would immerse ourselves in making water channels across the street, making round basins with our feet, building sandcastles and so on. Watching rainbows with awe, observing wriggling earthworms and roaming armies of millipedes, hearing the croaking of frogs and watching dragonflies flying at jet speed were some of the favourite pastimes of our generation. We learnt

more from nature than from classrooms. Now, all parents want their children to learn everything from the classroom. Interaction with nature has been reduced to almost zero. Nothing deterred us, and nobody stopped us from playing in muddy waters. Even frolicking in floodwater was not a taboo. Such was the freedom we enjoyed in those halcyon days. Interference was minimal and monitoring was unknown. In fact, nobody had any expectations of anyone. Life used to move at its leisurely pace. No pressures and deadlines were imposed. We grew up naturally, retaining our childlike qualities intact. But the current generation of children is imprisoned in the name of education and deprived of the simple pleasures that nature offers aplenty, free of cost.

Pulluru Jagadishwar
Rao



Revenue Divisional Officer
Adilabad
pjdrao@123@gmail.com

Kharge Seeks Clarity On Special Parliament Session



Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking clarity on reports that the Centre may convene a special session of Parliament to introduce legislation related to delimitation. Kharge has described delimitation as an issue of major national importance and urged the government to clearly state its intentions before taking any legislative step. The Congress has also reiterated its demand that the existing strength of the Lok Sabha should remain unchanged for the next 25 years. Delimitation involves redrawing parliamentary constituencies based on population figures. The issue has become politically sensitive because several states, particularly in southern India, fear that population-based delimitation could alter the current balance of representation in Parliament. The Congress argues that states which successfully implemented population-control measures should not be penalised through a reduction in their political representation. Party leaders have repeatedly raised concerns that states with larger populations could gain a greater share of Lok Sabha seats under a new delimitation exercise. Kharge has therefore called for broad consultations involving political parties and state governments before any decision is taken. The Congress wants the Centre to clarify whether a special session is actually being planned and whether new delimitation Bills could be introduced. The issue is also linked to the Census and the constitutional requirement for a fresh delimitation exercise after the first Census conducted following 2026. Any change in the distribution of parliamentary constituencies could have long-term political consequences. The debate has gained further significance because delimitation is closely connected with women's reservation in Parliament. The implementation of the reservation law is expected to be linked to the completion of the delimitation process. Opposition parties have been demanding greater transparency over the government's plans, arguing that such a major constitutional and political exercise should not be undertaken without consensus. With political parties already preparing for future elections, the delimitation issue is likely to become increasingly contentious. Kharge's letter has once again brought the subject into the national spotlight, with the Congress insisting that federal balance and the interests of all states must be protected before any new delimitation exercise is undertaken.

Tharoor Urges Media To Avoid Boasting

Congress MP and former diplomat Shashi Tharoor has welcomed India's swift response to the devastating flash floods in Nepal, while urging Indian media outlets to avoid excessive publicity or "boasting" about the assistance being provided. Speaking at the NDTV World Anviksha Summit in Kathmandu, Tharoor said India had done the right thing by responding quickly to Nepal's crisis. He described the immediate relief assistance as the natural responsibility of a close neighbour and said more help should be provided if required. At the same time, Tharoor recalled India's experience during Nepal's earthquake and warned that the way humanitarian assistance is presented can affect bilateral relations. He said India had provided substantial help at the time, but sections of the Indian media had highlighted the assistance in a manner that created resentment among Nepalis. According to Tharoor, people facing a disaster do not need to be repeatedly reminded that another country is helping them. He argued that the media should show the same sensitivity towards India-Nepal relations as the government does. His remarks come as India has begun sending emergency relief material to flood-hit Nepal. The assistance is aimed at supporting rescue and recovery efforts after devastating floods swept through parts of the Himalayan nation, destroying homes, bridges, roads and other infrastructure. The disaster has also affected a large number of Indian nationals, including pilgrims travelling towards the Kailash Mansarovar region. Families across India are seeking information about relatives who remain missing or stranded. Tharoor stressed that Nepal needs all the assistance it can receive at this critical moment. He also called for a broader change in India's approach towards its Himalayan neighbour, arguing that New Delhi should engage with Nepal as a sovereign and equal country. The former diplomat said strong bilateral relations require sensitivity and mutual respect, particularly during moments of crisis. Humanitarian assistance, he suggested, should strengthen the relationship rather than create a perception of superiority. With rescue operations still underway, India's support is expected to continue. Tharoor's message is that while helping a neighbour during a catastrophe is important, how that help is communicated can be equally significant for long-term India-Nepal ties.

Top Law School Cancels Convocation Amid Row

The National Law School of India University (NLSIU) in Bengaluru has cancelled its 34th annual convocation for the graduating batch of 2026, citing "unavoidable circumstances". The ceremony was earlier scheduled to take place on September 12. The cancellation comes amid growing opposition from students and alumni over the proposed participation of Bar Council of India Chairman Manan Kumar Mishra and Chief Justice of India Surya Kant at the convocation. According to the university, the degrees of graduating students will instead be conferred in absentia, subject to approval from the appropriate governing bodies. Students will be given the option of receiving their certificates by courier or collecting them directly from the campus. The controversy has its roots in a wider dispute involving the BCI and another premier law institution, NALSAR. Students at NLSIU described the BCI's earlier actions as an attack on free speech. They also criticised a directive seeking information about students and faculty members involved in the campaign against the proposed participation of the legal officials. Amid the growing tensions, CJI Surya Kant reportedly held an interaction with NLSIU students to understand their concerns. The cancellation of the convocation has now added another dimension to the controversy. Instead of celebrating their graduation together, the 2026 batch will receive their degrees through an alternative process. The development has sparked a wider debate over student dissent, institutional autonomy and the relationship between law students and regulatory bodies.



PM Modi Set For Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan Visit

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to undertake a four-day visit to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan from August 29 to September 1, with the trip expected to strengthen India's engagement with Central Asia and deepen cooperation on regional and global issues. Modi will first visit Uzbekistan on August 29 and 30 for bilateral talks with President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The visit comes as India seeks to expand its strategic partnership with Uzbekistan in areas including trade, connectivity, defence, technology, energy and regional security. From Uzbekistan, the Prime Minister will travel to Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan to participate in the 26th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit on August 31 and September 1. The summit will bring together leaders of major Eurasian countries to discuss regional security, economic cooperation and development. The SCO meeting is expected to focus on terrorism, connectivity,



trade, energy and broader regional stability. Discussions on strengthening economic cooperation within the grouping are also likely to receive attention, including the proposed SCO Development Bank. Modi's visit is also significant against the backdrop of evolving India-China relations. Recent diplomatic contacts between New

Delhi and Beijing have indicated efforts to stabilise bilateral ties and maintain dialogue on important issues. The SCO summit could provide an opportunity for Modi to engage with Chinese President Xi Jinping and other regional leaders. Russian President Vladimir Putin is also expected to meet Modi on the sidelines of the sum-

mit, adding importance to the gathering for India's engagement with Moscow. India has traditionally viewed Central Asia as strategically important because of its geographical location, natural resources and connectivity potential. However, geographical barriers and the lack of direct land access have complicated New Delhi's efforts to expand economic links with the region. The upcoming visit therefore carries significance beyond routine diplomacy. It reflects India's effort to strengthen its presence in Central Asia, maintain strategic partnerships with Russia and other regional powers, and pursue its broader multi-alignment policy. Modi's engagements in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan are expected to give fresh momentum to India's Central Asia strategy while providing an important platform to discuss regional security, connectivity, trade and economic cooperation.

Nearly 300 Indians Missing In Nepal Floods

Nepal is facing a devastating humanitarian crisis after massive flash floods struck the Rasuwa region near the Nepal-Tibet border, leaving at least 160 people dead and thousands unaccounted for. Nepal Foreign Minister Shishir Khanal said nearly 300 Indian nationals, many of them pilgrims travelling for the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, have been reported missing. Around 500 foreign nationals in total are currently out of contact. The disaster struck suddenly, sending huge volumes of muddy water, rocks and debris through settlements along the river system. Entire towns and villages were severely damaged within hours, with homes, roads, bridges and other infrastructure either washed away or buried under mud. Speaking about the situation, Khanal described the scale of the destruction as unprecedented. He said thousands of families had lost their homes and that authorities were still trying to determine the full extent of the disaster.



The large number of missing Indians has raised serious concerns in India, particularly because many were believed to be pilgrims travelling through the region. Families are anxiously waiting for information about their relatives as rescue teams struggle to reach affected areas. Nepal's security forces and emergency agencies have launched extensive search-and-rescue oper-

ations. However, the destruction of roads and bridges has made access to several locations extremely difficult. Communication networks have also been disrupted in some areas, complicating efforts to establish contact with people stranded in remote locations. Nepal's army has rescued more than 100 people from Timure in Rasuwa, while rescue teams continue operations in the worst-hit

areas. Authorities are also assessing the damage and providing emergency assistance to survivors. India is coordinating with Nepal to locate its citizens and assist those affected by the disaster. Indian authorities are closely monitoring the situation and working with Nepalese agencies on rescue and relief operations. The disaster has also affected areas on the Tibetan side of the border, with significant casualties and infrastructure damage reported there. For Nepal, the immediate priorities are rescuing survivors, locating missing people and providing shelter and medical assistance. For India, the focus remains on tracing missing nationals and ensuring the safe return of those stranded. With thousands of people still unaccounted for, the full scale of the tragedy remains unclear. Rescue teams are continuing their efforts amid extremely challenging conditions, while families on both sides of the border wait anxiously for news of their loved ones.

New Myanmar Drug Route Alarms Assam

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has raised serious concerns over the emergence of a new drug trafficking route from Myanmar through Arunachal Pradesh into Assam. Sarma said drug traffickers who previously relied on the Moreh-Manipur corridor are now attempting to use a different route through Changlang district in Arunachal Pradesh before reaching Tinsukia in Assam. The new corridor came to light during investigations into recent drug trafficking cases. Describing the development as a "very worrying signal" for Upper Assam, the Chief Minister said the changing routes showed that drug networks were attempting to evade intensified enforcement measures. He warned that authorities would continue to target traffickers regardless of which route they chose. Assam has significantly intensified its crackdown on narcotics in recent weeks. According to Sarma, authorities



recently seized drugs worth around ₹80 crore that were allegedly being transported towards Punjab. He said the scale of the seizure highlighted the growing challenge posed by organised drug networks operating across state and international borders. The emergence of the new route has also increased concerns because Arunachal Pradesh

shares a long and difficult-to-monitor border with Myanmar. The mountainous terrain and remote locations can make surveillance and enforcement particularly challenging. Officials said drug-producing networks in Myanmar have historically used India's Northeast as a transit corridor. The latest shift indicates that trafficking groups may be constantly chang-

ing their routes to avoid security agencies. Arunachal Pradesh has also stepped up its own anti-drug operations, with authorities arresting several people allegedly involved in narcotics trafficking. Sarma has made the fight against drugs a major priority for his government and has repeatedly called for stronger coordination between law-enforcement agencies across the Northeast. The latest development has therefore triggered concerns not only for Assam but for the wider region. Authorities fear that the new corridor could expand if traffickers are not stopped at an early stage. Sarma has made it clear that changing routes will not weaken the government's crackdown. With increased surveillance, seizures and arrests expected along the Myanmar-Arunachal-Assam corridor, security agencies are now focusing on preventing the emerging route from becoming an established drug-trafficking network.

MP School Education Department Tops Payment Probe

Madhya Pradesh's School Education Department has emerged as the department with the highest number of offices flagged in a statewide investigation into suspected irregularities in government payments. The probe is examining transactions worth around ₹648 crore made through the state's financial management system. The investigation is being conducted by the State Financial Intelligence Cell, which was established to identify suspicious payment patterns through the government treasury system. Officials said the investigation covers transactions suspected to be irregular, fraudulent, duplicated or excessive. Of the 187 Drawing and Disbursing Offices flagged across various government departments, 45 belong to the School Education Department. This is the highest number among all departments. The Revenue Department follows with 43 flagged offices, while the Tribal Affairs Department has 26. The investigation has identified around ₹349 crore in irregular



transfers and another ₹299 crore in payments categorised as suspicious, fraudulent, duplicate or excessive. However, officials have cautioned that these figures represent transactions that triggered alerts and do not automatically mean that the entire amount was misappropriated. Investigators have also identified nearly ₹305 crore across 199 suspicious transactions involving trans-

fers to private bank accounts linked to government officials, employees and their relatives. Another ₹293 crore meant to remain in Treasury Personal Deposit accounts was reportedly transferred to other bank accounts. The probe has uncovered several weaknesses in the government payment system. These include duplicate employee codes, changes

to registered mobile numbers, shared login credentials and mismatches between employee records and bank-account details. Such vulnerabilities could potentially facilitate unauthorised or duplicate payments. Authorities have already recovered around ₹56 crore and reversed irregular transfers worth nearly ₹164 crore, bringing the amount addressed so far to approximately ₹220 crore. Where investigations indicate criminal wrongdoing, cases have been referred for further action, with FIRs reportedly registered against more than 50 officials over the past three years. Following the findings, the Madhya Pradesh government has introduced additional safeguards, including stronger system validation, restrictions on changing registered mobile numbers, payment limits and mandatory two-factor authentication. The investigation is continuing, with officials examining the flagged transactions to determine which cases involve genuine errors and which may point to financial misconduct.



China Warns Of Fresh Risk To Nepal Rescue



China has warned of a fresh geological threat that could further complicate rescue operations following the devastating floods and landslides along the Nepal-China border. Authorities in Beijing have identified a barrier lake upstream from the affected Himalayan border area. The lake has already begun overflowing, raising concerns that a sudden release of water could trigger another surge and create additional danger for people in the region. According to Chinese authorities, the barrier lake is located near the meeting point of the Chhochen Khola and Purepu Tsangpo rivers, northeast of the disaster-hit area. China's Ministry of Water Resources has increased monitoring of the lake and is assessing the possibility of further geological hazards. The latest warning comes as rescue teams continue searching for hundreds of people missing after the catastrophic flash floods. The disaster caused extensive destruction in Nepal and Tibet, sweeping away homes, roads, bridges and power infrastructure. The barrier lake was estimated to contain around 2 million cubic metres of water on Thursday, while another 3 million cubic metres could flow into it over the next three days. Authorities are therefore keeping a close watch on water levels and surrounding geological conditions. The potential threat has added another challenge for rescue teams already working in extremely difficult terrain. Several roads and bridges have been damaged, leaving some areas difficult to access. Rescue workers must now balance the urgent search for survivors with the possibility of another flood or landslide. China has deployed additional fire and rescue personnel from Beijing and Chengdu to assist local police and emergency teams. Authorities have also evacuated residents from vulnerable areas on the Tibetan side of the border. The latest danger follows the massive flash flood that struck the region on August 26. A huge wall of mud and rock entered the Lhende River near the border, triggering a powerful surge that travelled downstream through the Bhote Kosi and Trishuli river systems in Nepal. The disaster has already caused a large number of deaths and left hundreds of people missing. Critical infrastructure has been destroyed, while rescue and relief operations remain underway on both sides of the border. The emergence of a new barrier lake highlights the continuing dangers facing the region even after the initial floodwaters have receded. With unstable slopes, blocked waterways and changing water levels posing additional risks, authorities are closely monitoring the situation. For rescuers, the priority remains finding survivors and providing emergency assistance, but the possibility of another sudden surge means operations must proceed with extreme caution.

Trump Team Defends Plan To Revoke 2 Lakh Visas

The Trump administration is preparing a major review of temporary US visas that could eventually lead to the cancellation of up to 2 lakh business and tourist visas. The move targets foreign nationals who entered the United States on temporary visas and later applied for asylum or sought to remain permanently.



US State Department spokesperson Tommy Pigott defended the proposed action, saying that a US visa is "a privilege, not a right." He said the administration was targeting what it considers fraud and abuse in the visa system. The review mainly concerns B1 and B2 visas. B1 visas are generally issued for business travel, while B2 visas are meant for tourism, family visits and certain medical purposes. According to US officials, authorities are examining cases in which people entered the country claiming they intended to stay temporarily but later applied for asylum. The key issue is whether applicants misrepresented their intentions when they originally applied for their visas. The administration argues that temporary visas are issued with the expectation that visitors will eventually return to their home countries. If authorities determine that an applicant deliberately concealed an intention to remain permanently, officials could consider that fraud and revoke the visa.

However, applying for asylum after entering the US does not automatically mean that a person committed fraud. Authorities are specifically looking at whether the individual had already decided to remain permanently before obtaining the temporary visa and failed to disclose that intention during the visa process.

The State Department has not officially confirmed that exactly 2 lakh visas will be revoked. Officials have indicated that the figure could change as the review progresses and that the cancellations would take place in phases rather than all at once.

The review could affect nationals from several countries, including potentially Indians. However, US officials have not provided a specific figure for Indian nationals who could be affected and have not singled out India for special treatment.

The proposed action is part of President Donald Trump's broader immigration crackdown. His administration has increased scrutiny of visa applicants and taken several steps aimed at tightening both legal and illegal immigration.

Officials have also stressed that revoking a visa does not automatically mean immediate deportation for someone already in the United States with a pending asylum case. Their immigration status could instead be affected through separate legal procedures. The proposed mass cancellation could become one of the largest visa-revocation exercises in US history. It has already raised concerns among immigration advocates and could face legal challenges. For now, the administration says the focus is on preventing misuse of temporary visas. For foreign nationals holding US visitor visas, the latest policy sends a clear message that authorities are prepared to take action if they believe the original purpose of a visa was misrepresented.

China Denies Dam Link To Nepal Floods

China has rejected allegations that the devastating flash floods in Nepal were caused by the collapse of a "geological disaster dam" on the Chinese side of the border. Beijing has also dismissed claims that it failed to provide an early warning to Nepal before the disaster.

The flash floods struck areas around the Nepal-China border, causing widespread destruction and leaving hundreds of people dead or missing. Roads, bridges, power infrastructure and buildings were swept away by powerful torrents of water, mud and debris. Questions emerged in Nepal over whether a natural geological blockage or dam had formed upstream and later collapsed, sending a sudden surge of water into Nepal. There were also concerns about whether an earlier warning from Chinese authorities could have helped people living downstream move to safer locations.

China has rejected both allegations, calling them false. The Chinese Embassy in Nepal said



the disaster was triggered by an earthquake or earthquake-like event and a massive landslide, rather than the collapse of a geological dam on the Chinese side. However, preliminary geological and satellite assessments have pointed towards an ice-rock avalanche or glacial collapse as the likely trigger. The collapse sent huge quantities of ice, rock and debris into the Lhende Khola river,

generating a powerful downstream surge.

The event caused extensive destruction on both sides of the border. The floodwaters swept through settlements and damaged critical infrastructure, while rescue operations have been complicated by damaged roads, communication networks and difficult Himalayan terrain. Chinese authorities have launched

large-scale rescue and relief operations in the affected areas. Nepal and China are also coordinating their efforts to locate missing people and provide emergency assistance.

The disaster has renewed attention on the growing risks posed by unstable glaciers and mountain slopes in the Himalayas. Scientists have warned that rising temperatures, glacier melt and changing weather patterns could increase the likelihood of such extreme events.

The incident has also highlighted the importance of cross-border early-warning systems. Nepal and China have agreed to exchange meteorological information to improve preparedness for future disasters.

For now, China has firmly denied that a collapsed geological dam on its territory caused the Nepal floods. While investigations into the exact sequence of events continue, authorities on both sides are focusing on rescue, relief and preventing further disasters.

Putin Moves To Escalate Ukraine War As Talks Stall

Russia is preparing to intensify its military campaign in Ukraine after peace negotiations were reportedly pushed to a dead end, raising fresh concerns that the nearly four-year-old war could enter an even more dangerous phase.

People familiar with the Kremlin's thinking said Moscow is considering a new wave of powerful conventional ballistic missile strikes against Kyiv, including possible attacks on targets in the Ukrainian capital. Critical infrastructure in other Ukrainian cities could also come under increased pressure.

The development comes after months of diplomatic efforts aimed at finding a settlement. Negotiations involving the United States, Russia and Ukraine have so far failed to bridge major differences, particularly over territory and security guarantees. Recent discussions have produced little progress, leaving the two sides facing many of the same disagreements that have blocked a peace deal.

Russia's leadership reportedly



believes that economic pressure, Western sanctions and Ukrainian attacks on Russian infrastructure have not forced Moscow to change its position. Instead, the Kremlin appears increasingly prepared to rely on military pressure to achieve its objectives.

Ukraine, meanwhile, has stepped up attacks against Russian military and economic targets. Ukrainian drones have struck oil refineries, logistics facilities and other infrastructure inside Russia, adding to pressure on Moscow. The possibility of intensified Russian missile attacks has raised

concerns in Kyiv, particularly because Ukraine's air-defence systems are already under significant pressure. Western countries have been working to provide additional interceptor missiles and other air-defence equipment as Russian attacks continue. The latest developments also come amid growing concern over the future of US-led diplomatic efforts.

While Washington has continued to push for an end to the conflict, expectations of an immediate breakthrough have weakened considerably.

Russia has previously indicated

that it remains open to negotiations, but Moscow insists that any agreement must reflect what it describes as the "realities on the ground." Ukraine, on the other hand, has rejected demands that would require it to surrender territory.

The possibility of further escalation has also revived fears about how far Russia could go if conventional military pressure fails. However, there is currently no concrete indication that Moscow has decided to use nuclear weapons, and analysts continue to consider such a scenario highly unlikely.

For now, the biggest concern is a renewed intensification of conventional attacks. With diplomatic efforts struggling to produce results and both Russia and Ukraine continuing to target each other's military and strategic infrastructure, hopes for a quick end to the war appear increasingly distant. The latest situation suggests that instead of moving closer to a peace agreement, Moscow and Kyiv could once again be heading toward a more dangerous phase of the conflict.

Meta Agrees \$17 Billion Deal Over Teen Safety

Meta has agreed to pay up to \$17 billion to settle a major legal battle with US states over allegations that Facebook and Instagram were designed in ways that encouraged teenagers to spend excessive amounts of time on social media.

The settlement follows a closely watched legal dispute in which several US states accused Meta of deliberately creating features that could encourage addictive behaviour among young users. Authorities also alleged that the company failed to adequately protect children and teenagers from potential harms associated with its platforms.

Meta has denied wrongdoing. However, as part of the proposed settlement, the company has agreed to introduce several significant changes aimed at improving safety for users under the age of 18.

One of the most notable measures is a daily usage limit for teenage accounts. Under the proposed changes, teenagers would face restrictions on how long they can use Meta's social media platforms each day. Access would also be restricted during overnight hours, while notifications could be limited during school hours.

Meta is also expected to strengthen its age-verification systems. The company plans to improve its ability to identify underage users and prevent children from accessing features or content that may not be appropriate for their age. Parents could also receive greater control over their children's accounts. Enhanced parental controls are expected to give parents more information about their children's activity and allow them to manage certain aspects of their social media use. Some features that have faced criticism for encouraging excessive engagement could also be restricted for teenagers. These may include certain recommendation systems, personalised content and features designed to increase user interaction. The settlement comes amid growing concern in the United States about the impact of social media on children and teenagers. Parents, educators and lawmakers have increasingly questioned whether platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube are doing enough to protect young users.



Chinese Hackers Breach NASA, Senate In Major Attack

The United States has disrupted a major cyber-espionage operation allegedly linked to Chinese state-backed hackers that targeted several sensitive American government agencies and critical infrastructure networks.

US authorities said the hacking campaign involved a group known as QTFY and relied on two platforms, QScan and QTRouter. Law enforcement agencies seized internet domains associated with the platforms as part of an operation aimed at dismantling the hacking infrastructure. According to the US Justice Department, the hackers successfully breached or targeted several high-profile institutions, including NASA, the Federal Reserve, the US Senate, the Department of Justice, the Department of Energy and the National Institutes of Health. The campaign also allegedly targeted the Department of Health and Human Services and several organisations in the private sector. Hospitals, universities, telecommunications companies, power providers, financial institutions and defence contractors were among the sectors reportedly targeted. Investigators said QTFY was connected to Nanjing Xinjiuwei Network Technology Company, a China-based technology firm. Court documents allege that the hacking group provided services to customers including China's Ministry of State Security and the People's Liberation Army. The hackers reportedly used QScan to scan internet-connected devices for vulnerabilities and automatically infect them. Those compromised devices were then incorporated into QTRouter, creating a large network that could be used to conduct further cyberattacks. The infrastructure also relied on commercial proxy services and rented virtual private servers. This allowed the attackers to hide the true origin of their activities and make it more difficult for investigators to trace the operations back to China.

US officials said the hacking campaign had been active since at least 2018. Investigators found evidence of successful data theft from defence contractors, financial institutions and universities, while several attempts to penetrate other networks were unsuccessful.



Iran, US Tensions Escalate Over Strait Of Hormuz

Tensions between Iran and the United States remain high as the two countries continue to face off over the strategic Strait of Hormuz. Fresh developments have raised concerns about the security of one of the world's most important oil routes. Iran and Oman have reportedly agreed to share revenues from the Strait of Hormuz, amid continuing uncertainty over the waterway. The development comes as efforts continue to manage tensions surrounding shipping and energy supplies in the region. The Strait of Hormuz is a crucial global trade route through which a

significant share of the world's oil supplies passes. Any prolonged disruption could therefore have consequences far beyond the Middle East, potentially pushing up crude prices and increasing pressure on energy-importing countries. The latest developments follow a series of warnings and threats between Washington and Tehran. US President Donald Trump has repeatedly warned Iran against actions that could threaten shipping through the strait. The United States has also increased pressure on Iran through sanctions and military measures. Iran, mean-

while, has maintained a tough position and warned that it will respond to attempts to restrict its economic activity or challenge its control over the region. The situation became more tense after an unidentified projectile struck a tanker in the Strait of Hormuz, triggering a fire that was later brought under control. The incident added to concerns about the safety of commercial shipping in the strategically important waterway. The Strait of Hormuz has become a major centre of the wider US-Iran confrontation. Washington has sought to pressure



Tehran economically while keeping military options

open, whereas Iran has resisted US demands and warned against further escalation. The crisis is also being closely watched by countries that depend heavily on energy imports. Any major disruption to oil shipments could lead to higher crude prices, increased transportation costs and renewed inflationary pressures across global economies. For India, the situation is particularly important because the country is one of the world's largest energy importers and has significant trade and strategic interests in the Gulf region. Higher oil prices

could increase India's import bill and put additional pressure on domestic fuel prices and inflation. Diplomatic efforts remain crucial as both sides consider their next steps. Although there have been attempts at negotiations and mediation, deep disagreements between Washington and Tehran continue to make a lasting settlement difficult. For now, the Strait of Hormuz remains a major geopolitical flashpoint. Any military confrontation or prolonged disruption could have serious consequences for global energy markets, international trade and regional stability.

FDA Cancels Cipla Unit's Drug Licence

Mumbai: The Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has cancelled the drug sale licences of Cipla Pharma & Life Sciences Ltd's Carry and Forwarding (C&F) unit in Pune, citing serious irregularities in the packaging, storage and recall of Reactin Plus Tablets.

According to an FDA statement issued on Friday, the cancellation took effect on August 27 following inspections of the company's main warehouse at Wadki in Pune district.

The regulator said its inspections uncovered several deficiencies in the unit's drug storage and distribution systems. Medicines were found stored directly on the floor, while arrangements involving pallets and racks were deemed inadequate. The FDA also identified shortcomings in procedures and record-keeping related to expired medicines.

During an inspection conducted around June, officials found that the packaging of Reactin Plus Tablets, a Schedule H prescription medicine, carried an unauthorised claim describing the product as an "analgesic and antipyretic". The FDA said the claim violated provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, and the Drugs Rules, 1945.



Following the discovery, the regulator seized stock valued at Rs 11.19 lakh and directed the company to recall the misbranded tablets from the market.

However, the FDA said Cipla Pharma & Life Sciences did not fully comply with the recall directions and other measures required

by the regulator. A subsequent inspection of the C&F unit's sale and distribution system revealed further irregularities.

These included discrepancies between purchase and sale records and the actual computerised stock, as well as differences between physical inventory and computerised records. The FDA also flagged deficiencies in storage arrangements and the procedures

followed for handling expired medicines.

The regulator subsequently issued a show-cause notice to the licence holder, seeking an explanation for the violations. After examining the company's response, the FDA concluded that the deficiencies had not been adequately addressed and that directions relating to the recall of Reactin Plus Tablets had not been properly complied with.

FDA Commissioner Tukaram Mundhe said the department would take a strict approach to violations involving drug safety and public health.

He particularly highlighted the importance of compliance in the advertising, sale, storage and distribution of Schedule H prescription medicines. Mundhe said any violation of rules by entities involved in the manufacture or distribution of medicines would invite action under the law.

The cancellation represents a regulatory setback for Cipla's Pune distribution operations and underlines the increasing scrutiny of pharmaceutical companies over drug labelling, inventory management, storage standards and compliance with recall orders.

Sensex, Nifty Rise on IT Rally



Mumbai: Indian equity benchmarks ended higher on Friday, snapping a two-session losing streak as strong gains in technology stocks helped offset weakness across several key sectors. Investors drew confidence from the overnight rally in US technology shares, with renewed optimism over artificial intelligence spending providing a major boost to domestic IT stocks. The Sensex gained 330.92 points, or 0.43 per cent, to close at 77,264.51. The Nifty 50 advanced 84.80 points, or 0.35 per cent, ending the session at 24,175.65. The Nifty IT index was the standout performer, surging 3.5 per cent as investors returned to technology counters following the recent selloff. The sector tracked gains in global technology stocks after Nvidia reported strong second-quarter results and offered an upbeat revenue outlook, reinforcing expectations of continued spending on AI infrastructure and related technologies. Among individual stocks, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) rose 4.09 per cent, emerging as one of the biggest gainers on the Nifty. Infosys climbed 3.34 per cent, while Tech Mahindra advanced 3.18 per cent and HCL Technologies gained 2.68 per cent. The rally in IT stocks provided crucial support to the benchmark indices despite muted participation from financial stocks. The Bank Nifty ended almost unchanged, slipping 0.02 per cent to 57,496.30. Sector-wise, metal and pharmaceutical stocks also performed strongly, supported by selective buying interest. However, FMCG, energy and automobile stocks remained under pressure as investors booked profits. FMCG companies were particularly affected by concerns over rising raw material costs, which could put pressure on margins. The broader market remained relatively resilient. The Nifty Smallcap 100 gained 0.20 per cent and continued to trade close to its record-high levels. The Nifty Midcap 100 was largely flat, edging up 0.05 per cent, highlighting selective participation rather than a broad-based buying trend. Despite Friday's gains, investors remained cautious because Brent crude oil prices continued to trade above \$85 a barrel. Elevated crude prices remain a concern for India because the country relies heavily on imports to meet its energy requirements and higher oil prices can put pressure on inflation and the trade balance. Market participants will now closely monitor developments from the Jackson Hole symposium over the weekend. Comments from global central bankers, particularly on inflation, interest rates and the future direction of monetary policy, could influence market sentiment in the coming sessions. Overall, the week's final session reflected a recovery led primarily by technology stocks, while investors continued to remain watchful of global interest rate signals, crude prices and domestic sector-specific trends.

NTPC Plans Rs.16.86 Lakh Crore Capex by 2037



New Delhi: State-run power giant NTPC plans to significantly expand its generation and energy infrastructure capacity, targeting 244 GW of operational capacity by 2037, Chairman and Managing Director Gurdeep Singh said.

Addressing the company's 50th Annual General Meeting, Singh said NTPC expects strong growth over the coming decade as India's electricity demand rises alongside economic expansion and improvements in living standards.

NTPC currently has an installed operational capacity of around 91 GW. The company has now set more ambitious long-term capacity targets, aiming to increase its capacity to 149 GW by 2032, including 60 GW from renewable energy sources.

The target is expected to rise further to 244 GW by 2037, reflecting the company's strategy to expand beyond conventional thermal power and build a diversified energy portfolio.

To support this expansion, NTPC plans to undertake capital expenditure of approximately Rs.16.86 lakh crore across multiple segments through the financial year 2036-37. The planned investments will cover thermal power, hydropower, pumped-storage projects, renewable energy, battery storage, mining and nuclear power.

The company expects a growing share of renewable and storage capacity to complement its conventional generation portfolio as India's energy requirements increase and the country continues its transition towards cleaner sources of electricity.

Singh said rising incomes, economic activity and improving living standards would drive higher electricity consumption in the years ahead. NTPC's long-term investment programme is therefore aimed at ensuring adequate generation capacity while supporting India's broader energy-security requirements.

The expansion across thermal, hydro, renewable and storage projects is also expected to provide NTPC with greater flexibility in managing changing patterns of electricity demand. Investments in pumped storage and battery systems could help address the intermittency associated with renewable power generation.

The company's plans to enter or expand its presence in areas such as nuclear energy and mining further underline its ambition to build an integrated energy portfolio.

NTPC's proposed Rs.16.86 lakh crore investment programme represents one of the country's largest long-term power-sector expansion plans. The company is expected to play a key role in meeting India's rising electricity demand while balancing the need for energy security, capacity expansion and a gradual shift towards cleaner energy sources.

With the 2032 and 2037 targets substantially higher than its current capacity, NTPC is preparing for a major expansion phase over the next decade as India seeks to strengthen its power infrastructure and support sustained economic growth.

EV Market May Hit Rs.20 Lakh Crore by 2030

New Delhi: India's electric vehicle (EV) market could expand to around Rs.20 lakh crore by 2030 and generate nearly five crore jobs, Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said.

Speaking at a conference organised by the CII-ITC Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development, Gadkari said 5.7 million electric vehicles had been registered in the country so far, accounting for around 7 per cent of the overall vehicle market.

He highlighted the growing potential of India's EV ecosystem and said the sector could become a major source of employment and economic growth over the coming years.

Gadkari said leading two-wheeler manufacturers Bajaj Auto and Hero MotoCorp were already exporting more than half of the vehicles they produce, reflecting the increasing competitiveness of India's automobile industry in global markets.

The minister also pointed to a significant gap between demand and production in the electric bus segment. India has annual demand



for around one lakh electric buses, but manufacturers currently have the capacity to produce only about 50,000-60,000 units, he said.

The government, Gadkari added, aims to make India's automobile industry the world's leading vehicle manufacturing sector within the next five years. He attributed India's potential success to the combination of competitive pricing and improving quality of vehicles manufactured domestically.

Gadkari said the size of India's automobile industry had increased substantially since he took charge as the road transport minister. The industry's value, which stood at around Rs.14 lakh crore at the time, has now grown to approximately Rs.23 lakh crore. For comparison, he said the US automobile industry is valued at around Rs.78 lakh crore, while

China's is estimated at approximately Rs.47 lakh crore, indicating significant room for further expansion of India's automotive sector.

The minister also stressed the importance of reducing India's dependence on imported fuel. The country currently imports fuel worth around Rs.22 lakh crore annually, he said, adding that bio-fuels are expected to play an increasingly important role in the transport sector in the future.

Gadkari further said improvements in the country's road infrastructure had helped bring down logistics costs significantly.

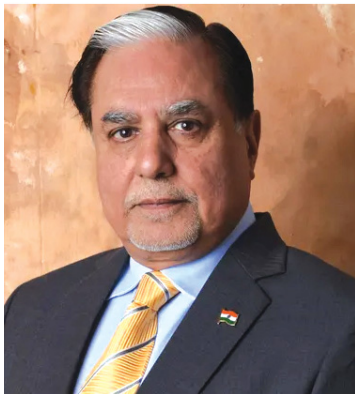
Logistics expenses have declined from around 16 per cent to 10 per cent, and the government's target is to reduce them further to 8 per cent. The expansion of EV manufacturing, increased exports, alternative fuels and lower logistics costs are expected to strengthen India's position as a global automobile manufacturing hub. The government is also banking on rising domestic demand and technological development to accelerate the transition towards cleaner mobility.

Subhash Chandra Says Claim Is Rs.3,992 Crore

New Delhi: Essel Group founder Subhash Chandra has clarified that the total claim against him in his personal insolvency proceedings is Rs.3,992 crore, and not Rs.22,006.57 crore as widely reported. He said he was only a personal guarantor for loans taken by companies and was not himself a borrower.

Chandra's clarification comes amid widespread discussion over the National Company Law Tribunal's (NCLT) approval of a resolution plan under which only Rs.6.5 crore would be paid against claims of Rs.22,006.57 crore in his personal insolvency case. The approval had raised concerns among lenders over the extent of recovery.

Responding to the reports on Thursday, Chandra said the total amount claimed against him was Rs.3,992 crore. Of this, claims amounting to Rs.620 crore have already been resolved, while companies that had borrowed the money have agreed to repay another Rs.1,063 crore, he said.



Chandra further claimed that companies that had borrowed funds against his personal guarantees had already repaid around Rs.43,000 crore. He said the concerned companies had also assured lenders that the remaining amounts would be settled.

How the Case Began
The insolvency proceedings originated with a Rs.170-crore loan taken by Vivek Infracon, which

subsequently turned into a non-performing asset. Chandra had provided a personal guarantee for the loan.

After the lender approached the NCLT and insolvency proceedings were initiated, other entities with claims against Chandra joined the process. This eventually pushed the aggregate claims submitted in the proceedings to Rs.22,006 crore. The claims included loans taken by companies associated with the Essel and Zee Network groups for which Chandra had provided personal guarantees. Chandra, however, maintains that these figures should not be treated as loans personally borrowed by him.

HDFC Bank to Appeal
HDFC Bank has announced that it will challenge the approval of the resolution plan, joining lenders who had opposed it on the grounds that the recovery was too low.

The lenders, led by LIC Housing Finance, had argued that the plan should not be approved because of the limited recovery. Their objections were rejected by the tribunal.

HDFC Bank said its claim of around Rs.680 crore would result in a recovery of only about 3.2 per cent under the approved plan. The bank also said the loan had been sourced from its parent entity, HDFC.

Vijay Mallya Reacts
Fugitive businessman Vijay Mallya, who is currently in the UK, reacted sarcastically to the development. He congratulated Chandra if the reported resolution was accurate and drew a comparison with his own case. Mallya said the court-determined amount outstanding against him was Rs.6,203 crore, while banks and the government had acknowledged recovery of Rs.14,100 crore. He also pointed to other borrowers who, according to him, had settled their liabilities by paying substantially smaller amounts.

Mallya described the situation as an example of what he called India's approach to debt-resolution law.

Sandhya Devanathan to Join OpenAI

New Delhi: Sandhya Devanathan, Meta's Vice President and Head for India and Southeast Asia, is stepping down from the social media company after more than a decade to take up a leadership role at OpenAI. Devanathan announced her departure in a social media post on Friday, describing the decision as "bittersweet". She said she would take a short break before sharing details about her next chapter. Devanathan will join OpenAI in October 2026 to lead its operations across Southeast Asia and Australia. In her new role, she will oversee consumer growth, enterprise adoption, partnerships, engagement with authorities and regional operations for the ChatGPT maker. Her move comes at a time when OpenAI is expand-

ing its presence across international markets and focusing on increasing adoption among consumers, businesses and other organisations.

Meta's Asia-Pacific leadership acknowledged Devanathan's contribution to the company. Benjamin Joe, Meta's Vice President for Asia Pacific, thanked her for her work and said Arun Srinivas, Meta's Managing Director and Country Head for India, would join his leadership team and help build on the company's existing foundation in the country. Devanathan joined Meta more than 10 years ago, beginning her journey when the company had around 300 employees in Singapore. During her tenure, she worked across multiple sectors



and markets, including e-commerce and gaming. She became Meta's Vice President for Asia-Pacific Gaming in 2020. In 2023, she was appointed Vice President and head of Meta India, before expanding her responsibilities to Southeast Asia in 2025. Reflecting on her tenure, Devanathan said she had the opportunity to work with startups, businesses, creators and ecosystem partners across India and Southeast Asia. She also

highlighted the evolving role of Meta's platforms in the region.

According to Devanathan, WhatsApp has increasingly been used to support government citizen services in India, while Meta platforms have helped small businesses expand in markets such as Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand. She said that although Meta's products and teams had evolved considerably during her tenure, its commitment to clients remained consistent. Devanathan also expressed pride in the teams she worked with, particularly as the technology industry underwent rapid changes. She thanked employees, businesses, ecosystem partners, non-profit organisations and creators for their support and collaboration.

Kashmiri Girls Tie Rakhi To Army Jawans

A heartwarming Raksha Bandhan gesture by Kashmiri girls towards Army personnel is winning appreciation online, with a video showing the emotional interaction between the local community and soldiers. The video captures local Kashmiri girls approaching Army jawans and tying rakhis around their wrists. The simple gesture reflects the spirit of Raksha Bandhan, a festival traditionally celebrating the bond of love, trust and protection between brothers and sisters. One Kashmiri local explained the emotional significance of the moment, saying she did not have a brother of her own but felt as though

she had one that day. "Due to circumstances, they (jawans) feel they won't be able to celebrate this day while away from family. But we are their sisters, too. We are their family," she said. Raksha Bandhan is being celebrated across India on Friday, August 28. On the festival, sisters traditionally tie a rakhi around their brothers' wrists and pray for their well-being, while brothers promise to protect and support their sisters. The interaction between the girls and Army personnel has drawn considerable attention on social media, where users praised the gesture as a touching example of affection and community



bonding. Several users described the video as a reflection of the emotional side of the festival.

One commenter called it "a beautiful example of love and trust," while another wrote, "This is the beauty of



India." "Raksha Bandhan is about protection and trust, and this captures both," another user

commented. The video has resonated with viewers largely because of its simplicity. Rather than being a formal celebration, the moment shows local girls stepping forward to make soldiers stationed away from their families feel included during the festival. For the jawans, who may be unable to celebrate Raksha Bandhan with their own sisters and families, the gesture offered a sense of warmth and belonging. As the video continues to circulate online, the Raksha Bandhan celebration has become a reminder that the festival's message of family, affection and mutual trust can extend beyond traditional relationships.

Meta Teen Safeguards Limited to US



Meta's latest safety measures for teenagers on Facebook and Instagram will initially apply only to users in the United States, raising questions about whether young people in other countries will receive the same level of protection.

The new safeguards are part of a series of major settlements aimed at resolving claims that Meta's social media platforms pose risks to children. The agreements could cost the company as much as \$18 billion and include new restrictions on how teenagers use the platforms. Among the measures are limits on the amount of time younger users can spend on Facebook and Instagram, along with restrictions preventing teens from easily turning off certain safety settings. Meta said it will monitor the impact of the changes while continuing discussions with governments in other countries.

The decision to initially limit the safeguards to the US comes as governments around the world intensify scrutiny of social media's impact on children and teenagers. Regulators in more than two dozen countries have introduced or are considering restrictions on young users of platforms operated by Meta, TikTok and Snapchat.

The US settlement is therefore expected to attract close attention from policymakers overseas.

In the UK, officials have already been considering tougher measures for young people. The government has announced plans to prevent children under 16 from using social media platforms and has also proposed curfews for older teenagers.

UK Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Pat McFadden said the issue was a major concern for parents and governments. He questioned why children in the US should receive stronger protections than those in Britain.

The new Meta measures have also been welcomed by child-safety advocates, who argue that social media companies should be held responsible for the effects their platforms can have on young users.

Matthew Bergman, founder of the Social Media Victims Law Center, described the US settlement as a potential "bellwether" for other countries. He argued that protections should not stop at US borders and called for social media companies to be held accountable internationally. Meta, meanwhile, has maintained that it is committed to user safety and has highlighted various features introduced over the years to protect teenagers. However, the US-only rollout could intensify pressure on the company to extend the new safeguards globally. With governments increasingly examining how social media affects children, Meta may face growing demands to establish consistent protections across countries rather than adopting different standards for different markets.

Korean Creator's "Baseline" Joke Goes Viral

A South Korean content creator has turned an unusual pronunciation of Vaseline into an internet sensation, prompting the skincare brand itself to join the joke. Creator Min Day Lee went viral after repeatedly pronouncing Vaseline as "Baseline" in an Instagram video showcasing her collection of Vaseline products. The clip has crossed 38 million views, with viewers fascinated by the way she pronounced the brand name. The video, captioned "I just love Vaseline," quickly attracted thousands of comments. Some users asked why she pronounced the name as "Baseline," while others said it sounded closer to "Basrin" to non-Korean speakers. Rather than correcting the pronunciation, Vaseline embraced the unexpected publicity. The official Vaseline Instagram account responded by calling Lee "THE QUEEN," while Vaseline India joined the fun with a comment about adding "Vaseline for everything" to its personality. The brand later joked that Vaseline had "never sounded this iconic," turning the pronunciation into a playful unofficial rebranding moment. Vaseline even humorously appointed Lee as the "CEO of Baseline", adding that no interview was required for the position. The company clarified that despite the different pronunciation, the product itself remains exactly the same. The only thing changing is the way consumers say its name. The playful response has been widely appreciated online, with many users praising the brand for embracing an organic social media moment instead of treating the pronunciation as a mistake. Vaseline also pointed out that its name has been pronounced, adapted and localised in different ways around the world over nearly 150 years. According to the brand, these variations reflect its long global presence and the way different cultures interact with familiar products. What began as one creator's casual product showcase has therefore evolved into a clever social media moment for the brand. By playing along with the "Baseline" pronunciation, Vaseline has managed to turn an accidental linguistic twist into entertaining online marketing. For Lee, meanwhile, the viral clip has transformed her pronunciation into an unexpected internet catchphrase and earned her a tongue-in-cheek executive title along the way.



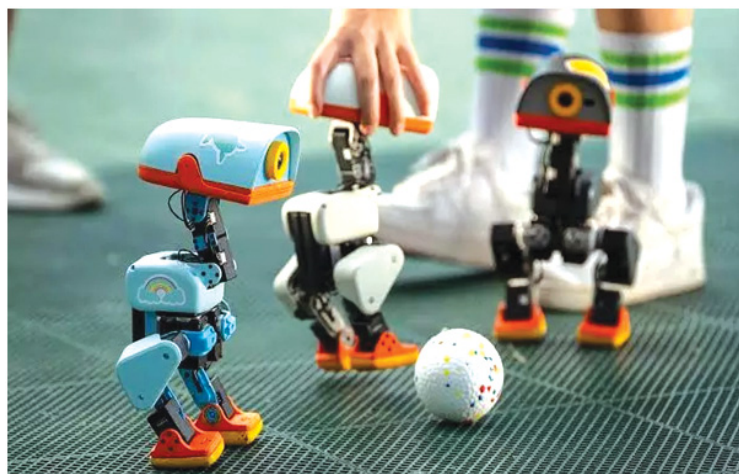
Hugging Face Unveils \$400 Singing Robot

Hugging Face has unveiled a tiny \$400 bipedal robot that can sing, skate and learn new tricks, offering consumers a playful introduction to artificial intelligence and robotics.

Named Microduck, the nearly 10-inch-tall robot takes inspiration from a duck, although it has a distinctive single-eye design. Hugging Face said the robot will go on sale later this year, marking its second consumer-focused robot.

Designed for both beginners and experienced developers, Microduck can be programmed to learn physical skills through reinforcement learning, simulation and open-source software. Users can create new behaviours using programming languages including Python and JavaScript.

The robot was developed partly with the help of Pollen Robotics, a Bordeaux-based company acquired by Hugging Face last year. The company said Microduck generated strong interest immediately after preorders opened Thursday. Hugging Face co-founder and Chief Science Officer



Thomas Wolf said the company was selling roughly one robot every four seconds, translating to around \$500,000 in sales.

The launch comes amid reports that Nvidia is nearing a deal to acquire Hugging Face for approximately \$13 billion. Wolf declined to comment on the reports, saying the company regularly receives acquisition and investment offers. Nvidia had not immediately com-

mented. Microduck is intended to make AI feel less intimidating and more accessible. It comes with built-in behaviours that allow users to interact with it without writing code. The robot can be guided around, while movements can also be triggered using a laser pointer or game controller. In a demonstration, Microduck was shown roller-skating, carrying small objects such as socks and

singing alongside other Microducks. Its hardware includes a camera, microphone, speaker, lidar, Bluetooth and Wi-Fi connectivity, as well as two NFC readers for interacting with accessories.

Hugging Face also plans an expansion pack aimed at advanced developers. The company sees Microduck as a new category of consumer robot that combines AI, entertainment and education.

Manufactured in China with Shenzhen-based open-source hardware company Seed Studio, Microduck weighs around 1.7 pounds. Hugging Face hopes to sell more than 20,000 units, with the first shipments expected before Christmas.

The robot builds on Hugging Face's earlier collaboration with Pollen Robotics. Their previous creation, the Reachy Mini, has reportedly sold around 10,000 units. With its playful design and relatively low price, Microduck could offer a glimpse of a future where experimenting with AI-powered robots becomes as accessible as programming a computer or building with electronics kits.

Foreigner Says Indian Food Changed His Taste

Indian cuisine has made such a strong impression on a foreign food enthusiast that he says it has completely changed the way he views food from other countries.

Ed Nathanson, who calls himself the "World's Greatest Snack Detective," shared a video on Instagram describing his love for Indian food. He said discovering Indian cuisine around five years ago transformed his palate and made it harder for him to get excited about many other cuisines.

Nathanson jokingly described Indian food as a "problem" because the experience had raised his expectations so much that food from other countries no longer seemed as extraordinary. Recalling his first experience with Indian cuisine, he said it was so delicious that it felt as though the "gates of heaven had opened" and God Himself had welcomed him. He went on to highlight some of his favourite Indian dishes, particularly pani puri. Nathanson



described the popular street food as "little flavour bombs" that burst in the mouth, praising its combination of textures and flavours. He also singled out Gobi Manchurian, joking that cauliflower simply should not taste that good. His comments reflected his appreciation for the bold combinations of spices, sauces and textures commonly found across

Indian cuisine. Nathanson compared the complexity and variety of Indian food with what he described as relatively simpler offerings in some other countries. For him, the sheer number of flavours and regional dishes available has made Indian cuisine particularly exciting. His food preferences have even changed as a result. Nathanson

described himself as a "hardcore carnivore," but said his love for Indian cuisine eventually led him to start ordering vegetarian dishes as well.

The video sparked a lively response online, with many Indian food lovers agreeing with his assessment. One user commented, "Yes, I totally agree." Another encouraged him to try preparing Indian dishes himself, writing, "Try cooking yourself, you'll love it more."

A third user highlighted the variety of Indian cuisine, saying, "You never get bored because you have so many options in Indian cuisine." Nathanson's enthusiastic reaction offers another example of how Indian food continues to attract international audiences, with its wide variety of regional flavours and vegetarian and non-vegetarian options leaving a lasting impression on food lovers around the world.

Daughter Surprises Dad On IndiGo Flight

A heartwarming father-daughter moment has gone viral after an IndiGo cabin crew member surprised her father on his birthday by welcoming him aboard his flight.

Flight attendant Shweta Pandey shared a video of the emotional encounter on Instagram. Her father had no idea that his daughter would be working as part of the cabin crew on the flight, making the surprise even more special.

As he boarded the aircraft, Pandey greeted him with a smile before bending down to touch his feet. Her father appeared pleasantly surprised as he recognised his daughter in her IndiGo uniform. The video captures his reaction as he realises that she is part of the crew. Pandey can be seen warmly welcoming him while her father looks visibly delighted by the unexpected meeting.

Text displayed on the video read, "Decided to surprise my father on his birthday." Pandey later revealed that her father had been completely unaware that she would be on his flight. She also shared another detail that made the moment particularly meaningful—this was the first time he had seen her wearing her professional uniform in person.

"And he was unaware of the fact that I am in his flight. Also he saw me in uniform for the first time in



person," she wrote in the caption. The surprise therefore became more than just a birthday celebration. It gave Pandey an opportunity to welcome her father as a professional cabin crew member and allowed him to see her in her work uniform for the first time. The video quickly attracted affectionate reactions from social media users, many of whom were touched by the father's surprise and happiness.

"That was such a beautiful moment between a father and his daughter," one user commented. Another wrote that viewers could see how happy and surprised he was when he realised it was his daughter.

"He must have felt incredibly proud seeing his daughter welcome him in uniform," another person said. Several users also praised the birthday surprise, calling it a memorable way to cele-

brate the special occasion. "What a memorable way to surprise your dad on his birthday," one viewer wrote. Another described it as a proud moment for the father, while another called it the kind of wholesome video that can instantly bring a smile to people's faces. The touching encounter has resonated with viewers as a simple yet memorable celebration of a daughter's achievement and a father's pride.

Amit Shah: India Aims to Become Global Sports Destination



India is stepping up preparations to establish itself as a major global sports destination, with the government focusing on hosting several major international sporting events over the coming decade. Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi held a review meeting on Thursday to discuss preparations for the 2030 Commonwealth Games and India's proposed bid to host the 2036 Olympic Games. Sharing details of the meeting on social media, Shah said the Narendra Modi government was working with an ambitious objective of positioning India as an international sporting hub. "The Modi government is working with a big goal. Our target is to establish India as a global sports destination," Shah said, adding that all necessary steps would be taken to ensure the country is equipped to host major international events. The meeting reviewed India's preparations for the 2030 Commonwealth Games, which are scheduled to be hosted in Ahmedabad. Discussions were also held on India's proposed bid for the 2036 Olympics, with Ahmedabad being projected as the potential host city. Shah also reviewed preparations for the 2029 World Police and Fire Games, which will be held in Ahmedabad. The event is expected to attract more than 10,000 athletes from around 70 countries, making security and logistical arrangements a key priority. The Home Ministry is closely monitoring the security preparations for the major events. Shah has been holding review meetings with the Sports Ministry as India works to strengthen its infrastructure and organisational capabilities. India last hosted the Commonwealth Games in 2010 in Delhi. Hosting the 2030 edition would therefore mark the country's return as the Games' host after two decades. The proposed 2036 Olympic bid represents an even larger ambition. The central government has been working towards bringing the world's biggest sporting event to India, with Ahmedabad emerging as the preferred venue. Gujarat officials have also held discussions with the International Olympic Committee regarding the proposal. The government's broader strategy includes developing infrastructure capable of handling large international competitions while improving India's reputation as a reliable destination for global sporting events. The 2029 World Police and Fire Games, followed by the 2030 Commonwealth Games, are expected to provide India with opportunities to demonstrate its organisational and logistical capabilities ahead of the proposed Olympic bid. With preparations for multiple major events now underway, the government is seeking to combine sports infrastructure, security and event management capabilities to strengthen India's case for hosting the world's biggest sporting competitions.

Milan Draw Sunderland, Bournemouth



AC Milan will face two English opponents in the Europa League league phase after being drawn to host Sunderland and travel to Bournemouth, setting up an intriguing campaign for new coach Ruben Amorim. The Italian giants will also welcome Benfica to the San Siro in the eight-game league phase. The fixture carries historical significance, as Milan defeated the Portuguese club in the 1990 European Cup final. For Amorim, the Europa League campaign will provide an opportunity to move forward from his difficult spell at Manchester United. The Portuguese coach lost the 2025 Europa League final during his largely disappointing 14-month tenure at the English club, which ended in January. Milan's meeting with Sunderland will be particularly interesting given the contrasting histories and current trajectories of the two clubs, while the trip to Bournemouth will give the Italian side another test against Premier League opposition. Juventus were handed a challenging draw of their own, with the Italian club set to face Spanish sides Real Sociedad and Celta Vigo. Juventus will also travel to a neutral venue to meet Hapoel Beer-Sheva of Israel. Hapoel Beer-Sheva face an especially demanding schedule, with trips to the Netherlands, Belgium, England and Turkey to take on AZ Alkmaar, Union Saint-Gilloise, Bournemouth and Besiktas. Crystal Palace will finally make their Europa League appearance after their participation was blocked by UEFA last season because of shared ownership links with Lyon involving American businessman John Textor. Following Textor's departure from Lyon, Palace are now eligible to compete and will travel to France to face Lyon. Celtic have been drawn against Marseille and will make two trips to Portugal. The Scottish champions will face Benfica and second-tier side Torrence. The Benfica fixture also carries historical significance, as Celtic famously defeated the Portuguese club in the 1967 European Cup final. Bayer Leverkusen, who lost the 2024 Europa League final after going unbeaten in both their domestic league and Europa League campaign until that stage, will face French opposition in Marseille and Lyon. The Europa League league phase will begin on September 16-17, with the eighth and final round scheduled for January 28. The competition's final will be played in May at the stadium of Eintracht Frankfurt. A total of 36 teams will compete in the league phase, sharing a UEFA prize-money fund of 565 million (\$658 million). With several high-profile clubs and intriguing matchups in the draw, the revamped league phase promises a demanding schedule for Milan, Juventus, Celtic, Crystal Palace and the rest of the field.

Asian Games Organisers Assure Accommodation for All

Tokyo: Asian Games organisers have assured that all registered participants will have accommodation during next month's event, despite the number of athletes and officials rising to more than 17,000 and concerns over a potential shortage of rooms. The Asian Games will be held in Nagoya and across Japan's Aichi Prefecture from September 19 to October 4. Organisers had initially expected around 15,000 athletes and officials, already exceeding the number who attended the Olympics. However, the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) recently revised the figure to around 17,000, including approximately 11,000 athletes and 6,000 officials. Unlike recent Olympic Games, the event will not have a dedicated athletes' village. Organisers are instead using a combination of hotels, temporary accommodation and a cruise ship to house participants. The accommodation issue became a concern after the OCA added teqball and padel to the sporting programme in March. Earlier this week, organising committee president Hideaki Omura, who is also governor of Aichi Prefecture, said the committee did not have suffi-



cient manpower or budget to make arrangements for additional participants. However, a joint statement issued by the organising committee and OCA on Friday said accommodation had been secured for all registered athletes and officials. "All the 17,000+ athletes and officials that are registered for the Asian Games before the closing of Entry by Name in July have been provided with Games-appropriate accommodation," the statement

said. It added that, except in exceptional circumstances, no further registrations would be permitted. The organising committee separately said the exact number of participants was still fluctuating daily but acknowledged that the delegation size was expected to exceed 15,000. To control costs, organisers have hired the Italian cruise ship Costa Serena as temporary accommodation. Between 4,000 and 5,000 athletes are expected to stay aboard

the ship, while another 2,000 athletes and officials will be housed in temporary wooden, shipping-container-style units. The remaining participants will stay in hotels, including some in Tokyo, where swimming, diving and equestrian competitions will be held. Organisers also rejected reports that they were attempting to reduce the number of participants. Instead, they said certain team officials would make their own accommodation arrangements. There are also concerns about Japan's typhoon season, which is typically active during September and October. However, organisers expressed confidence that the weather would not disrupt the Games. "The final preparations are all on track and progressing smoothly," the joint statement said, describing the event as one that promises to be among the most spectacular Asian Games in generations. With less than a month remaining before the opening ceremony, organisers will now focus on ensuring that the unconventional accommodation arrangements operate smoothly throughout the competition.

Mamatha Madiwala Picked for India A

Hyderabad wicket-keeper Mamatha Madiwala has earned a place in the India 'A' women's squad for the upcoming Australia 'A' tour of India, marking another significant opportunity in her cricketing career. Mamatha has been selected for the multi-day fixture against Australia 'A', scheduled to be played from September 29 to October at Dharamshala in Himachal Pradesh. The Hyderabad player will join a strong India 'A' squad led by Yastika Bhatia. The tour will feature three T20s, three One-Day matches and a multi-day game. The T20 fixtures are scheduled for September 12, 15 and 17 at New Chandigarh, while the three One-Day matches will be played on September 20, 23 and 25 at the PCA Stadium in Mohali, Punjab. Mamatha's selection for the multi-day game is particularly notable as she will be one of the wicket-keeping options in the squad. Yastika



Bhatia has been named captain and wicket-keeper, while Mamatha has been included alongside the experienced India player. The India 'A' multi-day squad includes Anushka Sharma as vice-captain, along with Shubha Satheesh, Priya Punia, Tanisha Singh, Tejal Hasabnis, Nikki Prasad, Sushree Dibyadarshini, Shuchi Upadhyay, Vaishnavi

Sharma, Sayali Satghare, Jintimani Kalita, Shabnam Shakeel and Akshita Bhagat. The T20 squad will be led by Anushka Sharma, with Sayali Satghare serving as vice-captain. The squad also includes Vrinda Dinesh, Sujata Dey, Tejal Hasabnis, Nikki Prasad, Shipra Giri, Shweta Sehrawat, Uma Chetry, Tanuja Kanwer, Minnu

Mani, Vaishnavi Sharma, Jintimani Kalita, Shabnam Shakeel and Simran Dil Bahadur. For the One-Day matches, Yastika Bhatia will captain the side, with Anushka Sharma as vice-captain. The squad features several players from the multi-day team, including Vrinda Dinesh, Priya Punia, Tanisha Singh, Tejal Hasabnis, Nikki Prasad, Uma Chetry, Minnu Mani, Amandeep Kaur, Vaishnavi Sharma, Sayali Satghare, Jintimani Kalita, Shabnam Shakeel and Akshita Bhagat. The Australia 'A' series will provide India's emerging players with valuable exposure against international opposition. For Mamatha, the multi-day fixture at Dharamshala represents an important chance to strengthen her credentials at the domestic and national pathway level. Her inclusion also brings recognition to Hyderabad's women's cricket setup, with the wicket-keeper now set to represent India 'A' on an international development tour.

Praggnanandhaa Makes History

Indian chess prodigy R Praggnanandhaa created history by becoming the first Indian player to win the Grand Chess Tour title, defeating defending champion Fabiano Caruana 15-13 in a thrilling finish. Praggnanandhaa entered the final day six points behind Caruana and appeared to face a difficult challenge. However, the young Indian produced a stunning comeback, winning two consecutive rapid games to overturn the deficit and take the lead. His victory earned him his maiden Grand Chess Tour title along with prize money of nearly Rs 2 crore. The triumph also secured Praggnanandhaa direct qualification for next year's Grand Chess Tour. Reflecting on his remarkable comeback, Praggnanandhaa admitted that he had not expected to get a chance to win when the final day began. "I did not think I would get a chance to win today. I was six points behind. But I showed how to play in such situations. Against a play-

er like Fabi, winning even one game is difficult. I managed to win two rapid games," he said. The 19-year-old also credited the changes he had made to his rapid and blitz preparation since last year for the breakthrough performance. "I made changes to my rapid and blitz games from last year. Now the results are visible. I think I have improved in this format," Praggnanandhaa said. The historic triumph caps an impressive year for the Indian grandmaster. His campaign did not begin particularly well, with a disappointing performance at the Candidates Tournament. However, he quickly bounced back with a victory at Norway Chess. His Norway Chess triumph was particularly notable as he defeated world No. 1 Magnus Carlsen twice during the event, underlining his ability to compete against the strongest players in the world. Praggnanandhaa continued his impressive run by winning the St. Louis Rapid & Blitz and the



Sinquefield Cup. His consistency across different formats has strengthened his position among the leading young players in international chess. The Indian star had earlier expressed disappointment about not winning the Candidates Tournament, saying it would have made his year even more special. However, his performances since then have provided a strong response. The Grand Chess Tour victory now adds another major

achievement to his growing list of accomplishments. More importantly, the dramatic comeback against Caruana showcased Praggnanandhaa's composure, fighting spirit and growing mastery of rapid chess. With direct qualification for next year's Grand Chess Tour secured, the Indian youngster will now look to build on his breakthrough and establish himself further among the elite of world chess.

BCCI Raises Asian Games Facility Concerns

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has reportedly raised concerns over the facilities and arrangements being made for cricketers at the upcoming Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan. The BCCI and the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) are not satisfied with the conditions being provided for participating cricketers. The concerns reportedly include temporary dressing rooms being arranged in tents, while wash-room facilities are said to be located around 500 metres away from the playing area. The Asian Games are scheduled to begin on September 19 in Aichi-Nagoya. Cricket will be among the sports at the continental multi-sport event, with the men's tournament scheduled from September 24 to October 3. The women's competition is scheduled from September 17 to 22.

The board is closely monitoring the situation and may send an observer to Japan to assess the facilities and arrangements in person. The reported concerns could have implications for India's squad selection. If the facilities are ultimately deemed inadequate, the BCCI could consider sending a 'B' team to the competition instead of its strongest available squad. India's participation in the Asian Games has attracted considerable attention because cricket has become an important part of the multi-sport event. The tournament provides players with an opportunity to represent the country on a major continental stage while also competing against teams from across Asia. The BCCI is expected to assess the arrangements before making a final decision on the composition



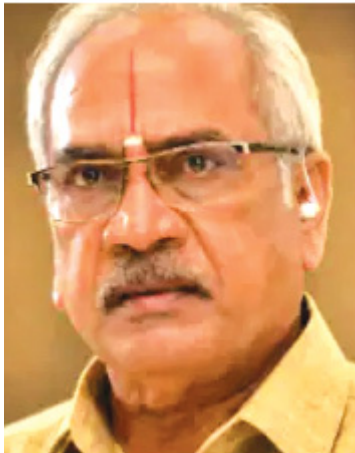
of India's teams. The board's priority is likely to be ensuring that players have appropriate facilities for training, match preparation, recovery and general comfort during the competition. The Asian Games cricket tournaments will be played in a condensed schedule, making proper logistical arrangements particu-

larly important. The women's event will conclude before the men's tournament gets underway, giving the cricket competitions a prominent place in the overall Games calendar. While the reported concerns have not yet resulted in a formal decision to withdraw or alter India's participation, the possibility of sending a second-string squad highlights the seriousness with which the BCCI is viewing the situation. An on-site assessment by a BCCI representative could provide clarity on whether the reported shortcomings can be addressed before the tournament begins. With the Asian Games approaching, attention will now remain on the facilities in Japan and the BCCI's eventual decision regarding India's squads for the men's and women's cricket competitions.

Veteran Actor G.V. Narayana Rao Dies at 73

Veteran Telugu actor and producer Gullapalli Venkata Narayana Rao, popularly known as G.V. Narayana Rao, passed away at the age of 73 on Wednesday night. He had been suffering from health issues for some time and breathed his last at his residence in Hyderabad's Srinagar Colony.

Narayana Rao left a lasting mark on Telugu cinema with performances in more than 100 films and several television serials. As a producer, he backed successful films including Yamudiki Mogudu, Devantakudu, Intiko Rudramma and Pelli Neeku Shubham Naaku. Born in Kurumaddali in Krishna district, Narayana Rao grew up in Guntakal after his father, a film distributor, settled there. Growing up in a cinema-oriented environment sparked his interest in the



arts from an early age. He trained in Bharatanatyam under Gidugu Visalakshi, Kuchipudi under Nataraja Ramakrishna and acting

under A.R. Krishna.

He developed an association with theatre during his student years and earned recognition through plays such as Mohammed Bin Tughlaq, Prataparudreeya and Manchutera. Before entering films, he received formal acting training at the Madras Film Institute. Superstar Rajinikanth was reportedly his classmate there.

Narayana Rao made his screen debut with K. Balachander's Antuleni Katha. The film became a major success, opening the doors to several opportunities. He went on to play lead roles in around 50 films before transitioning to character and supporting roles.

His notable films include Muthyala Pallaki, Oka Oori Katha, Guppedu Manasu, Chilakamma

Cheppindi, Seetharamayyagari Manavaralu, Manchu Pallaki, Bahudoorapu Batasari, Chattaniki Kallu Levu, Raja Vikramarka, Gang Leader, Hitler, Sahasam, Tholubommalata and Skylab. His final film, Aalochana, is yet to be released.

Narayana Rao shared a close friendship with Chiranjeevi, who expressed grief over his death. Chiranjeevi recalled their long association and cherished memories. The Movie Artists Association and several film personalities also condoled his demise.

He is survived by his wife Anuradha, son Avinash and daughter Lalitha Yamini. His last rites will be performed at Mahaprasthanam in Jubilee Hills on Friday.

KING 100 Title Reveal on August 29

The much-awaited title of Nagarjuna's 100th film will be unveiled on August 29 at 9 AM, coinciding with the actor's birthday.

The makers have released a teaser announcing the title reveal time. The glimpse features a speeding car moving through a dense night, with a prominent cobra warning sign adding mystery to the visuals.

The cobra imagery has already sparked speculation among fans about a possible connection with the film's title. The mystery is expected to be cleared when the official title is revealed on August 29.

Produced by Nagarjuna and directed by Ra Karthik, the film features Tabu, Sushmita Bhatt and Vijayendra in key roles. Devi Sri Prasad is composing the music.

With Nagarjuna celebrating his birthday and marking the milestone of his 100th film, the title reveal is expected to be a special treat for his fans.



Raashii Khanna Misses Brother on Raksha Bandhan

Actress Raashii Khanna shared an emotional and adorable note for her brother Raunaq Khanna on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan on Friday, revealing that she missed him as he is currently away at sea. Taking to Instagram, Raashii wrote about the special bond she shares with her brother while playfully acknowledging their frequent fights. "Sometimes I love you, most times I love to fight with you," she wrote, adding that she was celebrating Raksha Bandhan alone this year. She concluded her message by wishing her brother and calling him "Captain."

On the work front, Raashii is gearing up for her upcoming Tamil film Dharman, in which she shares the screen with superstar Rajinikanth. Directed by Ashwath Marimuthu, the film has been generating considerable buzz and is among the highly anticipated releases.

Recently, Raashii also revealed a thoughtful gift she received from Rajinikanth while working on the film. The superstar gifted her the spiritual book Living with the Himalayan Masters after the two discussed spirituality during a conversation on the sets.

Raashii said she has been reading the book diligently and was particularly moved by its reflections on self-discovery and human relationships. She revealed that Rajinikanth even told her he would test her on the book, making the gift all the more memorable.

Sharing her key takeaway, the actress said many people feel disconnected because they spend years trying to become someone else rather than remaining connected to their true selves.

Meanwhile, Dharman continues to attract attention with its combination of Rajinikanth, Raashii Khanna and director Ashwath Marimuthu. The film's unique combination of talent has raised expectations among audiences ahead of its release.



Anand Deverakonda's Honest Take on Kingdom Goes Viral

Actor Anand Deverakonda has grabbed attention with his candid comments about his brother Vijay Deverakonda's film Kingdom. His straightforward assessment of the movie has now become a talking point among Telugu cinema fans on social media.

During a recent interaction, Anand revealed that he generally avoids listening to the stories of Vijay's films before their release. However, he watched the edited version of Kingdom and shared his genuine reaction to the movie.

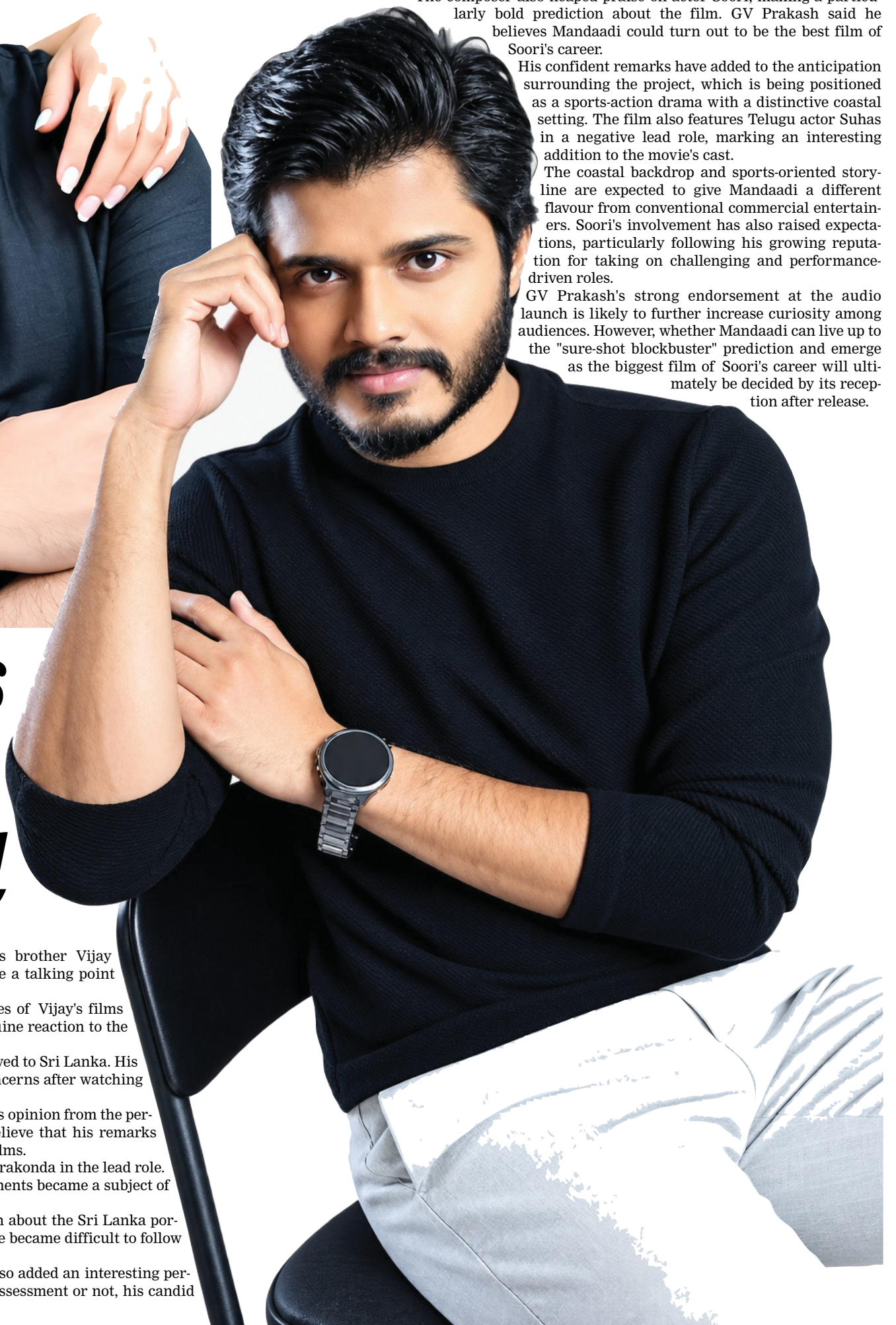
According to Anand, the film became somewhat confusing when the protagonist's journey moved to Sri Lanka. His comments have drawn attention because a section of the audience had also raised similar concerns after watching the film.

Rather than offering unconditional praise for his brother's movie, Anand appeared to share his opinion from the perspective of an ordinary viewer. This honesty has been appreciated by several fans, who believe that his remarks demonstrate that he is willing to acknowledge both the strengths and weaknesses of Vijay's films.

Kingdom, which generated considerable expectations ahead of its release, features Vijay Deverakonda in the lead role. The film's narrative and setting attracted significant attention, while its second-half developments became a subject of discussion among audiences.

Anand's latest comments have once again brought the film into the spotlight. His observation about the Sri Lanka portion, in particular, has sparked conversations online, with fans debating whether the narrative became difficult to follow at that stage.

While Anand's remarks may be unexpected coming from a close family member, they have also added an interesting perspective to the ongoing discussion around the Kingdom. Whether audiences agree with his assessment or not, his candid take has certainly succeeded in generating fresh buzz around the film.



GV Prakash: 'Mandaadi' a Blockbuster

Music composer and actor G. V. Prakash Kumar has expressed strong confidence in the upcoming sports-action drama Mandaadi, calling it a "sure-shot blockbuster" during the film's audio launch event.

Speaking at the event, GV Prakash said 2026 has been an exceptionally successful year for him. He pointed to projects including Youth, Happy Raj, Vishwanath And Sons and Irumudi, which he described as successful outings. He expressed hope that Mandaadi would continue the winning streak and become another major success.

The composer also heaped praise on actor Soori, making a particularly bold prediction about the film. GV Prakash said he believes Mandaadi could turn out to be the best film of Soori's career.

His confident remarks have added to the anticipation surrounding the project, which is being positioned as a sports-action drama with a distinctive coastal setting. The film also features Telugu actor Suhas in a negative lead role, marking an interesting addition to the movie's cast.

The coastal backdrop and sports-oriented storyline are expected to give Mandaadi a different flavour from conventional commercial entertainers. Soori's involvement has also raised expectations, particularly following his growing reputation for taking on challenging and performance-driven roles.

GV Prakash's strong endorsement at the audio launch is likely to further increase curiosity among audiences. However, whether Mandaadi can live up to the "sure-shot blockbuster" prediction and emerge as the biggest film of Soori's career will ultimately be decided by its reception after release.

