



Revanth Hails India's Space Achievements

Hyderabad, August 23 | TPN Bureau
Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy extended greetings to scientists, engineers, technical experts and support staff on the occasion of National Space Day, praising their contribution to India's growing achievements in space exploration. In his message, the Chief Minister said India's successful Chandrayaan-3 mission

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From IAS Office to Varanasi Streets:
Can Praveen Prakash's Career 2.0 Win Cantt?

K Kalyan Krishna Kumar

Varanasi : After nearly three decades in the IAS, Praveen Prakash is preparing for a very different test-seeking political authority from voters in Varanasi Cantonment as a prospective Congress candidate, a constituency where the BJP has maintained a strong electoral hold for decades.
Prakash, a 1994-batch IAS officer of the Andhra Pradesh cadre, was once among the key officials in the government of former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. He served as Principal Secretary (Political) in the General Administration Department (GAD), a significant position in the State administration. His decision to opt for voluntary retirement brought his long bureaucratic career to an unexpected end, coming around the time the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) led government came to power in Andhra Pradesh.
Now, after stepping away from the administrative system, Prakash is seeking a new political role in Uttar Pradesh. His proposed entry into electoral politics marks a sharp transition from an officer who implemented government decisions to a prospective people's representative seeking a mandate to influence those



decisions. Varanasi Cantonment, Assembly Constituency No. 390, has been won by the BJP in every Assembly election since 2002. The party's Saurabh Srivastava retained the seat in 2017 and 2022. In 2022, he secured 1,47,833 votes,

defeating SP candidate Pooja Yadav by 86,844 votes, underlining the scale of the challenge facing any challenger. Prakash says he deliberately chose what he considers one of the most difficult seats. His proposition is built around

nearly 30 years of administrative experience, including work in public health, education, infrastructure, urban governance and anti-corruption. His academic credentials include IIT Kanpur and the Maxwell School of Public Policy in the US.
But he acknowledges that credentials alone cannot win elections. Since taking VRS in 2024, he says he has walked through all 400 polling stations and begun extensive grassroots outreach, spending six to seven hours daily on door-to-door interactions.
His political priorities are employment generation, tackling corruption and improving urban and municipal services. The larger test is whether administrative credibility can become political credibility. As an IAS officer, he was an implementer; as a prospective MLA, he wants to become a bridge between people and government.
That is the real meaning of "Praveen Prakash 2.0." The 2027 election will reveal whether an administrator's experience can overcome a BJP stronghold's established political equations-and whether a career built in government offices can be successfully rebuilt on the streets of Varanasi Cantonment.

"1.0 Was Like a Judge, 2.0 Is Like an Advocate," Says Praveen Prakash

"I would describe my role as an IAS officer as being somewhat like that of a judge. Now, as a political representative, my role is different. I see it more as being an advocate for the people," said former IAS officer Praveen Prakash. Describing his new journey as "Praveen Prakash 2.0," in an exclusive interview with K Kalyan Krishna Kumar, Resident Editor, True Point, Praveen Prakash discussed his transition from bureaucracy to electoral politics, his choice of Varanasi Cantonment and his decision to choose Congress as his political platform. He explained how three decades of administrative experience could help address people's concerns, while stressing the importance of grassroots engagement. He also outlined his priorities of employment generation, tackling corruption and improving urban infrastructure ahead of the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections.

Q. You had earlier indicated that you were not inclined towards entering electoral politics. What made you change your mind and take the political plunge now?
A. Yes, I had said that in an earlier interview, and I genuinely felt that entering electoral politics would be very difficult. During my 30 years in the IAS, I did not take many leaves and spent most of my time either in Andhra Pradesh or in Delhi. As a result, my visibility in Varanasi has been relatively low, and I knew that I would have to make an additional effort to build a connection with the people there. At the same time, I had voluntarily resigned from the Andhra Pradesh cadre because I wanted to devote the last ten years of my professional life to public service in a more intensive manner. Somewhere, I had a feeling that my journey was incomplete and that I needed to do more to complete it. I have also observed that people from Andhra Pradesh

have a very strong connection with Varanasi. A large number of devotees visiting the temples in Varanasi come from Andhra Pradesh. I am trying to build on this existing connection and increase my visibility among the people of Varanasi, and I have sought their support. There is also a deeper sense of responsibility behind my decision. The nation invested so much in me and gave me the opportunity to learn and grow throughout my 30 years in public service. I may have made mistakes while serving as a Sub-Collector, Collector or Secretary, but the nation stood by me, trained me and shaped me throughout that journey. I feel that I have a responsibility to give something back. It is with that sense of an incomplete journey and a desire to serve more meaningfully that I decided to enter politics.
Q. You have described this new phase as "Praveen Prakash 2.0." What does this new version of you represent,



and how will it be different from your role as an IAS officer?
A. As an executive, my role was largely that of an implementer. I would listen to public grievances, understand the issues and then work towards implementing solutions. In that sense, I would describe my role as an IAS officer as being somewhat like that of a judge. Now, as a political representative, my role is different. I see it more as being an advocate for the people. The ques-

tion is whether, with my experience, I can effectively represent the grievances, wishes and aspirations of the people before the government and ensure that they are addressed in the right manner. If "Praveen Prakash 1.0" was like a judge, then "Praveen Prakash 2.0" is like an advocate-someone who represents the people's interests, voices their concerns and works towards the development of the constituency.

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One N Only Wins Governor's Trophy



Hyderabad, August 23 | TPN Bureau

The Hyderabad Monsoon Races-2026 witnessed an exciting finish as One N Only emerged victorious in the prestigious Governor's Trophy at the Hyderabad Race Club in Malakpet. Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla, who is the Chief Patron of the Hyderabad Race Club, witnessed the race from the Governor's Box. The Governor's Trophy was contested over a distance of 1,200 metres, with One N Only securing the top position. The winning horse was ridden by jockey Akshay Kumar and trained by D. Netto. Following the race, Governor Shukla presented the Governor's Trophy to the winning owners Ramaseshu Eyunni, Shankar Srinivas, Ashok Ranpise and Donald Anthony Netto. The Governor congratulated the owners, jockey, trainer and the entire team for

their achievement. The victory added another highlight to the ongoing Hyderabad Monsoon Races, which attract racing enthusiasts and participants from across the region. Earlier, the Governor visited the Hyderabad Race Club Museum, where he was briefed about the history and evolution of the club. Officials and representatives explained the institution's heritage and its role in promoting horse racing in Hyderabad. The Governor's participation added significance to the day's racing programme, with the Governor's Trophy remaining one of the prominent events of the season. The Hyderabad Monsoon Races continue to draw considerable interest among racing fans, with several competitive events scheduled as part of the 2026 season. The victory of One N Only is expected to be remembered as one of the notable results of this year's Governor's Trophy.

Revanth Alleges Political Motive Behind US Visit Denial

London, August 23 | TPN Bureau

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Sunday alleged that political considerations were behind the Centre's decision to deny clearance for his proposed visit to the United States. Speaking in London, he said he would provide a detailed response on the issue after returning to Hyderabad.
Reddy said he would head back to Hyderabad from London instead of travelling to Boston, as originally planned. His office had earlier announced that the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had denied political clearance for the US leg of his foreign tour. The Telangana government had sought permission for visits to both the United Kingdom and the US, but clearance was granted only for the UK leg.
The Chief Minister had embarked on a 10-day overseas tour on August 20 with a "Telangana Rising" delegation. The US itinerary was expected to include meetings with universities and educational institutions to explore collaborations and encourage them to establish campuses in Telangana's proposed Bharat Future City. Following the denial, the official delegation was instructed to proceed with its planned US engagements. The MEA later said the proposed programme was not considered appropriate in relation to the office held and the stated purpose of the visit. The explanation has become a point of political contention between the Telangana government and the Centre. Reddy thanked Congress president



Mallikarjun Kharge and other party leaders for their support over the issue. Kharge has criticised the Centre's decision as unfair, while the Indian Overseas Congress alleged that different standards were being applied to chief ministers belonging to different political parties. The dispute has triggered a wider political debate over the process for granting political clearance to elected state leaders undertaking foreign visits. The Congress has questioned the Centre's decision, while the Union government has maintained that the proposed programme did not meet the required criteria. Reddy said he had completed his scheduled London engagements and would return to Hyderabad on August 23. He indicated that he would discuss the circumstances surrounding the denied clearance in greater detail after reaching the State capital.

El Nino Raises Drought and Water Stress Concerns



New Delhi, August 23 | TPN Bureau

India could face heightened risks of dry spells, heatwaves and water stress as El Nino strengthens in the coming months, with scientists and weather agencies warning that its influence could become more pronounced during late 2026 and into early 2027. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has said El Nino conditions developed during the 2026 southwest monsoon and strengthened from weak levels in June to moderate levels in July. The Centre has also indicated that the phenomenon could intensify further during October-December and potentially reach a very strong category. The developing weather pattern has raised concerns because El Nino is historically associated with weaker monsoon rainfall and higher temperatures in India. However, scientists caution that El Nino alone does not determine the Indian monsoon; other oceanic and atmospheric factors also influence rainfall. India has already recorded uneven rainfall this monsoon. The cumulative rainfall deficit was reported at about 13% in mid-August, with some regions receiving heavy rain while others experienced significant shortages. Such uneven distribution can create challenges for agriculture, groundwater recharge and reservoir management. Concerns have also grown over the pos-

sible impact on drinking-water supplies. Prolonged rainfall deficits could reduce replenishment of reservoirs and groundwater, increasing pressure on cities and rural communities. Agriculture and the power sector could also face difficulties if water availability declines. Recent international forecasts have pointed to a potentially very strong El Nino during the northern hemisphere autumn and winter. Global forecasters are considering the possibility of an exceptionally strong event, although its eventual intensity and regional effects remain uncertain. Weather experts have therefore stressed the importance of preparedness rather than panic. Governments have been urged to strengthen water conservation, monitor reservoirs and groundwater, prepare drought-management measures and support vulnerable farming communities. The IMD and other agencies continue to monitor the evolving ocean-atmosphere conditions and issue forecasts and advisories. The government has also been reviewing the impact of El Nino, rainfall distribution, water storage and agricultural conditions as part of its preparedness measures. With the monsoon still underway, experts say the coming months will be crucial in determining the extent of El Nino's impact on India's water resources, agriculture and temperatures.

Revanth Urges Diaspora to Champion Telangana Rising



London, August 23 | TPN Bureau

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy called upon the Telugu diaspora in London to actively support and promote the State's "Telangana Rising" vision across the world. The Chief Minister, accompanied by IT and Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu, met members of the Telugu community in London on Sunday. The leaders interacted with the diaspora and held discussions on Telangana's development priorities, economic growth and future opportunities. Revanth Reddy urged members of the Telugu community living abroad to become active partners in the State's development. He said their international experience, professional networks and connections could contribute significantly to Telangana's growth ambitions. The Chief Minister asked the diaspora to serve as ambassadors for "Telangana Rising" and help project the State as an attractive destination for investments, innovation, technology and business partnerships. He said the government was working towards building a progres-

sive Telangana with opportunities for people across different sectors. During the interaction, the Chief Minister and Sridhar Babu discussed the State government's development agenda and the potential role of the global Telugu community in supporting it. The meeting also provided an opportunity for diaspora members to share their views and suggestions on Telangana's future development. Revanth Reddy said the government wanted the Telugu diaspora to remain closely connected with the State and contribute to its transformation while pursuing opportunities abroad. He appealed to the community to spread awareness about Telangana's development initiatives and help attract investments and collaborations from international companies and institutions. The Chief Minister's interaction with the London-based Telugu diaspora is part of efforts to strengthen Telangana's engagement with its global community and build wider support for the "Telangana Rising" initiative. Sridhar Babu also participated in the discussions and interacted with community representatives during the meeting.

Governor's Visit Scheduled for August 25

Nizamabad, August 23 | TPN Bureau

Telangana Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla is scheduled to visit Nizamabad on August 25, where he will participate in an anti-drug awareness programme and interact with local farmers. According to the district administration, the Governor will attend the awareness programme at the Police Parade Ground as the chief guest. The event is expected to focus on creating greater public awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse and the need for collective efforts to prevent substance addiction. Following the programme, Shukla will visit the headquarters of the National Turmeric Board in Nizamabad. He is scheduled to interact with turmeric farmers and learn about issues concerning the crop, including cultivation, marketing and the welfare of farming communities. After completing his engagements, the Governor will return to the Integrated District Offices Complex before proceeding to Begumpet Airport by helicopter. The district administration and police



commissionerate have begun making arrangements for the Governor's visit. Officials are coordinating security, traffic management and other logistical requirements to ensure the programmes are conducted smoothly. The Governor's interaction with turmeric farmers is expected to provide an opportunity for growers to present their concerns and discuss measures aimed at strengthening the turmeric sector. Nizamabad is an important turmeric-growing region, and the

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Minister Warns Hospitals Against Unnecessary Referrals

Hyderabad, August 23 | TPN Bureau

Health Minister Damodar Rajanarsimha has directed government hospitals to refer patients to higher-level facilities only when medically necessary or in emergency situations. He warned that unnecessary referrals were causing inconvenience to patients and placing avoidable pressure on tertiary-care hospitals. During a review of hospitals functioning under the Directorate of Secondary Health Care (DSH) on Saturday, the Minister said the practice of unnecessary referrals had declined in several institutions. However, reports of patients being sent to higher centres even for minor ailments were still being received. Rajanarsimha warned that strict action would be taken against hospitals and officials if unjustified referrals continued. He said Community Health Centres (CHCs), area hospitals and district hospitals should be strengthened to provide comprehensive treatment locally, including major surgical procedures. Doctors were instructed to assess patients carefully and refer them only when there was a valid medical reason. In unavoidable emergency cases, the referring hospital should contact the receiving facility in advance and coordinate with its medical team to ensure uninterrupted treatment. The Minister directed DSH officials to make optimum

use of available doctors, nursing staff, beds, equipment and diagnostic facilities before sending patients elsewhere. He said the government had recruited 1,616 specialist doctors for district and area hospitals and CHCs, while 607 assistant professor posts had also been filled in teaching hospitals. Infrastructure and medical equipment were being upgraded alongside the recruitment drive, he added. Rajanarsimha instructed DSH officials to conduct surprise inspections of hospitals at least once every week. The inspections should cover staff attendance, medicine availability, functioning of medical equipment, diagnostic services, sanitation, drinking water and biomedical waste management. He warned that unauthorised absence, leaving duty before scheduled hours and negligence would attract disciplinary action. Officials were also told to identify infrastructure and operational shortcomings at an early stage and resolve them promptly. The Minister said strengthening secondary-level healthcare would reduce unnecessary travel for patients, improve access to treatment in districts and help tertiary-care hospitals concentrate on serious and complex medical cases. The directions are part of the State government's efforts to improve the functioning of public hospitals and ensure that patients receive appropriate treatment closer to their homes.

Laxman Kumar Reviews Tribal Welfare

Utnoor, August 23 | TPN Bureau

SC, ST and Disabled Welfare Minister Adhuri Laxman Kumar said the Telangana government remains committed to strengthening welfare and development programmes for SC, ST and BC communities. He made the remarks during a review meeting on the implementation of welfare schemes for SC, ST and disabled communities at Utnoor on Saturday. The Minister said Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy was giving priority to the education and welfare of disadvantaged communities. He assured officials and representatives that he would bring the shortage of funds for tribal welfare schemes under the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) to the Chief Minister's attention. Laxman Kumar said an emergency allocation of Rs 42 crore was required for ITDA, Utnoor, and stressed that adequate financial resources were essential for implementing welfare and development programmes. Earlier, the Minister, along with Khanapur MLA Vedma Bojju, MLC Dande Vittal, Collector Rajarshi Shah and ITDA Project Officer Manda Makarandu, distributed school uniforms, bags and bed sheets to students of the Ashram Tribal School for Girls in Utnoor. The Minister also inaugurated an IF panel in a classroom and had lunch with the students. He interacted with them and reviewed facilities available at the institution. Adilabad MP Godam Nagesh instructed senior officials of the Tribal Welfare Department to submit utilisation certificates for funds received from the Centre. He said timely submission of the documents would help the constituency become eligible for additional funds for tribal and SC welfare and development programmes. Khanapur MLA Vedma Bojju, Asifabad MLA Kova Laxmi, Boath MLA Anil Jadhav and MLC Dande Vittal raised issues concerning the Rights of Forest Dwellers Act (ROFR), Podu cultivation, forest-related matters and Indiramma housing. They urged the Minister to issue clear directions to forest officials to ensure that tribal and non-tribal residents in forest areas were not subjected to harassment. Tribal Welfare Commissioner Santhosh, Residential Schools Secretary Seetha Mahalaxmi, SC and BC Corporations Vice-Chairman and Managing Director Dr Mallaiah Bhattu, and Social Welfare Residential Society Secretary Sharada were among the officials present. The Minister directed officials to continue monitoring welfare schemes and address implementation-related issues faced by beneficiaries.

90% Medical Care to Be Available at District Level

Narayankhed, August 23 | TPN Bureau

State Medical and Health Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha said the Telangana government is strengthening public healthcare infrastructure with the aim of making nearly 90% of medical treatments available at the district level. The Minister was speaking during his visit to Narayankhed constituency in Sangareddy district, where he inaugurated the newly established Balaji Anuradha Super Speciality Hospital along with local MLA Dr. Sanjeeva Reddy. During the visit, the Minister inspected various departments of the newly established hospital and appreciated its management for setting up the facility to address the healthcare requirements of people in Narayankhed and surrounding areas. Raja Narasimha said the State

government was giving priority to the development of both education and healthcare sectors. He stated that efforts were underway to strengthen government hospitals and improve public health services so that people could access quality treatment closer to their homes. The Minister also observed that public confidence in government hospitals has been increasing due to improvements in medical services and infrastructure. He said strengthening the public healthcare system would help reduce the need for patients to travel to major cities for treatment. The newly inaugurated super speciality hospital is expected to provide advanced medical services to residents of Narayankhed and neighbouring areas, expanding access to specialised healthcare in the region. Sangareddy District Collector Prateek Jain, District Superintendent



of Police Paritosh Pankaj, Narayankhed Sub-Collector Harini, hospital administrators Dr. Patlolla Anurag Reddy and Dr. K. Sridhar, local public representatives and hospital staff attended the inauguration.

Second Phase of Indiramma Houses by September 15

Hyderabad, August 23 | TPN Bureau

The Telangana government is preparing to launch the second phase of the Indiramma housing programme, with beneficiary selection and sanction procedures targeted for completion by September 15. The initiative is expected to provide housing assistance to 2.5 lakh economically weaker families across the State. The government has been implementing the housing programme in phases. While construction of many houses sanctioned during the first phase has been completed, officials are working to finish the remaining units and facilitate housewarming ceremonies. With the first phase nearing completion, attention

has now shifted towards identifying beneficiaries for the second phase. Under the latest plan, 2,500 houses will be sanctioned in each of 100 Assembly constituencies, excluding constituencies within Hyderabad city limits. Officials have been instructed to verify applications, identify eligible families and prepare final beneficiary lists before the September 15 deadline. A State-wide survey found that around 50,000 families are still living in huts. The government has decided to give priority to these households while finalising beneficiaries for the second phase. The State has earmarked Rs 10,400 crore for the second phase. Of this, approximately Rs 9,000 crore is proposed to

be spent on constructing 1.8 lakh houses, with assistance of Rs 5 lakh allocated per house. Apart from the government-constructed houses, families that already own land can receive Rs 5 lakh in financial assistance to build their homes. The amount is released in four installments based on construction progress. Women's self-help groups are also facilitating loans of up to Rs 1 lakh for house construction. The government has additionally introduced a "Roof Renewal" initiative to support repairs and reconstruction of existing houses. Under the programme, 70,000 houses are expected to receive assistance. Around 700 houses per constituency will be selected, with eligible beneficiaries receiv-



ing Rs 2 lakh towards roof renovation or reconstruction. District Collectors have been entrusted with the responsibility of identifying and verifying beneficiaries. Lists prepared at the field level will be reviewed by Collectors and subsequent-

ly forwarded to the respective District In-charge Ministers. The final beneficiary names will be announced after approval. Officials have been directed to complete the verification process within the stipulated

timeline so that sanction letters can be issued without delay. The government expects the second phase to provide greater housing security to families who were left out of the first phase and meet eligibility criteria.

Nalgonda to Get Super Smart City Push

Nalgonda, August 23 | TPN Bureau

Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy has said that transforming Nalgonda town into a "Super Smart City" with improved infrastructure and facilities across sectors is one of his key priorities. Speaking after inaugurating additional rooms and a conference hall at the Nalgonda Club, constructed at a cost of Rs 2 crore, the Minister said he would continue to support initiatives aimed at strengthening the club and improving facilities for its members. Komatireddy announced that works worth Rs 125 crore have been taken up to provide



a reliable 24-hour drinking water supply to residents of Nalgonda. He said the project

is expected to be completed within six months, providing a major boost to the town's basic

infrastructure. The Minister also highlighted the importance of completing

the Srisailem Left Bank Canal (SLBC) tunnel project, describing it as one of his major objectives. He said efforts were underway to secure the required funds in line with Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's commitment and with the cooperation of Irrigation Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy. According to Komatireddy, the government is working to accelerate the project and has set a target of completing the tunnel works by August 2028. He emphasized that the development of Nalgonda requires coordinated efforts across sectors, including drinking water, irrigation, urban infrastructure and public amenities. The Minister said

the government would continue to focus on projects that improve living standards and promote long-term growth in the district. The announcement of the drinking water project and the proposed timeline for the SLBC tunnel are expected to be closely watched by residents and farmers in the region, given the importance of dependable water resources to both urban and rural communities. Komatireddy reiterated that the development of Nalgonda remains a long-term commitment and that he would work to ensure that major infrastructure projects are completed within the stipulated timelines.

Transport Workers Call Off Strike

Hyderabad, August 23 | TPN Bureau

The Telangana Transport Joint Action Committee (JAC) on Sunday night announced the withdrawal of its proposed indefinite strike, which was scheduled to begin on Monday, August 24, following assurances from Transport Minister Ponnamb Prabhakar. In a statement, the JAC said the minister had responded positively to the concerns raised by auto, cab and other transport workers. The committee said assurances were given on several key demands, including the establishment of a welfare board, revision of auto and cab fares, and financial assistance of up to Rs 1.50 lakh for electric-vehicle retrofitting. The JAC also said discussions covered per-kilometre and per-minute fare mechanisms for cabs, autos and goods transport under the Motor Vehicle Aggregator Guidelines. Regulation of private vehicles being used for commercial transport services was another issue raised by the workers. Expressing appreciation for the government's response, JAC leaders decided to withdraw the strike call and urged workers to take note of the developments. Earlier on Sunday, Minister Ponnamb Prabhakar had appealed to transport workers to reconsider the

strike. He said the government was committed to establishing a welfare board for auto drivers after framing the necessary guidelines. He also announced financial support of up to Rs 1.50 lakh to encourage the conversion of existing petrol, diesel and gas-powered autos to electric vehicles. The proposed strike had created uncertainty among residents, particularly parents of school-going children, who were concerned about the possible disruption of school transport services. Some parents had even appealed to the government to consider declaring a holiday if the strike went ahead. Transport unions had earlier highlighted the financial difficulties faced by auto drivers and alleged that government policies had adversely affected



their livelihoods. JAC leaders had also claimed that around 200 auto drivers had died by suicide in Telangana over the past three years, an allegation that formed part of their wider demand for stronger welfare measures. The withdrawal of the strike is expected to provide temporary relief to commuters and school-going families while discussions between the government and transport workers continue.

Ponnamb Urges Auto Drivers to Call Off Strike

Hyderabad, August 23 | TPN Bureau

Telangana Transport Minister Ponnamb Prabhakar has appealed to auto-rickshaw drivers to withdraw their proposed strike, assuring them that the government is prepared to address their concerns through discussions and policy measures. Ponnamb said strikes would not provide a lasting solution to the problems faced by auto drivers and urged representatives to engage with the government. He announced that the State Cabinet had decided to establish a dedicated welfare board for auto-rickshaw drivers. The board will be constituted after the necessary guidelines are finalised. The Minister said the government was also examining measures to improve the financial security of drivers, particularly those working in rural areas. He assured that eligible auto workers and their families would be considered for applicable welfare programmes, including ration cards and other government benefits. Ponnamb pointed out that auto-rickshaw fares had not been revised since 2012 despite increases in fuel prices, vehicle costs and maintenance expenses. He said the government would constitute a special committee to exam-

ine the demand for a fare revision. Representatives of auto drivers, Transport Department officials and other stakeholders would be included so that the issue could be examined comprehensively and a fair decision reached. The Minister also announced government support of up to Rs 1.50 lakh per vehicle for eligible auto-rickshaw owners who shift from petrol, diesel or gas-powered vehicles to electric autos through the proposed retrofitting and replacement measures. He said the initiative was aimed at reducing pollution in Hyderabad while also easing the financial burden on auto drivers. He urged auto-rickshaw unions and drivers to reconsider the proposed strike and participate in discussions with officials. The Minister said the government would examine the sector's economic challenges while ensuring that welfare and environmental objectives were balanced. The proposals came amid growing concerns among auto workers over rising operating costs and their income prospects. The government's proposed welfare board, fare review and assistance for electric vehicles are expected to form key components of its approach towards the sector.

"God Has Given Me an Opportunity to Serve My Janmabhoomi After Serving My Karmabhoomi," Says Praveen Prakash



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Q. As an IAS officer, you worked within the administrative system for decades. What convinced you that you could bring greater change by entering politics rather than continuing to contribute through public administration?

A. Given a choice, I would have continued in the IAS until 2031. I had intended to complete my service and continue contributing through public administration. However, due to certain special circumstances, I had to come out of the service earlier than planned.

Now that I have left the service, I have returned to my native place. In a way, I feel that perhaps God has given me an opportunity to serve my birthplace after spending most of my career serving my karmabhoomi. Maybe this was the path that was meant for me.

So, rather than looking at it as a choice between administration and politics, I see it as a new opportunity to continue serving people in a different capacity. I am simply going with the flow and taking this journey forward with that belief.

Q. Your campaign poster highlights your 30 years of IAS experience, education at IIT Kanpur and the Maxwell School in the US. Do you believe these credentials will influence voters, or do you still need to build a strong grassroots connection with them?

A. Ultimately, in an election, the people are the judges and I am the candidate. My credentials are like a CV that I am presenting before them. My 30 years in the IAS represent experience across various public systems, including public health, education, infrastructure, urban governance and anti-corruption measures. That experience gives me an understanding of how different systems work and how public issues can be addressed. My education at IIT Kanpur has given me a technical and analytical perspective. Being an IIT Kanpur graduate from Uttar Pradesh who is now seeking to contest an Assembly election is also relatively unusual. Generally, people from this background do not enter electoral politics. I hope that demonstrates my sincerity and my willingness to step outside my comfort zone to serve people.

My education at the Maxwell School of Public Policy has also given me exposure to public policy and best practices from around the world. But I see all these credentials only as an initial introduction. They cannot substitute for a genuine connection with voters.

After that introduction, I want to be their advocate. People should feel comfortable approaching me and reaching out to me with their problems. Throughout the campaign, my most important objective is to convince the four lakh voters that I can be like a member of their family—that they will have access to me and the freedom to speak to me openly.

That kind of relationship cannot be created through a poster or a CV. It has to be built personally. That is why I have started going door to door and shop to shop and spending five to six hours every day meeting people. Building that personal connection with the people is a separate journey, and I believe it is the most important part of this campaign.

Q. Varanasi Cantonment has traditionally been a strong BJP constituency. Why do you believe Congress can challenge the BJP's established political strength here in the 2027 Assembly elections?

A. There is a new trend in politics today, with many young people, including those from Generations Y and Z, entering public life. I belong to Generation X, having been born in 1971. At 55, with 30 years of experience in the IAS, I felt that I should take on the most difficult seat rather than choose an easier option. From the Uttar Pradesh perspective, Varanasi Cantonment has been with the BJP for nearly three decades. I am consciously putting forward an alternative perspective and seeking to challenge an established political pattern. I deliberately chose Varanasi Cantonment because it is one of the most difficult constituencies to contest. If I can succeed here by convincing people and earning their trust, it will give confidence to others as well. It will demonstrate that electoral politics is dynamic and that established political equations can change

when you are able to connect with people and win their confidence.

That is why I consciously chose Varanasi Cantonment. I believe that if we want to bring change, we should be willing to take on the most difficult challenges first.

Q. Is there any assurance from the Congress high command regarding your candidature?

A. Generally, the present practice in most political parties is to allow two or three potential candidates to prepare for a constituency. Towards the end, the party conducts surveys and selects one candidate from among them.

At present, I am among the final three candidates being considered. Whether I will be selected as the final candidate is something only time and the party's survey will tell. The decision is likely to be taken around November or December.

Q. Why did you particularly choose this constituency? Is Varanasi Cantonment your native constituency, or do you have any personal connection with the area?

A. I have been living in Varanasi since 2002. In many ways, Varanasi is similar to places like Visakhapatnam or Tirupati, where government employees from surrounding regions often settle after retirement. Varanasi serves as a major settlement for government employees from across the Purvanchal region after their retirement.

My father was also a government employee, and after his retirement, our family settled in Varanasi. We have been living here ever since, and we currently reside in the Varanasi Cantonment constituency.

So, while it may not be my ancestral or native constituency, I have a long-standing personal connection with Varanasi. Having lived here for more



than two decades, I felt that this was the constituency where I should seek an opportunity to serve.

Q. You spent a major part of your administrative career in Andhra Pradesh. How will you convince Varanasi Cantonment voters that you understand their local problems and aspirations as deeply as leaders who have worked here at the grassroots level?

A. I understood from the beginning that this would be one of the first questions people would ask me. So, after taking VRS in 2024, the first thing I did was to familiarise myself with the constituency at the grassroots level. There are around 400 polling stations in the constituency, and I personally walked to all of them. Today, I can visit any polling station and the surrounding colonies and have a fair understanding of the local area. The next step was to interact with people through our Congress



K Kalyan Krishna Kumar

Resident Editor
True Point English Daily

network. Through these interactions, I have developed a fairly clear understanding of the problems and concerns of the constituency.

My administrative experience also gives me another advantage. The same problem can be addressed differently by different governments and administrations depending on the local context. I have seen how various issues were handled in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. My experience in the IAS has also exposed me to international best practices. The challenge is to adapt those experiences and best practices to the specific needs of Varanasi. Whether the issue is healthcare, education, youth employment, urban infrastructure or corruption, I believe I can combine my administrative experience with local understanding to develop practical solutions. In simple terms, my approach is: think globally and act locally.

Q. Are you planning to undertake extensive door-to-door interactions and meetings with residents before the election? What are the key issues you want to understand directly from the people of the constituency?

A. Yes, I have already started this outreach. People have different concerns depending on their trade, business or profession, so I want to listen to all of them directly and understand their individual as well as common problems.

My main focus over the next two to three months is to maximise direct door-to-door contact with residents. I am undertaking this in the form of a padayatra, walking through the constituency and meeting people personally.

I am spending around six to seven hours every day on this outreach. My priority is to listen first, understand the concerns of different sections of society and then identify the key issues that need to be taken up for the constituency.

Q. Do you think voters in Varanasi Cantonment will give special importance to your IAS background and educational qualifications, or will issues such as employment, roads, sanitation, drainage, education and local infrastructure matter more to them?

A. Ultimately, as a people's representative, my responsibility will be to solve these problems. My IAS experience and educational background may make me better equipped to understand and address them, but that background has no value to people if I cannot deliver results.

I am very clear about that. My experience and qualifications are only meant to tell people that I am capable of taking on these challenges and that they should give me an opportunity to prove myself.

My message to the people is simple: Give Congress one chance. The BJP has been here for nearly 30 years. Give us one opportunity and compare our performance with what has been done so far. That is the appeal I want to make to the voters: Give us one chance.

Q. Why did you choose the Congress as your political platform? What specifically attracted you to the party and its leadership at this stage of your career?

A. Having worked in government for many years, I believe that economic development is one of the most important priorities for any society. For me, development should be inclusive, with a focus on increasing the incomes and opportunities of the poor and the middle class.

Take the Banarasi saree industry, for example. If we want to make Banarasi sarees more prominent globally and expand the industry, the benefits should reach everyone involved, irrespective of their community or religion. The objective should be to bring people together and create broader economic opportunities.

This philosophy of inclusive development and increasing the incomes of the poor and middle class is close to the Congress ideology, and that is what attracted me to the party.

At the same time, I respect the fact that different political ideologies exist. Every country has different political schools of thought, and India is no exception.

The Congress and BJP represent different ideological approaches, and both have existed for a long time because they have found support among people.

I am proud of the ideology that I have chosen and that has attracted me to Congress. But that does not mean I look down upon people who follow a different ideology. I respect the democratic space for different political viewpoints while remaining committed to the ideology I believe in.

Q. When did you join the Congress?

A. I have been associated with the Congress for about a year now. It has been a gradual association rather than something that happened overnight.

Q. As a former senior bureaucrat, you have seen governments and political parties function from close quarters. What are the biggest differences you expect to encounter when you move

from administration to electoral politics?

A. Earlier, as a bureaucrat, there was another layer—the political executive—from whom we would receive guidance and feedback on whether we were moving in the right direction. As a people's representative, there will be no such intermediary. I will be directly accountable to the people.

The second major difference is the nature of the role itself. As a bureaucrat, I was primarily an implementer or executor. Once feedback and directions were received, my responsibility was to execute them through the administrative system.

As a people's representative, my role will be different. I will become a bridge between the people and the government. I will listen to people's concerns, understand their aspirations, provide feedback to the government and ensure that their voices are heard.

So, in simple terms, a bureaucrat is an implementer, while a people's representative is a bridge between the people and the government.

Q. If the Congress gives you the opportunity to contest from Varanasi Cantonment, what would be the three most important issues on which you would seek the people's mandate?

A. My first priority would be employment generation. I want to attract more industries and economic activity to Varanasi so that more employment opportunities are created for local people.

My second priority would be the removal of corruption. During my interactions with people, I have found that corruption is a major concern in Varanasi. Addressing it and ensuring greater transparency in public services would be one of my key objectives.

The third priority would be urban development, particularly improving municipal services and the functioning of the municipal administration.

So, my three key priorities would be employment generation, eliminating corruption and improving urban development and municipal services.

Q. Do you have any political background in your family?

A. No, I am the first person in my family to enter politics. I come from a family of government employees. My father, my brothers, my uncles and I have all been part of government service. There is no political background in my family.

Q. As an IAS officer, you had the authority to implement decisions. Today, you are seeking the people's mandate to serve as their elected representative. Why should a Varanasi Cantonment voter choose an administrator-turned-politician over a traditional grassroots politician?

A. A policy or an Act is only as good as its implementation. We may create an excellent policy, but if we are unable to implement it effectively, it serves little purpose.

My 30 years in the IAS have given me extensive experience in implementing policies and understanding what works on the ground. That experience has also helped me develop the ability to translate people's aspirations and demands into practical and implementable policy frameworks.

I believe this is one of the key advantages I bring. I can understand people's concerns, but at the same time, I know how to design policies that can actually be implemented through the government machinery.

Ultimately, what is the benefit of a policy that exists only on paper? My administrative experience gives me the ability to bridge that gap between policy formulation and effective implementation.

Q. How supportive is your family of your decision to enter politics, especially since your family has a background in government service?

A. As middle-class families, we are generally risk-averse. We do not want our nearest and dearest to take major risks because we worry that if things do not work out, they may have to face significant hardship.

In my case, there are several uncertainties. Will I get the party ticket? If I get it, will I win the election? These are all big questions. Generally, middle-class families in India tend to discourage their members from taking such risks. That is also one reason why entrepreneurship is relatively less common in our country.

We often have a similar attitude even when it comes to national service. We believe that the best people should serve as soldiers and defend the country, but instinctively, we would prefer that someone else's family takes that risk rather than our own.

Politics is also seen as a profession involving considerable uncertainty and risk. So, my family understands my decision and tells me that, at my age and with my experience, I should know what is best for me. But I would not describe their response as wholehearted or open-hearted support. They are accepting my decision, but they are naturally concerned about the risks involved.

Governor's Visit Scheduled for August 25

Continue

establishment of the National Turmeric Board headquarters in the district has raised expectations among farmers regarding better market support and opportunities for the crop. Authorities have been directed to ensure adequate arrangements at all venues ahead of the Governor's visit.

Revanth Hails India's Space Achievements

Continue

demonstrated the country's scientific and technological capabilities on the global stage. He noted that the successful landing near the Moon's south polar region was the result of years of dedicated research, hard work and perseverance by scientists and technical teams.

Revathi Reddy congratulated all those who contributed to the landmark achievement and said their

efforts had strengthened India's position in the international space sector.

The Chief Minister also highlighted Telangana's emerging role in the space technology sector. He said the State was encouraging startups and creating opportunities for innovation, particularly among young entrepreneurs and technology professionals.

Calling upon the youth to pursue new ideas and

ambitious goals, Revathi Reddy said innovation would play a crucial role in shaping the future. He encouraged young people to think boldly, experiment with new technologies and remain persistent in pursuing their aspirations. He emphasised the importance of knowledge and innovation in building a stronger technology ecosystem in Telangana. The State, he said, should continue to support emerging technologies and create an environment

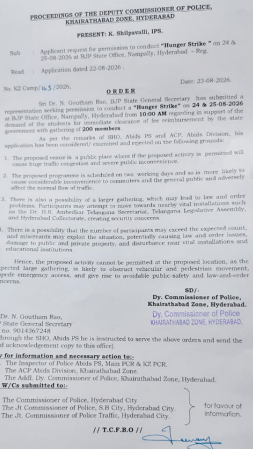
where startups and researchers can develop solutions with global relevance. Revathi Reddy said India's achievements in space should inspire the younger generation to explore new frontiers in science and technology. He expressed confidence that Telangana's growing space-tech ecosystem could contribute significantly to the country's future ambitions in the sector. His National Space Day message underlined the importance of scientific research, technological advancement and youth-led innovation in strengthening India's position as a leading space-faring nation.

Police Deny Permission for BJP Fee Protest

Hyderabad, August 23 | TPN Bureau

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has launched a protest campaign titled "Fee Arrears - BJP Ladai" to demand the release of pending fee reimbursement dues from the Telangana government.

The party had planned a two-day protest at its office, seeking the immediate clearance of approximately Rs 15,000 crore in outstanding fee reimbursement payments. BJP leaders and cadres had reportedly made arrangements for the programme and called for participation to press the government on the issue. However, police authorities have denied permission to conduct the protest at the party office. Officials cited the possibility of law-and-order problems as the reason for rejecting the request. The denial has led to a disagreement between the BJP and police authorities, with party cadres maintaining that the protest would proceed despite the lack of official permission. BJP leaders have accused the government of delaying payments that are important for students and educational



institutions. They said the protest was intended to draw attention to the financial burden caused by the pending reimbursements and demand immediate action from the government. Party workers have been urged to remain prepared for the proposed agitation and participate in large numbers. The BJP has indicated that it will continue its campaign until the fee reimbursement arrears are released. The development is expected to intensify the political confrontation between the BJP and the State government over student welfare and education-related funding.

MLA Vivekananda Inaugurates Banjara Bhavan



Quthbullapur, August 23 | TPN Bureau

BRS Legislature Party Whip and Quthbullapur MLA KP Vivekananda said he would continue to support initiatives aimed at protecting the self-respect, unity and development of the Banjara community. He made the remarks while inaugurating a newly constructed Banjara Bhavan at Shivalayanagar in Division 129, Suraram. The building was constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 12 lakh through personal funds under the aegis of the KM Pandu Memorial Trust. Speaking at the event, Vivekananda said public service based on the ideals of his father, KM Pandu, would remain a lasting legacy. He expressed confidence that the new facility would become a platform for the Banjara community to strengthen its unity and pursue developmental activities. The MLA recalled the community's contribution to his political journey, stating that Banjara voters had

played an important role in his election as Quthbullapur MLA on three occasions. He said he was particularly grateful for their support in securing his third victory with the highest majority in the State. Vivekananda assured the community that he would continue to extend his cooperation for its welfare and progress. He said efforts would be made to address issues affecting the community and support initiatives that promote its social development. Banjara women welcomed the MLA with traditional dance performances following his arrival at the venue. Former corporators Satyanarayana and Suresh Reddy, division presidents Puppala Bhaskar and Pole Srikanth, and senior leaders Varala Vinod, Kondakalla Srinivas Reddy, Dr. Hussain, Kola Srikanth, Feroz and Maheshwar Reddy attended the programme. Women's wing president Hemalatha Reddy and representatives and members of the Banjara Welfare Association were also present.

Two Killed in Building Collapse

Hyderabad, August 23 | TPN Bureau

Two migrant tile workers from Madhya Pradesh were killed and several others injured after an under-construction seven-storey building collapsed at Anjaiah Nagar in Gachibowli on Saturday. The incident occurred around 1 p.m., triggering a major rescue operation by fire and emergency teams. The deceased were identified as Umesh Khare and Mopath, who were working at the site. Debris from the collapsing structure also damaged an adjoining apartment building, injuring residents and workers. Police have launched an investigation into the incident. Raidurgam police registered a criminal case against Mohammed Sajid, identified as an accused in connection with the construction, and a contractor was also named in the case. Sajid was taken into police custody on Sunday. Municipal authorities said the building was an unauthorised structure constructed on a plot of about 50 square yards near or over a nala. Reports said the construction had previously been stopped after complaints, but work reportedly resumed shortly before the collapse. The incident has raised serious questions about enforcement of building regulations. A Town Planning report stated that the required building permission had not been obtained and prescribed setbacks were not maintained. Notices had reportedly been issued to the construction site in June. Following the tragedy, the Cyberabad Municipal Corporation ordered a wider inspection of unauthorised constructions and directed officials to take enforcement action wherever violations are found. The Town Planning Building Officer concerned was also suspended pending disciplinary proceedings over alleged failure to act against the unauthorised construction. HYDRABAD and municipal teams also monitored the demolition of the damaged structure on Sunday, while adjoining residents were asked to vacate unsafe premises during the operation. The authorities are continuing their investigation to determine responsibility for the construction violations and the circumstances that led to the fatal collapse.

Questions Over Shed Construction

Quthbullapur, August 23 | TPN Bureau

A shed construction coming up near Gagillapur in Dundigal Circle has triggered concerns among local residents, who are questioning whether the structure has obtained the required permissions. The construction is reportedly being carried out near Tea Time, along the Gandimaissamma-Narsapur main road in Survey No. 144. Residents have alleged that construction activity is continuing despite the absence of clarity over approvals from the concerned authorities. They have questioned why the Town Planning department has not intervened, particularly as the

structure is reportedly nearing completion. Locals have also raised questions over whether the construction was undertaken during holidays to avoid scrutiny. Some residents claimed that there were rumours that the work was being accelerated with an assurance that any official intervention would be managed.

These allegations, however, require verification by the concerned authorities. The Town Planning department is responsible for monitoring building activity and taking action against unauthorised constructions. Residents said the apparent lack of intervention in this case has created doubts about whether officials



have inspected the site and verified the permissions. They have urged the authorities to conduct an immediate field inspection of the shed in

Survey No. 144 and establish whether all mandatory approvals and clearances have been obtained. If violations are found, resi-

dents have demanded action in accordance with municipal regulations. The allegations have also prompted questions about

whether any officials or municipal staff facilitated the construction. No evidence establishing such involvement has been presented, and the claims require an official inquiry before any conclusions can be drawn.

Residents said timely inspections are essential to prevent unauthorised structures from reaching an advanced stage of construction.

They appealed to senior officials to examine the matter transparently and clarify the status of the permissions.

The key issue now is whether the concerned authorities will inspect the site and take appropriate action based on the findings, or allow construction to continue until completion.

Auto, Cab Workers Announce Statewide Strike

Hyderabad, August 23 | TPN Bureau

The Joint Action Committee of auto, cab and school van workers' unions has announced a statewide strike to press for solutions to their long-pending demands. BRTU State president Vemula Marayya made the announcement at a meeting held at Telangana Bhavan in Hyderabad.

According to the union leaders, auto drivers across Telangana will begin their strike from midnight on Sunday. In Greater Hyderabad, drivers of autos, cabs and school vans will



organise a major rally on Monday at 10.30 a.m. The

rally will begin at Sundarayya Vignana Kendram in

Baghlingampally and proceed towards RTC Crossroads,

where the unions plan to burn an effigy of the government. Similar demonstrations have been proposed at district headquarters across the State.

The union leaders alleged that the Congress government had failed to implement assurances made to auto drivers before the elections. They said promises to establish a welfare board and provide annual financial assistance of Rs 12,000 had not been fulfilled.

They further alleged that the Rs 5 lakh accident insurance facility available under the previous government had been discontinued. With nearly 25 lakh auto drivers report-

edly dependent on the sector across Telangana, the leaders demanded stronger welfare measures. The unions also sought a dedicated online platform to enable auto drivers to register and resolve their grievances. The leaders appealed to workers to participate in the strike in large numbers and urged the public to support their demands. They also cautioned drivers against misinformation regarding the agitation. AITUC leader B. Venkatesham, CITU's Srikanth, BMS representative Ravishankar, Salim Bhai, Praveen, Ram Reddy, Srinivas and Majid Bhai attended the meeting.

Telangana Activists Rally for September 16 Meet

Tarnaka, August 23 | TPN Bureau

Md. Rahim, State President of the Telangana Activists' Association, has called upon activists to make the September 16 meeting of two generations of Telangana statehood movement participants a grand success. He urged activists from across the state to attend the programme in large numbers and highlight their long-pending demands. The appeal was made during a preparatory meeting held near Osmania University College in Tarnaka. Pidamarthi Ravi, who attended the meeting as chief guest, shared suggestions on strengthening arrangements for the proposed gathering. The programme is being organised by research scholars and members of the Telangana Activists' Association. The leaders demanded that all

activists who participated in the Telangana statehood movement be officially recognised and provided with 250 square yards of land, identity cards, pensions, healthcare facilities and employment security. They also urged the government to speed up the recognition process. Organisers said the main objective of the September 16 meeting is to press for the early completion of the recognition process through the KK Committee and bring the concerns of Telangana activists to the government's attention. They also decided to publicise the meeting through national, electronic and print media to build greater public and governmental attention. Coordinators have been appointed for various universities and localities to mobilise participants. K. Ugender and Jeevan were assigned responsibility for Nizam College, while



Singari Galla Brahman, Raghavendra and Omkar were appointed for PU. Dr. Manchala

Maheshwar and others will coordinate activities at Telangana University. Several activists and

organisers participated in the meeting and pledged their support for the September 16 programme.

Citizens Must Defend Democracy: Parakala

guard people's rights, but alleged that ruling establishments were gradually creating conditions that weaken constitutional protections. Prabhakar expressed concern over the growing influence of corporate interests on the media, saying citizens were often unable to obtain balanced information about government policies and their impact. He also claimed that several important public issues were not receiving adequate discussion in Parliament. Referring to electoral reforms, he cited concerns raised by the

Association for Democratic Reforms about discrepancies in electoral data. He argued that weaknesses in the electoral system and inadequate enforcement of laws could undermine public confidence in democracy. Prabhakar also raised concerns over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. He alleged that while the process was intended to remove ineligible voters, genuine voters could also be affected if safeguards were inadequate. He urged citizens to remain vigilant and verify their names on electoral rolls before

elections. He said political parties and the public must take democratic issues seriously and oppose any attempt to weaken constitutional institutions. Citizens, he stressed, have a collective responsibility to protect their rights and ensure that democratic freedoms remain intact. Welfare Association president Nomula Sudarshan Reddy and several FACA leaders, including Ravindra Sharma, DASV Prasada Rao, Umamaheswara Rao and Kamesh Babu, attended the programme.

BJP Reviews Voter Revision Drive in Uppal

Uppal, August 23 | TPN Bureau

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) held a strategy meeting in Ramanthapur to prepare for the second phase of the comprehensive voter revision programme in the Uppal constituency. The meeting was chaired by Booth Level Agent-I Potthagani Gopal Goud, while BJP State leader and former Uppal MLA NVSS Prabhakar attended as the chief guest. Addressing party leaders and workers, Prabhakar said discipline was one of the BJP's core principles and praised party workers for their dedicated service. He said the party would recognise leaders based on their seniority and contributions when selecting candidates and giving responsibilities for the upcoming corporation elections. He urged leaders and workers to follow the party's ideology, organisational rules and action plan while working towards strengthening the BJP. He made it clear that indiscipline would not be tolerated and called upon workers to contribute to the party's growth in Telangana. District president Girivardhan Reddy and district coordinator for the voter revision programme Nandanam Diwakar said



Uppal constituency had performed strongly during the first phase. They appreciated the efforts of Booth Level Agent-2s, booth coordinators and Shakti Kendra in-charges and urged them to maintain the same momentum during the second phase. The leaders alleged that opposition parties were attempting to weaken the voter revision exercise and appealed to citizens to remain alert. They advised voters who receive official notices to submit the

required documents within the stipulated process. Prabhakar also asked voters facing difficulties or seeking clarification to approach local BJP activists for assistance. Tribal Morcha State president Ravi Naik, State Executive Committee member Gorige Krishna, former corporator Srivani, senior leaders, booth coordinators, Shakti Kendra in-charges and BLA-2s participated in the meeting.

BJP Chief to Fast Over Fee Arrears

Hyderabad, August 23 | TPN Bureau

BJP Telangana State president N. Ramchander Rao will undertake a two-day hunger strike from August 24 to demand the release of pending fee reimbursement dues, party State General Secretary Dr. N. Gautam Rao said on Sunday. In a statement, Gautam Rao alleged that the Congress government had withheld around Rs 15,000 crore in fee reimbursement arrears, affecting the higher education prospects of nearly 40 lakh students across Telangana. He claimed that students from poor and middle-class families were particularly affected by the delay. According to the BJP, Ramchander Rao will begin the hunger strike at 10 a.m. on Monday, August 24, at the party's State office in Nampally, Hyderabad. The protest will continue through August 25. Gautam Rao

alleged that delays in reimbursement payments had created difficulties for students, with some reportedly unable to obtain college certificates and facing problems in pursuing higher education and employment opportunities. He said the BJP would continue its agitation until the State government released the outstanding fee reimbursement amount. Describing the protest as a campaign for students' rights, he appealed to students, youth, parents, intellectuals and democratic groups to support the hunger strike. The BJP leader urged people from across Telangana to participate in the programme in large numbers. The two-day hunger strike is part of the BJP's campaign seeking immediate clearance of fee reimbursement dues. The party reiterated its demand that the government take urgent steps to protect students' educational and career prospects.

CPM Backs Transport Workers' Strike

Kothagudem, August 23 | TPN Bureau

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) has extended its full support to the proposed strike by transport workers across Telangana and appealed to the public to back the agitation. CPM State Secretariat member Pothineni Sudarshan said autos, private vans and school vans would remain off the roads from midnight on August 23 as part of the statewide protest. Addressing a CPM district committee meeting at Manchikanti Bhavan, chaired by State Committee member Annavarapu Kanakaiah, Sudarshan demanded that the State government immediately release the promised Rs 12,000 financial assistance to auto workers. He also urged the government to drop plans to introduce electric autos through the RTC and reconsider policies concerning app-based transport companies such as Rapido, Ola and Uber.



Instead, he called for the establishment of a government-operated app-based transport service that would protect the interests of drivers and passengers. Sudarshan said the Joint Action Committee (JAC) of

auto workers' unions had called the strike to press for solutions to their long-standing problems. He criticised the Transport Minister for appealing to workers to withdraw the strike without holding discus-

sions with the JAC. According to Sudarshan, auto workers have been facing serious financial difficulties following the introduction of the free bus travel scheme. He said declining earnings had made it increasingly difficult for drivers to support their families, with many reportedly falling into debt. He demanded immediate negotiations with transport workers and concrete measures to safeguard their livelihoods and social security. He urged the government to address the concerns of the transport sector rather than allowing the dispute to escalate. CPM District Secretary Macha Venkateswarlu, State Committee member AJ Ramesh and district secretariat members MB Narsa Reddy, Annavarapu Satyanarayana, Karam Pullaiah, K. Brahmachari, Likki Balaraju and Repakula Srinivas were among those who attended the meeting.

Probe Demanded Into Handloom Society Irregularities



Narayanpet, August 23 | TPN Bureau

Leaders of several political parties and workers' organisations have demanded an immediate inquiry into alleged irregularities in three handloom societies in Narayanpet district. They made the demand at a press conference held at Ambedkar Bhavan in the district headquarters on Sunday. TDP leader Omprakash Mudiraj, TRS district president Gavinolla Srinivas, BSP district president Bodigala Srinivas, CITU district secretary Balram, Rajyadhikara Party district president Krishna and CPI(ML) Mass Line secretary Kenchi Narayana alleged financial irregularities in the functioning of the societies. The leaders particularly demanded a detailed investigation into alleged illegal transactions worth Rs 51 crore in the Narayanpet handloom society. They called for strict action against those responsible and sought the removal of the society president and secretaries, accusing them of allegedly using the organisation for personal benefit. They urged authorities to protect the interests of genuine handloom weavers and ensure that all eligible work-

ers receive society membership. The leaders also alleged that benefits under the Rs 5 lakh Nethanna Bima insurance scheme intended for weavers were being diverted to middlemen. Another issue raised at the meeting concerned housing plots allotted to handloom workers through the Gandhinagar Society in 1961. The leaders said 100 weavers had reportedly been allotted plots measuring 444 square yards and were provided with houses, but ownership documents had still not been issued. They demanded that the authorities examine the matter and provide legal ownership documents to eligible beneficiaries without further delay. The leaders announced that an all-party coalition would organise a massive dharna in front of the District Collectorate on September 9 to highlight the problems confronting handloom weavers and press for immediate action. Pamphlets announcing the proposed protest were released during the press conference. Narsimha, Raghavanaidu, Hussain, Ashok, Gautam, Shiva, Ajay and Tuljaram were among those who participated in the programme.

Ganja Seized Near Metro



Habsiguda, August 23 | TPN Bureau

The Medchal-Malkajgiri Enforcement Wing seized 100 packets of cannabis weighing 735 grams near Habsiguda Metro Station, officials said. The seizure was carried out by a team led by Enforcement Wing Circle Inspector Kotamma. During the operation, officials detained an individual identified as Reetha and recovered the suspected contraband from their possession. According to CI Kotamma, preliminary questioning of the accused indicated that the packets had allegedly been sourced from a person in the Malleshwaram area. Officials are conducting further inquiries to establish the source of the substance and determine whether other individuals were involved in its transportation or dis-

tribution. Following the seizure, the accused along with the recovered cannabis was handed over to the Uppal Excise Station for further legal proceedings. Officials said the enforcement operation was part of efforts to curb the illegal movement and sale of narcotic substances in the region. The authorities are expected to investigate the circumstances surrounding the procurement and intended distribution of the seized cannabis. Further details regarding the case, including the applicable charges and the outcome of the investigation, are expected to emerge following the completion of the inquiry. The Enforcement Wing has urged the public to remain alert and cooperate with authorities in efforts to prevent the circulation of illegal narcotic substances.

Ayyappa Mantra Initiation Event

Hyderabad, August 23 | TPN Bureau

A two-day spiritual gathering featuring Ayyappa Mantra Deeksha and Mantra Upadesha based on the traditional Kerala Tantric lineage will be held in Hyderabad on September 6 and 7. The programme will take place at AVR Convention Hall in Gudlapochamma, according to organiser K. Niranjan Rao. Devotees trained at Chengannur Mantra Vidyapeetham, a Kerala government-recognised Tantric Gurukulam, will participate in the event. The rituals and spiritual sessions will be conducted under the guidance of Brahmasri T.D.P. Namboodiri Guruji, renowned Tantra Guru and head of the Mantra Vidyapeetham. The programme on September 6 will include practical classes for students undergoing training, along with Ayyappa bhajans. A special session for devotees seeking Mantra Upadesha will be organised on September 7. Those interested in receiving the initiation have been advised to complete registration by September 4. The gathering will feature traditional rituals including Maha Ganapathi Homam, Pitru Vandanam, Kalasha Puja, Abhishekam, Matru Vandanam, Mantra Upadesha and Bhiksha Karamam. Organisers expect devotees from Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and other states to attend. Accommodation has also been



arranged for a limited number of around 30 devotees. The organisers said the event aims to familiarise devotees with Kerala's traditional Tantric practices and offer them an opportunity for spiritual learning and worship under the guidance of a Guru. For further information, devotees may contact K. Niranjan Rao Guruji at 8712164646.

Bonalu Celebrated with Devotion



Mallapur, August 23 | TPN Bureau

The Bonalu festival was celebrated with religious fervour and enthusiasm at Chanakyapuri Colony in Mallapur on Sunday. A large number of devotees gathered at local temples to offer prayers and seek the blessings of the Goddess. Women dressed in traditional attire participated in processions while carrying Bonalu offerings on their heads. Special prayers and rituals were performed at the temples, which were decorated for the occasion. The festive atmosphere attracted people of all age groups, with women, youth and children taking part in the celebrations with enthusiasm. Devotees offered Bonalu with deep faith and prayed for the well-being, happiness and good health of people. The temple premises remained busy throughout the celebrations as devotees continued to

arrive to offer their prayers. Organisers made arrangements to facilitate the smooth participation of devotees. Drinking water and other basic amenities were provided at the venue. Volunteers also assisted visitors and helped manage the gathering. The local police made special security arrangements to ensure that the celebrations passed peacefully. Measures were also taken to regulate traffic and prevent inconvenience to residents and devotees in the surrounding areas. The celebrations reflected the strong cultural and religious traditions associated with Bonalu, with the community coming together to observe the festival in a spirit of devotion and unity. Residents and organisers expressed satisfaction over the peaceful conduct of the event and thanked devotees, volunteers and police personnel for their cooperation in making the celebrations successful.

Woman Dies After Suspected Snakebite



Vikarabad, August 23 | TPN Bureau

A woman from Gurrampalli village in Vikarabad district died after suffering a suspected snakebite while working at a farmhouse on the outskirts of Janagam in Peddemul mandal. According to family members, Narasamma, who was working at Moinuddin's farmhouse, reportedly told her husband, Anjaneyulu, that something had bitten her at around 1 a.m. on Saturday. When the family members checked, they could not find any visible snake or other creature. However, suspecting that she might have been bitten by a snake, they immediately arranged for medical treatment. Narasamma was taken to Tandur District Hospital at around 6 a.m. Doctors provided initial treatment and, considering her deteriorating condition, advised the family to shift her to Gandhi Hospital in Hyderabad for advanced medical care.

While she was being taken to the hospital, her condition reportedly worsened. She died on the way, leaving her family members in distress. The body was subsequently taken to the Vikarabad Government Hospital, where doctors confirmed her death. Later, the family shifted the body to the District Hospital for a post-mortem examination as part of the required procedures. The incident has caused concern among residents and workers in rural areas, particularly those employed at farms and agricultural fields where encounters with snakes can occur during the monsoon season. Family members appealed to the government to extend financial assistance and necessary support to them during this difficult time. They also urged authorities to take appropriate measures to improve safety for workers employed in isolated agricultural and farmhouse areas.

Grand Shravana Ekadashi Celebrations

Yellareddypet, August 23 | TPN Bureau

Grand spiritual celebrations themed "Vasudhaiva Kutumbam" (The World Is One Family) were held at Om Maujyah Ashram on the outskirts of Venkatapuram village in Yellareddypet mandal on the occasion of Shravana Masa Ekadashi. The celebrations were organized as part of the ashram's 13th anniversary. A major highlight was the distribution of sarees to 1,003 women aged above 50. The mass distribution event earned recognition for Om Maujyah Vishwa Mahila Seva Samithi in the World Records India book. Several devotional rituals, including Sahasra Kumkumarchana, Sahasra Kala sharchana and Sahasra Deeparadhana, were performed on the ashram premises amid religious fervour. Devotees also participated in Annadanam, with free meals and Laddu Prasadam distributed to visitors. According to the organisers,

more than 2,000 devotees attended the celebrations. Participants arrived from various parts of Telangana and neighbouring areas, including Karimnagar, Sircilla, Warangal, Nizamabad and Vijayawada. A Shakti Peetham Mahamata rally was conducted at around 10 a.m., drawing devotees and women participants. The programme was followed by a grand Sri Prabhu Pallaki Seva in the evening. The ashram premises remained vibrant throughout the day as devotees participated in prayers and spiritual activities. Organizers said the celebrations were intended not only to mark the religious occasion but also to promote the message of unity, service and respect for senior women. The event concluded amid devotional chants and prayers, with organizers expressing gratitude to devotees, volunteers and participants who contributed to the successful conduct of the celebrations.

Stray Dogs Kill 11 Lambs

Suryapet, August 23 | TPN Bureau

A pack of stray dogs attacked a flock of sheep at Narayanagudem village in Munagala mandal of Suryapet district, killing 11 lambs and causing an estimated financial loss of around Rs 1.50 lakh. The incident occurred when the sheep belonging to local shepherd Dasari Ramakrishna were kept inside a pen. The stray dogs reportedly entered the enclosure and attacked the animals. Despite efforts to protect the flock, 11 lambs died in the attack. Ramakrishna expressed deep distress over the loss and said the incident had caused him significant financial hardship. He appealed to the village panchayat authorities to immediately intervene and take effective measures to control the growing stray dog

population in the area. The incident has also sparked concern among residents, who fear that unchecked movement of stray dogs could pose a threat not only to livestock but also to children and pedestrians. Villagers urged local authorities to identify areas where stray dogs are present in large numbers and take appropriate steps to prevent similar incidents. They also called for measures to ensure the safety of livestock owners who depend on sheep and other animals for their livelihood. Residents said timely action was necessary to prevent further attacks and protect both people and domestic animals in the village. The affected shepherd has sought government assistance for the loss suffered in the incident and urged officials to assess the damage and provide appropriate relief.

Nala Project Nears Full Level

Jukkal, August 23 | TPN Bureau

The water level at the Kaulas Nala Project near Savargaon in Jukkal mandal of Kamareddy district has risen to 457.60 metres, prompting officials to issue an alert to people living in downstream areas. The project's maximum storage level is 458.00 metres. Officials said the water level could increase further over the next 24 to 48 hours if inflows from the upstream catchment continue. If the reservoir reaches its prescribed level, the floodgates may be opened to release excess water into the Kaulas Nala stream, depending on the volume of inflows. Authorities have advised residents in downstream villages to remain vigilant and asked the Revenue and Police departments to take necessary precautionary measures. Officials have also urged peo-

ple living near the stream to follow safety instructions and avoid unnecessary movement in vulnerable areas. Farmers, fishermen, shepherds and members of the public have been advised not to enter or approach the stream. Residents have also been asked to keep cattle, sheep and other livestock away from the watercourse to prevent accidents. Officials clarified that a separate announcement will be made before the gates are opened. The warning will provide information about the timing of the release and the quantity of water expected to be discharged. Authorities appealed to residents to remain calm while exercising caution and to strictly follow instructions issued by officials. They emphasized that timely precautions are essential to ensure the safety of people and livestock in downstream areas.

Fire Breaks Out at Warehouses



Hyderabad, August 23 | TPN Bureau

A major fire broke out at furniture and plywood warehouses in Mogal Kanala, within the Gudimalkapur police station limits in Hyderabad, on Sunday, triggering panic among residents and warehouse owners in the surrounding area. The blaze reportedly spread rapidly after flames erupted inside the warehouses, where large quantities of wood, plywood, plastic and other combustible materials were stored. Furniture, plywood and other goods were damaged in the incident, causing concern among owners of nearby warehouses over the possibility of the fire spreading. Fire department personnel responded quickly and deployed five fire engines to contain the blaze. Their efforts prevented the situation from developing into a larger disaster. Officials said the fire was brought under control in two warehouses, while flames continued to flare up for some time in two others before the situation was eventual-

ly contained. District Fire Officer Sridas said the department received information about the incident at around 11 a.m. Firefighters immediately reached the location and launched firefighting operations. According to officials, the fire affected six warehouses in total. Five of the warehouses reportedly contained plywood, while another was being used to store diapers and other goods. The nature of the materials stored at the premises contributed to the rapid spread and intensity of the flames. No casualties were reported in the incident, providing relief to authorities and local residents. The exact cause of the fire remains unknown. Police and fire department officials have begun an investigation to determine whether a short circuit or another factor triggered the blaze. Officials said further details would emerge after a thorough inspection of the affected premises. Authorities have also been assessing the extent of property and material damage caused by the fire.

Poetry as a Walking Human Being: The Essence of Varavara Rao's Poetry



Varavara Rao occupies a distinctive place in Telugu poetry. At the center of his work are the human being, freedom, social justice, resistance to exploitation, and the lived realities of ordinary people. For him, poetry is not an exercise in ornamentation; it is a moral act that interrogates life and its structures of power.

His poems carry anger, anguish and rebellion, but they are equally alive with love, tenderness, compassion and faith in the future. This is precisely why a poem of his may begin in the urgency of protest yet ultimately remain in the reader's mind as a profound human question. For Varavara Rao, poetry is not only an aesthetic object standing apart from life. If life is turbulent, wounded and unjust, poetry too must disturb our complacency. His poems do not allow the reader the comfort of passive appreciation; they compel us to think, question and confront reality. Some poets look at flowers. Others look at the people crushed beneath them. Varavara Rao belongs to the latter. His poetry does not reject beauty; it reminds us that beauty remains incomplete until it stands beside justice.



To read Varavara Rao is to hear, first, the heartbeat of a human being, then the footsteps of an age and finally, the silence in which history begins to question itself. His poems transform private grief into collective memory. A farmer's tear, a prisoner's silence, a tribal forest, a mother's waiting these become, in his hands, chapters in the larger history of humanity. Nature, too, is never a decorative landscape in his poetry; it is a moral compass. A river is not merely a flow of water but the journey of the people. A seed is not simply the promise of harvest but the possibility of the future. Fire is not only destruction but the energy of transformation. Every image carries the pulse of life renewing itself against despair.

In an age where almost everything is assigned a market value, Varavara Rao's poetry recalls a forgotten truth: a human being cannot be measured by price, only by dignity. It insists that equality is greater than privilege, justice more enduring than prosperity, and humanity more valuable than success.

For this reason, Varavara Rao's poetry ultimately belongs not to a single ideology but to everyone who believes in the inviolable worth of human life. It remembers those whom history has chosen to forget. It keeps hope alive in the darkest hours. Above all, it teaches us that poetry is not an escape from reality but a way of restoring the human voice to a world that

too often loses the courage to listen.

Sahacharulu Some books do not merely give us information after we read them. They awaken memories that have long been asleep within us. V.V.'s Sahacharulu is one such book. This is not a biography. It is not the path walked by a single individual. It is the story of an era narrating its own wounds.

We often assume that time comes to a halt behind prison walls. But in this book, it is time that moves the most-not a step forward, but inward, into the deepest interiors of the human being. In Varavara Rao's writing, compassion never shouts. Anger does not turn into violence. It settles instead like a certainty. Here, literature is not mere ornamentation; it is a repository of memory-an attempt to ensure that memory is not forgotten. Forgetting an individual may be forgivable; but how do we forget an era?

This is what Sahacharulu tells us: the people around us, those who walk with us, those who speak with us, will one day turn into history. Here, "companions" are not merely those who walked beside us. They are those who carried the same dream on their shoulders, who hid the same fear in their throats, who shared the same silence through long nights.

V.V.'s poetry is not a verse that lies quietly asleep on the page. It is a sleepless night, an alert road. There is no ornamentation in his poetry-after all, what use is ornament to the hungry?

What remains here is a shattered life, betrayed labour, and a hope that keeps walking. V.V.'s words are never flowers. They are a row of wounds. They wake a sleeping society like a blaring alarm. In his poetry, the poor person's voice does not learn grammar. Even love here is not floral. Love is a hand placed on a comrade's shoulder; a letter written on a prison wall. Speaking of prison walls, one is reminded of the Malayalam writer Vaikom Muhammad Basheer's story Mathilukal, and the film based on it by Adoor Gopalakrishnan, with Mammootty in the lead. In Sahacharulu, V.V. only questions. A poem that does not

ries into collective consciousness.

Varavara Rao's language here too privileges honesty over ornamentation, anguish over rage. He does not portray anyone as heroic giants, nor does he hide their weaknesses. That is precisely what lends this book its profound credibility. Reading Sahacharulu, one clearly understands that a movement is not merely a collection of slogans. It is a commitment that stands firm on its goal despite complexities in human relationships-contradictions, conflicts, disagreements, pauses. After reading Sahacharulu, one feels that the histories of many movements in this country

Varala Anand



Poet, Film Critic & Recipient of Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award for Translation

question is not poetry at all in his work. Personal anguish in his writing resonates as a collective wound. That is why reading V.V.'s poetry is not merely a literary experience; it is a responsibility. The poem does not end with his writing; it begins within us.

Sahacharulu is not simply a compilation of personal memories written by Varavara Rao. It is a living history of a movement's time, a human garland of a generation's resistance. The companions who appear in this book are not just individuals; they are symbols of an era, embodiments of political and cultural consciousness.

This work emerges from V.V.'s emotional and political responsibility toward those who walked alongside him in the movement. While introducing each companion, Varavara Rao focuses not on their private lives but on their political positions, social roles, and sacrifices. Here, a "companion" does not mean a friend. He is someone who believed in the same dream, shared the same danger, endured the same confinement. That is why these companions transform from personal memo-

should be measured not by names of individuals, but by their sacrifices. The language in Varavara Rao's writing does not scream. It is like a shadow cast on a prison wall, like an old wound no one notices. He neither entertains nor decorates with his sentences. He writes them and leaves them to truth. That is why, while reading, there are moments when one must stop and sit silently. I did exactly that.

When the book ends, it does not feel finished. A certain weight enters our thoughts, our minds, our walk. A portion of history settles into our silence. Only then do we realize that this book is not about companions-it is about us. About all of us. The question we must ask ourselves is how far we have stood as companions to our own time. Socially, this book is a poetic history.

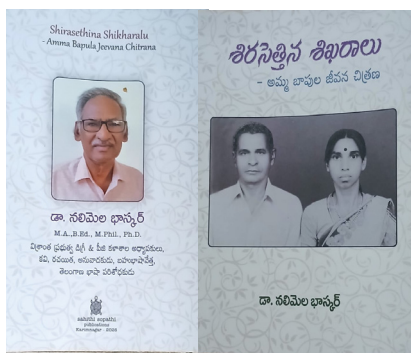
A poet does not merely describe his time; he asks the questions his time is afraid to ask. And though his poetry may arise from a particular moment in history, its deepest and most enduring subject remains the human being.

When Ordinary Lives Become Timeless Literature

A Literary Monument to Parenthood and Rural Telangana

Some books entertain the mind. Some touch the heart. A rare few reshape our understanding of life itself. Shirasethina Shikharalu, a Telugu Book belongs unmistakably to the last category. More than a memoir, it is an eloquent tribute to parents, a celebration of the teaching profession and a profound meditation on gratitude, integrity, compassion and the enduring values of rural Telangana.

Published in Ashada 2026 by Sahiti Sopathi Telangana, this 112-page volume is modest in size yet immense in emotional and literary depth. Every chapter transcends personal remembrance to become a lesson in humanity. What appears to be the story of one family gradually unfolds as the collective memory of an entire generation. Born in 1956 at Narayanapur, Ellareddypet Mandal, present-day Rajanna Sircilla District, to Sri Ramachandram and Smt Bucchamma, Dr Nalimela Bhaskar is a distinguished multilingual scholar, translator, researcher and retired college lecturer. His literary journey, enriched by more than forty five books, including fifteen translations, reflects a lifelong commitment to language and culture. Recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Translation Award, the Kaloji Award and numerous other honours, including My Gift Sahitee Puraskaram, he remains one of the most respected literary voices in contemporary Telugu letters. Yet, among his many achievements, this book reveals his most cherished identity: that of a grateful son. The emotional heart of the book is Bucchamma. She is portrayed not merely as a mother but as the quiet architect of an entire family's future. Rising before dawn, gently awakening her son with the affectionate advice that lessons learnt early in the morning remain forever in the mind, she transforms everyday motherhood into a sacred vocation. Her discipline, immaculate housekeeping, affectionate care, culinary skill, silent sacrifices and unwavering devotion illuminate every page. Dr Bhaskar does not simply remember his mother; he immortalises the invisible strength that sustains every



loving home. Through Bucchamma, motherhood itself becomes literature. Standing beside her is Ramachandram, an exemplary teacher whose life embodies honesty, discipline, humility, and unwavering dedication. Crossing streams, forests, flooded paths, and difficult terrain merely to reach his school, he never allowed hardship to interfere with his responsibility toward his students. His life reminds us that teaching is not merely a profession but a moral commitment to society. His uncompromising dedication to his children's education forms one of the strongest pillars of the narrative. Despite financial limitations, he refused to compromise on their schooling, careers, or future. Equally inspiring is the family's commitment to ethical living, reflected in the author's own rejection of dowry and the responsible fulfilment of family obligations with dignity and compassion.

Several episodes remain unforgettable. Ramachandram's courage while serving alone in remote Lambadi settlements recalls the vigilance of a soldier guarding the nation's frontier. His lifelong refusal to accept corruption silently teaches that integrity remains the noblest form of public service. Beyond family relationships, the narrative celebrates humanity's intimate bond with nature. Forests are not merely landscapes but living companions deserving reverence and protection. The emotional bond between people and animals, especially the grief surrounding the loss of a

buffalo calf, reflects a civilisation that regarded all living beings as members of one extended family. Such passages preserve a disappearing world of compassion and ecological harmony.

The recollections of village life, extended families, neighbours, festivals, kinship and the warmth of Telangana's rural communities transform the book into an invaluable social document. Personal memories become collective history, preserving the moral imagination of an era built upon simplicity, trust, gratitude and mutual affection. Dr. Bhaskar's prose is distinguished by remarkable restraint. He neither sentimentalises the past nor glorifies suffering. Instead, he transforms lived experience into enduring literature, allowing deeply personal memories to resonate as universal human truths. His elegant use of Telangana idiom lends authenticity while preserving literary dignity. That artistic balance between memory and literature gives the work its lasting significance.

Even after health challenges following laser eye treatment, the author's unwavering dedication to literature and translation reflects the spirit of a true literary pilgrim. His own life becomes an extension of the very values celebrated throughout this work.

Ultimately, Dr. Nalimela Bhaskar has achieved something extraordinary. He has not merely preserved the memory of his parents; he has transformed their ordinary lives into timeless literature. Bucchamma emerges as the summit of motherhood. Ramachandram stands as the summit of integrity, education, and selfless service. Between these two towering peaks stands the author himself, shaped by their values and preserving them for generations yet to come.



Dr Peruka Raju

Author & Literary Critic

By the final page, it becomes evident that Shirasethina Shikharalu is not written solely for the author's parents. It is written for every mother whose sacrifices remained unspoken, every father whose silent struggles shaped a family's future, every teacher who transformed lives without seeking recognition, every family that cherishes values and every reader who believes that humanity remains our greatest inheritance.

Verdict

Few books possess the rare ability to preserve both memory and morality with equal grace. Shirasethina Shikharalu achieves precisely that. What begins as a son's affectionate remembrance gradually unfolds into a profound meditation on parenthood, education, integrity, gratitude, and the quiet heroism of ordinary lives.

This is not merely a memoir. It is a literary archive of values. It is not simply the story of one family; it is the moral biography of an entire generation. To read Shirasethina Shikharalu is to honour a mother, salute a father, remember a teacher, rediscover the soul of rural Telangana and reaffirm the timeless virtues that define our civilisation.

In an age increasingly measured by achievement, speed and material success, this remarkable work gently reminds us that the highest peaks of human civilisation are neither wealth nor fame, but gratitude, integrity, compassion and remembrance. For its literary sincerity, emotional authenticity, cultural richness and profound humanism, Shirasethina Shikharalu deserves a distinguished place in contemporary Telugu literature. It is a book to be read, remembered, revisited and cherished.

Casket, full of dreams

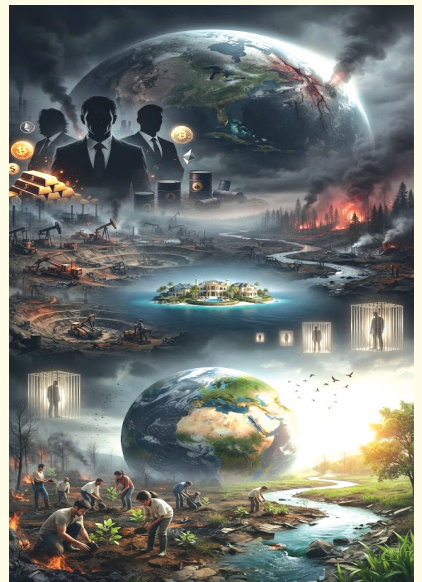


Dream, daughter of night,
Solace the troubled soul
Comforting through piles of broken images
Each droplet of foggy dream slips on a window pane
Silky & slippery
Frothing & floating
They have no script
Nor screenplay
Nurturing the oblivion
They push me into bliss
Haunting with tinted streamers
Dreams, Oh! they cut through life
as if they define Life and Love
Tales upon tales, piling for ever
Tales on wings, tales coloured with feathers
as delicate as balloons, as frail as airships
Self pricking all of a sudden
Self annihilating as fog....
Dying, dying and phoenix again
They are there in words and letters too
Its all about you
It gets the same story
Story of Life and Love
Let me....wait!
wait for the fulfilled dream!
Life asks for Love.....

Dr Srinivas Vasudev,
Academic Director,
Krishnaveni Talent School, Hyderabad
Ph : 9991991363



The Dark Greed



Perhaps the earth itself regrets the load
Of uncanny people with untidy deeds
A day comes when it dooms into dark
Unable to clear the inhuman dark
Filthy Islands bought by the rich
As abodes of luxury, as circles of perversion
Young girls are gifted, bodies are grilled
Lynching and munching as animals of lust
Every oil mine becomes a funeral pyre
With their thirst for wealth, earth to ashes
Turn the forests into deserts of death
Hurriedly digging their own graves
Gold, crypto, dollar -or the blood of the poor
If you ever feel disgusted with yourselves
Buy the moon and settle there
And leave this earth to us
We shall wash away your pus and blood
We shall weed out the sins of greed
We shall sow a few seeds of peace
We shall make this earth smile again!

Manivadan Vajja
Librarian, KV Waltair
9010357185



Palanquin of My Heart

There are plenty of leaves
But, flowers are precious.
There are many days spent in happiness
But, the days spent with my son are precious.
Two dearest days of life
One, when my mother brought me in
Two, when I brought them in.
The soft cheeks, turned rough
The soft voice, turned hoarse
The soft touch, turned blunt
Yet, the feelings are tender,
which linger in his name.
Love makes someone fragile.
These are those fragile moments.
I miss you beyond words or expressions.
Not that I glorified this day all the years.
But, you sit in the palanquin of my heart.
I always feel light in weighing your weight.
Today, this distance doubled your weight,
Making my heart heavier.



B Suneela Jyotsna
TGT English
KV Waltair
suneela.jyo@gmail.com



Railways Runs First Double-Stack Long-Haul Train

Mumbai: Indian Railways has achieved a significant operational milestone by successfully running its first double-stack long-haul container train on the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC), carrying 360 TEUs from Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNPT), Mumbai, to the CONCOR GCT terminal at Varnama in the Vadodara division. The train covered approximately 422 kilometres after departing JNPT at 7 pm on August 21, 2026. The long-haul service was formed by combining two double-stack container rakes, enabling a large volume of cargo to be transported in a single train movement. Each rake carried 45+1 containers. The leading rake operated with locomotive number 60311 and weighed 1,817 tonnes, while the rear rake was hauled by locomotive number 24690 and weighed 2,105 tonnes. Together, the two rakes carried a total of 360 TEUs, with the combined train weight reaching 3,922 tonnes. The operation demonstrates Indian Railways' growing capability to handle high-volume containerised freight effi-

ciently over dedicated freight routes. The double-stack long-haul configuration allows substantially more cargo to be moved in a single journey compared with conventional freight services. Such trains can also help reduce congestion at ports and freight terminals by moving larger quantities of containers in fewer train movements. Faster evacuation of containers can improve terminal efficiency and reduce the time cargo spends waiting for onward transportation. The initiative is also expected to improve utilisation of railway infrastructure and reduce the requirement for locomotives and container flat wagons for transporting equivalent volumes of freight. Fewer train movements can allow available corridor capacity to be used more efficiently. Another major advantage is the potential reduction in freight transit time. By carrying a greater quantity of cargo in a single long-haul service, Indian Railways can support faster movement of containers from JNPT and other freight terminals to their destinations. The service also highlights the environ-



mental benefits of shifting freight from road to rail. Since the train is electrically hauled, greater use of rail freight can reduce dependence on diesel-powered trucks. Moving large quantities of cargo



in a single double-stack train can help lower diesel consumption, road congestion and vehicular emissions. The successful operation marks another

step towards strengthening India's dedicated freight infrastructure and promoting efficient, high-capacity and sustainable freight transportation across the country.

Agartala Flooded as Haora River Crosses Danger Mark



Agartala: Several parts of Tripura's capital Agartala were inundated after the Haora River crossed the danger level following heavy overnight rainfall, prompting authorities to step up rescue and evacuation operations in low-lying areas. Floodwaters entered homes in the Chandrapur-Baldakhal area late Saturday night as the river rose sharply, forcing residents to leave with essential belongings. Jirania Sub-Divisional Magistrate Animesh Dhar said vulnerable residents, including a three-day-old baby, a disabled person and a stroke patient, were among those evacuated from the Baldakhal area. "Sudden heavy rainfall last night caused river levels to rise, forcing residents to evacuate with their belongings as water entered their homes," Dhar said. Rescue teams continued to assist people stranded in inundated locations, while the administration opened four relief shelters in Mandai, Old Agartala, Chandrapur and Ranirbazar under Jirania subdivision. Several displaced residents have already taken shelter at facilities in Mandai and Old Agartala. The other relief centres remained available for families requiring emergency accommodation. Civil Defence personnel, scouts, teams from the Tripura State Rifles' 10th and 2nd Battalions, and personnel from the State Disaster Response Force have been deployed for rescue and relief operations. Five boats are currently being used to evacuate residents and transport essential supplies, while another boat has been kept on standby. Authorities said there were no reports of major casualties or extensive damage so far. A detailed assessment of the situation will be undertaken after floodwaters recede and affected areas become accessible. The administration has also arranged essential supplies, including food and milk for children, for families affected by the flooding. Although rainfall has stopped and weather conditions have improved, officials said the Haora River remained close to the danger mark, keeping the administration on alert. Dhar said rescue operations would continue until water levels begin to fall and conditions return to normal. Officials are also monitoring vulnerable areas and remaining prepared to shift additional residents to relief shelters if the situation worsens. The exact number of people evacuated could not immediately be confirmed, as residents were continuing to move between affected areas and safer locations. Authorities urged people in low-lying zones to remain cautious and cooperate with rescue teams.

Air India Express Flight Delayed 5 Hours

Ranchi: An Air India Express flight from Ranchi to Bengaluru was delayed by around five hours on Sunday after the airline had to arrange fresh oxygen cylinders following a passenger's medical emergency on the incoming flight, an airport official said. Air India Express flight IX 1239 arrived at Birsa Munda Airport in Ranchi from Bengaluru at around 8:55 am. During the journey, a passenger reportedly experienced breathing difficulties and was provided oxygen on board. The passenger was stable after landing and subsequently left the airport for home, according to officials. However, the incident led to a delay in the aircraft's return journey to Bengaluru. The airline needed to replenish its oxygen cylinder supply and arranged additional cylinders from New Delhi, which were then transported to Ranchi. Airport Director Vinod Kumar Singh said the Bengaluru-bound return flight, IX 1244, eventually departed at around 1:51 pm, approximately five hours after the aircraft's arrival. "The flight number IX 1239 of Air India Express arrived here around 8.55 am. The return flight IX 1244 departed about five hours late for Bengaluru with passengers from Ranchi around 13:51 after oxygen cylinders were arranged from Delhi and brought here," Singh said. The delay affected passengers scheduled to travel from Ranchi to Bengaluru, who had to wait at the airport while the required medical equipment was arranged. Officials did not report any further medical emergency involving passengers at the Ranchi airport. The passenger who had required oxygen during the incoming flight was said to have remained stable. The incident highlights the operational challenges airlines can face when medical emergencies occur during flights, particularly when essential medical supplies need to be replenished before an aircraft can operate its next sector. Airlines routinely carry emergency medical equipment on board, including oxygen supplies, to assist passengers who develop breathing difficulties or other medical conditions during a flight. In this case, additional cylinders had to be brought in before the aircraft could depart for its next destination. The flight ultimately resumed its journey to Bengaluru after the oxygen cylinders arrived from Delhi, bringing the disruption to an end.



The Railway Passenger : A Source of Revenue, or a Citizen to Be Served?

Thousands of Crores for Station Modernisation, but Basic Passenger Facilities Still Neglected New railway station buildings are coming up across the country, with modern facades, foot-over bridges, escalators, lifts and spacious concourses. The government highlights these as symbols of railway modernisation. But for an ordinary passenger, the first requirements are much simpler: safe drinking water, clean toilets, adequate seating and shelter from the sun and rain. These are basic facilities, yet they remain inadequate at many stations. This is not merely a passenger complaint. The latest report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has highlighted the same concern. According to the CAG report tabled in Parliament in last week, an audit of 512 non-suburban railway stations across 16 railway zones found deficiencies in one or more basic passenger amenities at 458 stations—more than 89 per cent. Shortcomings included drinking water, seating, toilets, platform shelters, fans, water coolers and signboards. More worrying is that the problem is not confined to small or low-traffic stations. Even stations in the NSG-1 to NSG-3 categories, which handle significant passenger traffic and generate substantial revenue, were found lacking basic amenities. This suggests that the problem cannot simply be attributed to low passenger numbers or the small size of a station. Water Available, But Not Fit to Drink? The most disturbing finding concerns drinking water. The CAG report found E. coli bacteria in samples collected from water coolers at some railway stations. This is far more serious than an ordinary maintenance failure. When passengers depend on railway stations for drinking water, contamination becomes a direct public health concern. E. coli can cause gas-



trointestinal illnesses, including diarrhoea and, in severe cases, serious infections. Railway stations are places where passengers may have to wait for hours. Families travel with children, women and elderly people. Ensuring safe drinking water in such public spaces should therefore be treated as a basic responsibility, not an optional facility. The finding also raises a larger question: What exactly do we mean by railway infrastructure? Is modern infrastructure only about impressive buildings and sophisticated equipment, or does it also include the basic services that passengers depend on every day? This is not a new problem. Another important point is that the CAG has not identified these deficiencies for the first time. Earlier audit reports had raised similar concerns. A CAG report released in 2016 had also pointed to shortcomings in passenger amenities, including clean toilets, platform shelters and facilities for persons with disabilities. If similar deficiencies continue to appear a decade later, the question is no longer simply why these problems exist. The more important question is: Why were

they not adequately addressed despite being highlighted earlier? Modernisation should not merely change the appearance of railway stations. It should improve the everyday experience of passengers. The Passenger Is More Than a Revenue

Source For Indian Railways, the passenger is not merely someone who purchases a ticket. The passenger is at the centre of the railway system itself. Technology-driven improvements are certainly welcome. IRCTC is introducing a new website designed to increase ticket-booking capacity substantially, while artificial intelligence is also being introduced to help passengers assess the likelihood of wait-listed tickets being confirmed. Such innovations can make railway travel more convenient. New trains, faster services,

advanced technology and modern stations are all necessary. But they must go hand in hand with basic passenger amenities. When a passenger enters a railway station, the first impression should be: "This system respects me." That sense of respect does not come from expensive flooring alone. It comes from a clean toilet. It does not come only from an escalator or lift. It comes from safe drinking water. It does not depend on a huge concourse. It also comes from a shelter that protects passengers waiting on a platform in the heat or rain. The Question Railways Must Answer The CAG report has held up a mirror to the railway system. The picture it reflects is not entirely reassuring. Modernising railway stations is necessary. But modernisation must be measured not merely by how attractive a station looks, but by how well it serves the people who use it. The key question, therefore, is not simply how many thou-

Chennu Peddiraju

Senior Journalist

sands of crores are being spent on station redevelopment. It is how much priority is being given to the basic needs of passengers within that expenditure. A railway station is not merely a building. It is a public space that serves millions of people every day. Its appearance matters—but it is secondary. The first question is much simpler: Does the passenger receive basic dignity, safety and comfort? The CAG report has once again placed that question before the country. Now, the Railways must provide the answer.

Jharkhand Job Protests: 3 FIRs, 928 Booked



Ranchi: Three FIRs have been registered against 28 named individuals and more than 900 unidentified people following clashes between police and job aspirants protesting alleged irregularities in recruitment examinations in Jharkhand's Giridih and Hazaribag, officials said on Sunday. The cases were filed a day after three FIRs were registered at Ranchi's Kotwali police station against 14 named individuals and 200 unidentified people. The Ranchi cases relate to allegations of obstructing government work and clashing with police during protests by recruitment exam aspirants. In Giridih, two FIRs were registered at the Town police station in connection with incidents reported on Friday and Saturday. Another FIR was lodged in Hazaribag, where protesters have been accused of obstructing government work and assaulting police personnel. The latest cases follow demonstrations by thousands of students over alleged irregularities in Jharkhand's recruitment examinations. On Friday, a large number of job aspirants gathered at Gandhi Maidan in Giridih, where they planned to burn an effigy of Chief Minister Hemant Soren. The protest reportedly turned tense when police intervened, leading to a scuffle between the protesters and security personnel. Officials said the clashes resulted in cases being registered against individuals accused of unlawful activities and interference with government duties. The protests have highlighted growing frustration among job aspirants over recruitment procedures and alleged discrepancies in examinations. Students have been demanding transparency and corrective action from the state authorities. The FIRs in Giridih and Hazaribag add to the legal action already initiated in Ranchi, taking the number of named individuals booked across the three locations to at least 42, apart from more than 1,100 unidentified people. Police officials are expected to examine video footage and other evidence to identify those allegedly involved in violence, obstruction and attacks on personnel. Further action will depend on the findings of the investigations. The protests come amid continuing pressure on the Jharkhand government to address concerns raised by aspirants seeking jobs through state recruitment examinations. Student groups have repeatedly called for fair and transparent recruitment processes and swift resolution of complaints. Authorities have maintained that law and order must be preserved during demonstrations, while protesters have insisted that their concerns over recruitment irregularities be addressed. The investigations into the three latest FIRs are underway.

8.23 Lakh Central Government Posts Vacant



Bhopal: More than 8.23 lakh sanctioned posts were lying vacant across central government civilian establishments as of March 1, 2024, highlighting a major workforce gap at a time when government employment remains a key aspiration for millions of young Indians. The figures emerged through an RTI response obtained by Neemuch-based activist Chandra Shekhar Gaur. According to the Department of Expenditure's Pay Research Unit, 30,99,556 employees were in position against a sanctioned strength of 39,23,212, leaving 8,23,656 vacancies. This means roughly 21 per cent of the sanctioned civilian workforce was unoccupied. "These figures are worrying at a time of rising unemployment. Government jobs are the right of the youth. The government should begin the process of filling these vacant posts on the highest priority," Gaur said. The largest gaps were reported in the Defence Ministry's civilian establishment and the Railways. Defence had 5,56,248 sanctioned posts but only 3,14,005 employees, leaving 2,42,243 vacancies, or about 43.5 per cent of its sanctioned strength. These figures concern civilian defence employees and do not represent vacancies in the armed forces. The Railways had 14,79,701 sanctioned positions, with 12,39,576 employees in place. Its 2,40,125 vacancies accounted for nearly 30 per cent of the total gap. The Ministry of Home Affairs had 11,18,233 sanctioned posts against 10,07,348 employees, leaving 1,10,885 vacancies. Together, civilian defence establishments, Railways and Home Affairs accounted for nearly 5.93 lakh vacancies. Several other departments also reported substantial shortages. The Department of Posts had 61,546 vacancies, while the Department of Revenue had 69,662 unfilled positions, equivalent to nearly 39 per cent of its sanctioned strength. Significant proportional gaps were also recorded in specialised departments. The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying had 1,378 vacancies out of 2,393 sanctioned posts, leaving nearly 58 per cent unfilled. AYUSH had 233 vacancies out of 432 posts, while the Department of Health Research had 34 vacancies among 62 sanctioned positions. The Ministry of Labour and Employment had more than 41 per cent of its sanctioned posts vacant. Environment, Forest and Climate Change had around 38 per cent vacancies, while the Department of Higher Education had nearly 37 per cent. Strategic establishments were not immune either. The Department of Atomic Energy had 10,234 vacancies, while the Department of Space had 4,126. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology reported 1,681 vacancies. The RTI response provides a snapshot of sanctioned and occupied civilian posts and does not include vacancies in public sector banks or public sector undertakings. The data has renewed attention on the need to accelerate recruitment to strengthen government services while creating employment opportunities.

Hyundai, IIT-M Launch Cancer Aid Programme

Chennai: Children from economically disadvantaged families undergoing cancer treatment can now seek financial assistance under the Hyundai Hope for Cancer programme launched by the Hyundai Motor India Foundation (HMIF) in partnership with the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M). The initiative has opened an online nomination facility through which treating doctors, hospitals, parents, caregivers, NGOs and social organisations can refer eligible children for financial support from its Cancer Care Fund. Applications can be submitted through the programme's online portal. Treating physicians can nominate patients by providing the required medical records and completing the patient nomination form. The programme is aimed at helping families struggling to meet the cost of paediatric cancer treatment, particularly those from economically weaker sections.



Through financial assistance, the initiative seeks to reduce the burden on families and help eligible children continue their treatment. Prof. S. Mahalingam of the Department of Biotechnology at IIT-M, who is spearheading the initiative, said the programme was intended to reach families across

India who may not be aware of the financial assistance available to them. Under the programme, eligible paediatric cancer patients will receive treatment support subject to the prescribed eligibility criteria, documentation requirements and review process. The initiative also seeks to expand

awareness about available assistance by allowing multiple stakeholders, including hospitals, doctors, caregivers and non-governmental organisations, to identify and nominate children who require financial support. The opening of the online nomination facility is expected to make the assistance programme more accessible to families in different parts of the country. By involving treating doctors and hospitals in the nomination process, the programme can also facilitate the submission of relevant medical information required for reviewing applications. Hyundai Hope for Cancer is part of efforts by HMIF and IIT-M to support children battling cancer while assisting families facing financial challenges during prolonged treatment. The programme encourages eligible families and organisations working with paediatric cancer patients to use the online nomination facility and seek support from the Cancer Care Fund.

Sebi Proposes Tighter Ad Curbs for Online Bond Platforms



New Delhi: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has proposed tighter advertising rules for online bond platform providers (OBPPs), seeking to prevent promotional campaigns from influencing investors to make decisions without adequate due diligence. The proposed revised advertisement code, outlined in a consultation paper issued on Friday, aims to address the growing use of digital advertising, social media and influencer-led promotions by online bond platforms. Under the proposed framework, OBPPs would face restrictions on advertisements that create a sense of urgency or use behavioural prompts and fear-of-missing-out (FOMO) messaging. Sebi said such promotional strategies could encourage investors to act hastily without properly assessing the risks associated with debt securities. For advertisements featuring specific securities, platforms would be required to provide standardised information. This would include details such as the issuer, tenor, credit rating, nature of the security, clean and dirty prices, yield to maturity and the Credit Risk-o-meter. The regulator has also proposed stricter guidelines on the use of phrases such as "fixed returns", "predictable returns" and "passive income". Such descriptions would have to be presented in a manner that does not give investors the impression that returns are assured. Advertisements using the term "fixed returns" would be required to carry a prominent disclaimer clarifying that fixed returns are not guaranteed. The disclaimer would also highlight that investments in debt securities are subject to market, credit and default risks. Sebi has further proposed curbs on vague promotional claims, including "high yield", "high rated" and "high returns", unless such claims are adequately supported by relevant information. The proposed advertisement code is intended to operate alongside the common advertisement code applicable to specified entities regulated by Sebi. The regulator has invited comments and feedback from stakeholders on the consultation paper until September 11. The proposals come as online bond platforms increasingly use digital channels to reach retail investors, making clearer and more balanced disclosures important for informed investment decisions. Sebi's proposed measures are aimed at ensuring that promotional communication remains factual and transparent while reducing the possibility of investors being influenced by aggressive marketing tactics.

Tesla, Chinese EV Makers Recall 4 Million Cars



Hong Kong: Tesla and several Chinese electric vehicle makers are recalling more than four million vehicles in China over safety concerns involving electronic door handles, according to officials. Tesla alone is recalling around 2.98 million vehicles, including the Model 3, Model Y, Model X and Model S. Chinese EV manufacturers Xiaomi and Leapmotor are also recalling hundreds of thousands of vehicles, while Geely and XPeng are recalling selected electric vehicle models. The recalls are linked to concerns over hidden or flush electronic door handles increasingly used in modern vehicles. Unlike conventional mechanical handles, these systems rely partly on the vehicle's electrical system to operate. The technology has become increasingly popular among EV manufacturers because it provides vehicles with a sleek exterior design and can also help improve aerodynamic efficiency. However, safety concerns have emerged over the ability of such handles to function after a serious accident or electrical failure. In the event of a major road crash, damage to a vehicle's electrical system could prevent electronic door handles from operating normally. This could leave passengers trapped inside the vehicle and make it difficult for emergency responders to open the doors from outside. Xiaomi is reportedly recalling around 390,000 vehicles, while Leapmotor is recalling approximately 370,000 cars. Geely and XPeng have also announced recalls covering certain EV models as authorities increase scrutiny of the safety implications of electronically operated door systems. Tesla is expected to address the issue in affected vehicles through dedicated software updates. The updates are intended to improve the operation of the door systems and reduce the potential safety risks during emergency situations. The large-scale recalls come as Chinese authorities prepare to introduce stricter safety requirements for vehicle door handles. China has already indicated that hidden car door handles will be prohibited in new vehicles from 2027. The upcoming restrictions are aimed at improving passenger safety and ensuring that vehicle doors can be opened reliably during emergencies, particularly when a car's electrical systems have been damaged. The recall campaign is therefore being viewed as an effort to upgrade safety systems in existing vehicle models before the new regulations take effect. It also highlights the challenges facing automakers as they increasingly replace conventional mechanical components with electronically controlled technologies. For EV manufacturers, the issue could lead to additional costs related to recalls, software upgrades and compliance with evolving safety standards. At the same time, the regulatory push could influence future vehicle designs as automakers reassess the balance between innovative styling, aerodynamic efficiency and emergency accessibility. The recalls underline the growing importance of safety testing for advanced vehicle technologies as electric and software-driven cars become increasingly common in the Chinese automobile market.

India's Alternative Assets Market May Hit \$2tn by 2034

New Delhi: India's alternative investment market could grow more than five-fold to exceed \$2 trillion by 2034, driven by rising participation from high-net-worth individuals, family offices and investors seeking higher-yielding assets beyond traditional investments, according to a report by EY and Julius Baer. The report highlights the growing importance of alternative assets as Indian investors increasingly diversify their portfolios across private markets and emerging investment opportunities. The market, currently estimated at around \$400 billion, is projected to expand significantly over the next decade as wealth creation accelerates and investors seek new avenues for long-term returns. Family offices are emerging as a major force behind the expansion of India's private capital ecosystem. According to the report, these investment entities are increasingly using their sector expertise, networks and long-term investment horizons to support emerging businesses and new ventures.

"Family offices have emerged as one of the most transformative forces shaping India's private capital ecosystem," the report said. Their investment strategies are also expanding beyond conventional asset classes. Family offices and wealthy investors are increasingly exploring opportunities in technology, renewable energy and other high-growth sectors. Such investments allow them to gain exposure to businesses with strong long-term growth potential while diversifying away from traditional public market assets. The growing appetite for alternative investments is also being supported by demand for assets that have lower correlation with traditional investments such as listed equities and bonds. Investors are increasingly looking at private equity, venture capital, private credit, real estate and other alternative opportunities as part of broader wealth management strategies. The report suggests that India's expanding pool of wealthy investors will remain an impor-



tant catalyst for the alternative investment industry. As family wealth increases and younger generations become more involved in investment decisions, demand for sophisticated private-market opportunities is expected to rise. Family offices are also playing a greater role in backing innovative companies and entrepreneurs, leveraging their long-term approach to participate in emerg-

ing sectors. The projected rise from around \$400 billion to more than \$2 trillion by 2034 underlines the rapid transformation of India's investment landscape. The trend could create significant opportunities for asset managers, private-market firms and businesses seeking long-term capital, while further strengthening India's position as a growing destination for alternative investments.

India Boosts Venezuela Oil Imports

New Delhi: India has significantly increased crude oil imports from Venezuela amid growing concerns over supply disruptions linked to tensions between the United States and Iran and potential disruptions through the Strait of Hormuz, according to Kpler shipping data. Venezuelan crude shipments to India are estimated to have reached around 444,000 barrels per day in August, making the South American country India's fourth-largest oil supplier. Venezuela has overtaken Iraq and the United States, whose supplies stood at around 118,000 barrels per day and 153,000 barrels per day, respectively, during the month. India resumed significant crude imports from Venezuela in April, and the country's position among India's oil suppliers has risen rapidly since then. Indian refiners have increased purchases from Venezuela, Brazil and African producers as supply disruptions and geopolitical uncertainties have affected shipments from West Asia. At the same time, India continues to rely heavily on Russian crude. Russia remained the country's largest oil supplier in August, with shipments estimated at nearly 2



million barrels per day. Russian crude imports had reached around 2.6 million barrels per day in June and July, accounting for more than half of India's total crude oil consumption. The diversification of suppliers is increasingly becoming an important part of India's energy security strategy. With tensions in the Middle East raising concerns over shipping routes and crude availability, refiners are seeking supplies from geographically diverse markets to reduce their exposure

to disruptions in any single region. Kpler Senior Manager Sumit Ritolia said India was simultaneously pursuing several strategies, including increasing domestic production as far as possible, diversifying overseas crude suppliers and transportation routes, developing strategic and commercial reserves, and accelerating alternatives such as natural gas, biofuels, electric vehicles and renewable energy. However, shifting to suppliers

located farther from India comes with additional costs. Venezuela, West Africa and other Latin American producers are geographically farther from India than Gulf suppliers. Longer shipping distances can increase transportation, insurance and other logistics expenses for Indian refiners. According to Ritolia, alternative sources can provide India with some protection against supply disruptions caused by geopolitical tensions, but they could also increase the country's overall oil import bill. India imports the bulk of its crude oil requirements, making the country particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in global crude prices, freight costs and geopolitical disruptions. The latest increase in Venezuelan supplies reflects New Delhi's broader effort to strengthen energy security by maintaining access to crude from multiple regions. The diversification could help Indian refiners maintain steady supplies during periods of disruption, although higher logistics and insurance costs may limit the economic benefits of sourcing crude from distant markets.

Gemini Edibles Files Draft IPO Papers With Sebi

Hyderabad: Hyderabad-based Gemini Edibles and Fats India Ltd (GEF), the company behind popular brands including Freedom, Be-Rite, First Klass and Sri Kripa, has filed draft papers with market regulator Sebi to raise funds through an initial public offering (IPO). The proposed IPO will be entirely an Offer for Sale (OFS), meaning the company itself will not receive any proceeds from the issue. Instead, the money raised will go to the existing shareholders selling their stakes. Promoters Alka Chaudhary and Golden Agri International Enterprises Pte Ltd, along with investment firms Black River Food 2 Pte Ltd and Investment and Commercial Enterprise Pte Ltd, are proposing to sell up to 4.11 crore equity shares through the OFS. Following the proposed IPO, GEF's

shares are expected to be listed on both the BSE and NSE. Motilal Oswal Investment Advisors and IIFL Capital Services have been appointed as the book-running lead managers for the issue. The IPO will provide existing investors and promoters with an opportunity to monetise part of their holdings while giving public-market investors an opportunity to participate in the growth of the edible oils business. GEF has established a strong presence in India's branded edible oil market and is the country's largest player in the branded sunflower oil segment by sales. The company held an estimated 18% market share by revenue in 2025-26, highlighting its position in the highly competitive edible oils industry. The company has built a wide distribution network across India, with more than 1,600 distributors,



around 300,000 retail outlets and approximately 60 warehouses and stock points. GEF has also reported strong revenue growth in recent years. Its revenue increased from Rs.10,755.95 crore in 2024-25 to around Rs.12,650 crore in 2025-26, reflecting continued expansion in its branded edible oils business. The company's key brands, particularly Freedom, have helped it

strengthen its presence across retail markets. The growth of organised and branded edible oil consumption in India has created opportunities for established players with extensive distribution networks. The proposed listing could also increase GEF's visibility among institutional and retail investors and provide a public-market valuation benchmark for the company. However, since the IPO consists entirely of an OFS, GEF will not receive fresh capital from the issue for business expansion, debt reduction or other corporate purposes. The proceeds will accrue to the existing shareholders participating in the offer. The final size, pricing and other details of the IPO will be determined at a later stage, subject to regulatory approvals and market conditions.

Mumbai Metro Names Ginger Cat 'Chief Feline Officer'

Mumbai's metro network has found an unlikely new member of its organisational hierarchy a ginger cat that has become a familiar and much-loved presence at Gundavali Metro station. The feline recently went viral after commuter Sandesh Samant photographed it sitting casually near the entrance of the station. Amused by the cat's regular presence, Samant tagged the Maha Mumbai Metro Operation Corporation Ltd (MMMOCL) on social media with a playful request to give the animal an official position.

"Dear Maha Mumbai Metro Operation Corporation Ltd, please give this pure soul of Gundavli Metro station an official position. It's working for free at the moment," Samant wrote. Rather than ignoring the unusual suggestion, MMOCL decided to join in on the fun. The metro operator humorously appointed the cat as its "Chief Feline Officer", giving the station regular a title worthy of a corporate executive. "That's our Chief Feline Officer," MMOCL said in its response. The organisation jokingly listed the cat's

responsibilities as "station inspections, commuter observation, and sitting exactly where everyone can admire them." The metro authority also added a feline-inspired assessment of its performance, declaring that so far, the cat's work had been "purrfect". The light-hearted exchange quickly attracted attention online, with commuters and social media users sharing their own experiences of encountering the cat at Gundavali station. One user said the feline had become such a familiar sight that they looked for it every

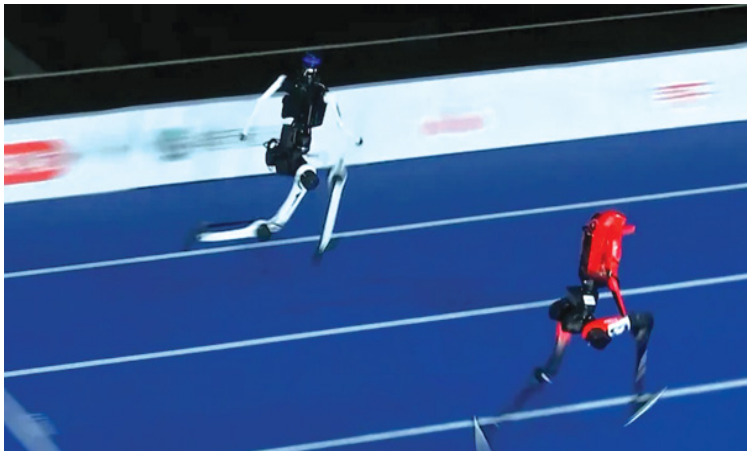
morning while travelling through the station. "I swear. Every morning at Gundavli, I look for it," the user commented. Another social media user proposed giving the cat a slightly different responsibility, joking that it should be appointed "Chief Mouse Catcher" from the day of its promotion. The playful interaction has turned the ginger cat into an unofficial mascot of the station, highlighting how animals can unexpectedly become part of the daily lives of commuters. While the "Chief Feline Officer" designation is clear-

ly a humorous one rather than a formal appointment, the cat appears to have earned something arguably more valuable - a loyal following among passengers who enjoy seeing it during their daily journeys. For now, the furry station regular can continue its duties of inspecting platforms, observing commuters and, most importantly, sitting exactly where it can attract maximum attention.



Chinese Humanoid Robot Runs 100m Faster Than Usain Bolt

A Chinese humanoid robot has made headlines after reportedly running 100 metres in 9.32 seconds, beating the long-standing human world record held by Jamaican sprinting legend Usain Bolt. The robot, named Lightning, was developed by Chinese smartphone maker Honor and clocked a remarkable time during a preparatory event ahead of the second World Humanoid Robot Games in Beijing. China's state broadcaster reported that Lightning reached a peak speed of 14.5 metres per second during the run. Bolt's men's 100-metre world record stands at 9.58 seconds, set at the 2009 World Athletics Championships in Berlin. Lightning's reported time was therefore 0.26 seconds faster than the fastest official human mark. However, the comparison comes with an important distinction: Lightning is a machine, while Bolt's record was achieved by a human athlete under World Athletics competition rules. The robot's performance is therefore best viewed as a technological milestone rather than a new human athletics record. The achievement nevertheless highlights the rapid development of humanoid robotics in China. Beijing has identified humanoid



robots as a strategic emerging industry, with technology companies and policymakers investing heavily in artificial intelligence, robotics hardware and automation. Lightning has already demonstrated its capabilities over longer distances. In April, the robot reportedly completed the 21-kilometre Beijing half marathon in 50 minutes and 26 seconds, a time faster than the pace corresponding to the elite men's human world record. At the time, Lightning stood 169 centimetres tall and had legs measuring 95 centimetres. Researchers have since extended its legs by 10 centimetres to 1.05

metres, according to China Central Television, ahead of the World Humanoid Robot Games. The event in Beijing brings together humanoid robots competing in a range of challenges designed to showcase advances in robotics, mobility and artificial intelligence. Lightning's latest sprint has added another eye-catching chapter to the competition. While Usain Bolt remains the undisputed record-holder among humans, China's robotic sprinter has demonstrated just how quickly machines are evolving - raising intriguing questions about how far humanoid technology can eventually go.

Honda Engineer's Anime Hair Steals the Internet

A Honda engineer has unexpectedly become an internet sensation after his striking anime-inspired hairstyle caught the attention of social media users around the world. Shotaro Odate, a senior research and development engineer at Honda, recently appeared in a Honda R&D video explaining technology related to advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS). While the subject of the presentation was highly technical, viewers quickly became more interested in Odate's extraordinary hairstyle. His hair was styled into sharp, upward-pointing spikes that immediately reminded social media users of characters from popular anime and video game franchises. Many compared his appearance to the iconic Super Saiyan transformations from Dragon Ball, while others spotted similarities with characters from Naruto, Final Fantasy and Tekken. Odate was featured discussing efforts to improve ADAS technology using offset-corrected and adaptive grasp detection. The presentation focused on automotive safety and technology, but his distinctive look soon became the unexpected star of the clip. According to reports, Odate has an



impressive professional record to match his unusual appearance. He is credited with more than 250 patents connected to automotive safety technology, with some reports putting the figure at 253. His work reportedly includes innovations involving steering sensors, braking systems and intelligent seat belt technology. That combination of serious engineering expertise and an unmistakably anime-inspired appearance made him an instant hit online. Clips and images of Odate quickly

spread across platforms including X, TikTok and Instagram. Social media users embraced the comparison to fictional heroes, with some even jokingly describing him as a "real-life Goku". One user wrote, "Born to be a Final Fantasy character, forced to be an engineer." Another joked, "Bro got cut from Tekken and started working at Honda." "This guy is the literal anime engineer who every other engineer freaks out over when he walks into the room," another commenter said. A fourth user summed up the situation with a workplace-themed joke: "When you have a Final Fantasy cosplay party at 3 pm but gotta pitch that business presentation at 2 pm." The viral reaction highlights how an ordinary corporate technology video can unexpectedly become internet entertainment. Odate's hairstyle may have grabbed the headlines, but his extensive work in automotive safety suggests there is plenty of substance behind the striking appearance. For now, however, the Honda engineer appears to have earned an unofficial new title online: the anime hero of automotive engineering.

DeepSeek Tests New AI Model to Rival Anthropic's Opus 4.8

Chinese artificial intelligence company DeepSeek has unveiled an experimental multimodal AI model designed to compete with advanced systems from US-based rival Anthropic. The new model, called DeepSeek-V4-Flash-Vision-Exp, is an experimental version of the company's flagship text-focused V4 Flash model. Unlike the original text-only system, the new version can understand visual inputs such as images and screenshots and use that information to perform tasks. DeepSeek said the experimental model retains the text capabilities of V4 Flash, including reasoning, agentic functions and broad world knowledge. The company also claimed that its performance is "close to" Anthropic's advanced Opus 4.8 model in tests focused on multimodal agentic capabilities. Agentic AI systems are designed to go beyond simply answering questions. They can interpret information, plan actions and carry out tasks with limited human supervision, making them increasingly important in areas such as software development, research and workplace automation. DeepSeek has previously developed multimodal systems, including its DeepSeek-VL family of vision-language models. However,



the latest release brings image understanding and task execution into its most advanced V4 model series. The experimental model is currently available to users through DeepSeek's API, allowing developers to test its visual reasoning and agentic capabilities in applications. The announcement comes as Chinese and US technology companies intensify their competition in artificial intelligence. Chinese developers have increasingly sought to match the capabilities of leading US models while keeping development and operating costs comparatively low. DeepSeek has already disrupted expectations in the global AI industry with models that demon-

strated strong performance despite being developed with fewer resources than some leading US systems. Its emergence has intensified debate over the cost of building advanced AI and the advantages of open-weight models. The latest vision-enabled experiment signals that DeepSeek is now pushing beyond text-based AI and targeting increasingly sophisticated multimodal systems. If its performance claims hold up in broader independent testing, DeepSeek-V4-Flash-Vision-Exp could further strengthen the company's position in the rapidly evolving AI race - particularly in the growing market for models capable of seeing, reasoning and acting on behalf of users.

2-Hour Traffic, 9-Minute Airport Rush in Bengaluru

A Bengaluru traveller's airport journey has captured attention online after rain turned a routine trip from Indiranagar into a 2-hour-15-minute battle with traffic - only for the airport experience to be completed in just nine minutes. Nitin Sharma shared his experience on X, describing how rain-related congestion made his journey to Bengaluru airport painfully slow. What would normally be a straightforward trip became an exhausting ordeal as traffic crawled along the route. Sharma said the situation became so frustrating that, at one point, he felt he might miss his flight altogether. The journey from Indiranagar to the airport eventually took 2 hours and 15 minutes, with rain and traffic combining to create major delays. But the dramatic contrast began as soon as he entered the airport. According to Sharma, he needed only nine minutes to travel from the airport entrance to his departure gate. He credited DigiYatra and the airport's streamlined operations for making the final part of his journey exceptionally quick. Highlighting the irony, Sharma wrote, "Yet another day of life made bearable by world-class digital infrastructure in a city with third-rate physical infrastruc-



ture." His post struck a chord with other Bengaluru residents and travellers, many of whom said they had experienced similar struggles during rainy weather. "Had the same plight yesterday and barely made it to my flight! But after check-in, it was a breeze because of DigiYatra," one user commented. Another user offered a humorous take on the city's traffic woes, saying, "Bengaluru has reached the stage where your international journey doesn't begin at the airport." The incident highlights a curious contradiction in Bengaluru's trav-

el experience. Modern digital services can help passengers breeze through airport procedures, but getting to the airport can still be the biggest challenge. For Sharma, the numbers tell the entire story: 135 minutes stuck in rain-hit traffic, followed by just nine minutes inside the airport. The experience has once again sparked online debate about Bengaluru's traffic infrastructure and the need for better urban mobility solutions, particularly during the monsoon. For now, however, DigiYatra appears to have earned some praise - even if the roads leading to it did not.

'Having a Job Is Worth Appreciating': Woman's Reality Check

A woman's candid take on the current job market has sparked discussion online after she urged dissatisfied employees to appreciate having a job while millions of others struggle to secure one. Social media user Mridul Gupta shared a video on Instagram highlighting the difficulties faced by jobseekers amid layoffs, hiring freezes and intense competition for vacancies. Her message was aimed at people who regularly complain about their jobs but may not realise how difficult it can be to find another one in the current market. Gupta pointed to the experiences of jobseekers who are sending dozens or even hundreds of applications without receiving interview calls. She also highlighted what she described as a particularly difficult trend: experienced professionals being rejected for posi-

tions that are considered entry-level. "People are sending fifty, hundred, even two hundred applications per day and not hearing back," Gupta said. She added that people with years of professional experience are also facing rejection when applying for entry-level positions. Gupta acknowledged that disliking one's job is perfectly understandable. However, she argued that employees should consider their circumstances before assuming that finding a new opportunity will be easy. "If you hate your job, that's completely fine, a lot of people do," she said. "But before you spend your morning complaining about having to log in, remember, a lot of people out there are refreshing their inbox every second just to receive an interview invitation," she



added. Her central message was not that people should remain permanently stuck in jobs they dislike, but that employment itself can provide a degree of security in an uncertain labour market. "You don't have to love your job, but in a market like this, having one is still something to be grateful for," Gupta said. The video resonated with several social media users, with many agreeing that finding employment has

become increasingly difficult for professionals across different experience levels. One user simply commented, "So true." Another wrote, "Be grateful you have a chair in an office." A third user shared a personal experience, saying, "I was laid off from my job in Dubai." Gupta's remarks have opened up a broader conversation about workplace dissatisfaction and job security. While employees continue to seek better salaries, healthier workplaces and career growth, the uncertainty surrounding hiring has made voluntarily leaving a job a much more complicated decision. Her message ultimately offered a simple reality check: a job may not always be perfect, but during a difficult employment market, having one can be valuable in ways that are easy to overlook.





ARN MAHESH

Seventeen-year-old Vijayawada skater Kopparapu Kaivalya has created history by becoming the first Indian ice skater to compete in the ISU Junior Grand Prix of Figure Skating. Kaivalya represented India at the international ISU Figure Skating Junior Grand Prix held in Xi'an, China, from August 19 to 22. The prestigious competition featured skaters from 26 countries, giving the young Indian athlete an opportunity to compete against some of the best junior talents in the world. The event marked Kaivalya's second international ice skating championship. Earlier this month, from August 1 to 6, he represented India at the Asian Open Figure Skating Championships 2026 in Jakarta, gaining valuable international experience. Speaking about his journey, Kaivalya highlighted the challenges faced by Indian ice skaters due to a lack of infrastructure and professional coaching. He said countries such as Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia have around 40 indoor ice skating rinks collectively, providing athletes with regular practice and international-level training. In contrast, India currently has only one ice skating rink, in Dehradun, he said. Kaivalya also pointed out the shortage of specialised ice skating coaches in the country. He said he managed to reach the international level largely through online training videos and by drawing on his experience in roller skating. The teenager has already established himself as a successful roller skater, winning seven international medals and currently occupying 22nd place in the World Skate rankings. His achievements in both disciplines have made him the first Indian skater to compete at an international level in both roller and ice skating, according to his account.

Kaivalya Makes History in Ice Skating

Kaivalya said greater government support, financial assistance and the development of indoor ice skating rinks could help India produce world-class skaters. He added that he has so far funded his international participation largely from his own resources and has not received financial support despite seeking assistance. Financial constraints have also forced him to withdraw from some international competitions despite having the talent to participate.

Kaivalya now has ambitious goals. He wants to win a gold medal for India at the World Championships in roller skating and eventually secure a gold medal in ice skating at the Winter Olympics.

His journey, he said, is a reminder that with proper infrastructure, coaching and financial backing, Indian athletes can compete successfully on the world stage.

Australia bounced back in emphatic fashion, defeating Bangladesh by an innings and 51 runs in the second Test to level the two-match series 1-1.

The victory was a dominant response from Australia after Bangladesh had stunned them with a historic win in the opening Test. This time, the Australian bowlers produced a ruthless performance, wrapping up the low-scoring contest early on the second day.

Bangladesh were dismissed for just 64 in their first innings, with Australia's pace attack making full use of the conditions. Australia then posted 210, securing a substantial lead despite the challenging batting conditions. Bangladesh's second innings followed a similar pattern. The visitors were bowled out for only 95, handing Australia a comprehensive innings victory. The match ended in the first over of the second session on day two, highlighting the extent of Australia's dominance. Mitchell Starc was the standout performer with the ball, finishing with 10 wickets in the match. His relentless pace and accuracy

Australia Crush Bangladesh by an Innings

repeatedly troubled the Bangladesh batters and played a central role in Australia's victory. Captain Pat Cummins also made a major contribution, claiming six wickets across the two innings. Nathan Lyon picked up three wickets, while Josh Hazlewood added one as Australia's bowling attack completely dismantled Bangladesh's batting line-up. Australia had resumed their first innings on 165 for eight on the second morning. Cameron Green and Nathan Lyon then added crucial runs to extend the total to 210. Green scored a valuable 67, while Lyon remained unbeaten on 32. The pair put together a 38-run partnership for the ninth wicket, providing Australia with an important boost. After Green was dismissed, Lyon continued to fight alongside Hazlewood, with the pair adding another 24 runs for the tenth wicket. Bangladesh's Shoriful Islam was their most successful bowler, finishing with impressive figures of seven for 48. Taskin Ahmed, Taijul Islam and Mehidy Hasan Miraz claimed one wicket each. With the victory, Australia avoided a series defeat and restored parity at 1-1. After Bangladesh's surprise triumph in the first Test, Australia's emphatic response underlined the gulf between the two sides when their bowling attack was firing on all cylinders. For Bangladesh, the result will be a disappointing end to a series in which they had initially produced one of their most memorable Test victories. For Australia, however, the second Test served as a powerful reminder of their resilience and ability to bounce back under pressure.



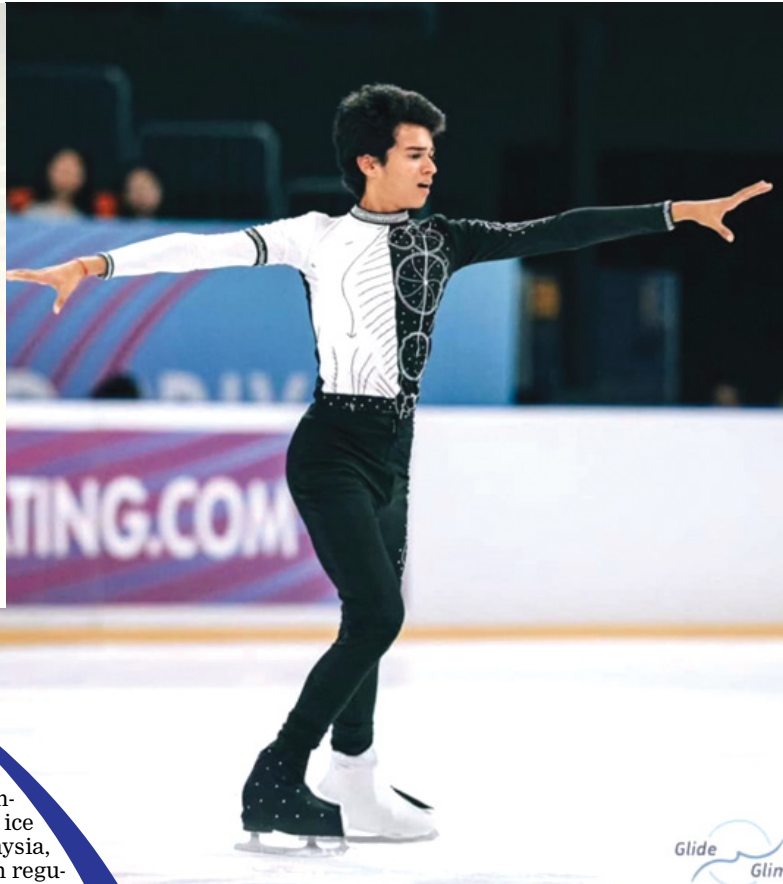
Karn Sharma Announces Retirement

Veteran Indian leg-spinner Karn Sharma has announced his retirement from all forms of international and domestic cricket, bringing the curtain down on a career that spanned several years across different levels of the game. The 38-year-old played one Test, two ODIs and one T20I for India. Although his international opportunities were limited, Sharma established himself as a reliable performer in the Indian Premier League and domestic cricket. Sharma is currently representing Kanpur Superstars in the Uttar Pradesh T20 League. He confirmed that the match against Meerut Mavericks on August 25 will be his final game as a professional cricketer. Following his retirement, Sharma said he would remain available for coaching and other roles connected with cricket. He also expressed his gratitude to everyone who supported him throughout his career. Sharma's biggest impact came in the IPL, where he played 90 matches and claimed 83 wickets. His ability to bowl effectively in the middle overs made him a valuable option for several franchises over the



years. One of the most remarkable achievements of his career came through an IPL record involving three different teams. Sharma became the first player to win IPL titles in three consecutive seasons with three dif-

ferent franchises. He was part of the Sunrisers Hyderabad squad that won the IPL title in 2016. The following year, he lifted the trophy with Mumbai Indians in 2017 before completing the remarkable three-season run with Chennai Super Kings in 2018. His international career was brief, with his only Test appearance coming for India alongside two ODI and one T20I outings. Nevertheless, his long association with domestic cricket and the IPL ensured that he remained a familiar figure in Indian cricket. Sharma's retirement marks the end of an era for a leg-spinner who contributed to some memorable IPL campaigns despite spending relatively little time in India's international setup. His decision to move into coaching and other cricket-related responsibilities could allow him to pass on his experience to the next generation of players. As he prepares for his final match on August 25, the veteran spinner leaves the playing field with a notable IPL legacy and three championship medals from three different teams.



India End Day One on 300/5 Against Sri Lanka



India made a strong start to the second Test against Sri Lanka, reaching 300 for five at stumps on the opening day after a largely dominant batting display. Devdutt Padikkal continued his impressive form with a century, while captain Shubman Gill and Ravindra Jadeja also made valuable contributions. Padikkal was the star of the day, scoring 117 off 193 balls.

The left-hander followed up his century in the first Test with another hundred, underlining his growing importance to India's Test batting line-up. His innings included a composed partnership with Gill that helped India recover after a cautious start. Gill scored a fluent 50 off 108 balls, striking six boundaries. He and Padikkal added 120 runs for the third wicket before Gill was dismissed by Asitha Fernando in the 52nd over, caught by wicketkeeper Niroshan Dickwella. Earlier, Yashasvi Jaiswal made 45 before being bowled by Fernando. Jaiswal had looked set for a half-century after hitting three boundaries in the same over, but an attempted off-side shot produced an edge onto the stumps. His dismissal also led to a brief verbal exchange with Fernando, although players from both sides quickly intervened. KL Rahul contributed 18 before falling to Lahiru Kumara, who induced an outside edge that was taken by the wicketkeeper. India were subsequently steadied by Padikkal and Gill. Rishabh Pant's innings was cut short after he was forced to retire hurt on three. The wicketkeeper-batter was struck on the forearm while attempting a shot against Kumara in the 58th over. Despite receiving treatment from the physiotherapist, Pant left the field because of the pain. Jadeja then joined Padikkal and scored a useful 43 from 83 balls. He was India's fifth wicket, bowled by Fernando in the 85th over after failing to judge the delivery correctly. Dhruv Jurel was unbeaten on seven at stumps, while debutant Saransh Jain remained not out on four. Fernando was Sri Lanka's most successful bowler, claiming three wickets, while Kumara and Keshara Nuwantha took one each. India made one change from the first Test, bringing in 33-year-old off-spinner Saransh Jain for Kuldeep Yadav. Sri Lanka made two changes, handing a debut to Kamil Mishra and bringing in Pasindu Sooriyabandara. India, who won the opening Test, will look to build a substantial first-innings total on the second day and strengthen their bid to complete a series clean sweep.

Saransh Jain Makes India Debut Without IPL

At 33, Saransh Jain has earned his India Test debut without ever playing in the Indian Premier League, marking a rare return to the traditional pathway of domestic cricket. Jain was named in India's playing XI for the second Test against Sri Lanka, becoming only the third Indian player since the IPL era began to make his international debut without having featured in the lucrative T20 league. Before Jain, Murali Vijay and Mohammed Shami achieved the distinction. Vijay made his Test debut against Australia in 2008, while Shami entered international cricket in an ODI against Pakistan in 2013. Both players earned their opportunities through strong performances in domestic cricket. Jain has followed a similar route. The spin-bowling all-rounder has been a consistent performer in India's domestic circuit, combining useful batting with effective bowling. In 54 first-class matches, he has scored 2,223 runs and taken 188 wickets, numbers that eventually brought him into the national selection picture. His selection is notable at a time when the IPL has become one of the most important platforms for players seeking India recognition. Performances in the tournament often attract the attention of selectors, particularly for limited-overs cricket. Jain's journey, however, highlights that sustained excellence in domestic cricket can still open the door to the national team. The debut also gives Jain another distinction. At 33 years and 145 days, he has become the oldest Indian player since 2000 to make his Test debut. The last Indian to debut at an older age was Robin Singh, who was 35 years and 23 days old when he entered Test cricket in 1998. Jain's story stands in sharp contrast to the recent emergence of teenage sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi, who made headlines by becoming one of India's youngest international debutants in T20 cricket. While Suryavanshi represents the rapid rise of young talent, Jain's selection demonstrates the value of patience, consistency and years of domestic experience. For Jain, the Sri Lanka Test is the culmination of a long domestic journey. His numbers with both bat and ball have finally earned him the opportunity to represent India at the highest level, without taking the IPL route that has become increasingly common in modern Indian cricket.



Bobby Deol Wants Beyond Villain Roles

Actor Bobby Deol is making a conscious effort to move beyond his increasingly familiar image as a villain, saying he wants to explore a wider range of characters and genres. Speaking on the sidelines of the Jagran Film Festival, Bobby said actors are often typecast after finding success with a particular kind of role. The 57-year-old actor acknowledged that he has been receiving numerous offers to play antagonists but is determined to experiment with different characters. "If an actor becomes successful in a particular kind of role, they keep getting similar roles. That's what happens in the industry. And I try really hard to break out of that," Bobby said. He pointed to his recent film *Bandar* as an example of his attempt to take on unconventional roles. Directed by Anurag Kashyap, the film features Bobby as an ageing star accused of rape by his former girlfriend. Released in theatres in June, the movie received positive reviews from critics. However, Bobby has continued to appear as an antagonist in several major projects. His other releases this year included *Alpha*, starring Alia Bhatt and Sharvari, and *Jana Nayagan*, in which he appeared alongside Tamil actor and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay. In both films, Bobby played negative characters.

The actor said he still enjoys portraying villains because the roles can offer considerable variety. According to him, antagonists can have different personalities, motivations and emotional shades, allowing actors to approach each character differently. "Even within antagonist roles, there are different kinds of antagonists, with different shades. So I enjoy playing those," he said. Bobby also revealed that he has several web series lined up, promising that they will offer something different from his recent work. His next project is Prime Video's spy thriller series *Teen Kauwe*, which is currently in production. The series also stars Sidhant Gupta, Fatima Sana Shaikh and Pavail Gulati. Despite his willingness to experiment, Bobby admitted that over-the-top and slapstick comedy remain genres he finds difficult to understand and perform. He said such films require exceptionally strong writing because comedy can be a risky space for actors. "I don't understand over-the-top comedy, slapstick comedy so much. I feel very uncomfortable doing that," he said. The 2026 edition of the Jagran Film Festival concluded on August 22, bringing together filmmakers, actors and cinema enthusiasts from across the industry.



Alia Bhatt and Sharvari-starrer *Alpha*, the first female-led spy action thriller from Yash Raj Films' Spy Universe, is set for its digital premiere after a disappointing theatrical run.

Directed by Shiv Rawail, *Alpha* arrived with considerable expectations, backed by the popularity of the Spy Universe and a strong ensemble cast. However, despite the franchise connection and star power, the film failed to make a significant impact at the box office. The latest update is that *Alpha* will begin streaming on Netflix from August 28, 2026. The film will be available in Hindi, while there is currently no official confirmation about the availability of dubbed versions. Alia Bhatt leads the film alongside Sharvari, with both actresses playing prominent roles in the spy action thriller. The movie also features several established names from the franchise. Hrithik Roshan makes a cameo appearance as Kabir, while Bobby Deol and Anil Kapoor play key roles. The film was positioned as a major expansion of the YRF Spy Universe, which has previously featured popular characters played by stars including Salman Khan, Shah Rukh Khan and Hrithik Roshan. With *Alpha*, the franchise aimed to bring female protagonists to the forefront of its action-driven universe. While the theatrical response fell short of expectations, the film's arrival on Netflix gives it an opportunity to reach a much wider audience. OTT releases have often helped films that underperformed in cinemas find renewed interest among streaming viewers. For Alia Bhatt and Sharvari, *Alpha* also represents an important addition to their filmographies, particularly because of its large-scale action and connection to one of Indian cinema's most commercially successful spy franchises. With its Netflix premiere now locked for August 28, attention will shift to whether *Alpha* can receive a stronger response from streaming audiences than it did during its theatrical release.

Alia Bhatt's Alpha Gets OTT Date

Raashii Khanna Marks 13 Years in Cinema

Actress Raashii Khanna has completed 13 years in the Indian film industry, reflecting on a journey that began with *Madras Cafe* in 2013 and has since taken her across Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam cinema.

The actress, who was recently seen in a special appearance in *120 Bahadur*, said the years have passed quickly because she has always viewed acting as a privilege rather than simply a profession.

"Thirteen years is a long time, and it has gone quickly because the work has never stopped feeling like a privilege," Raashii said while looking back at her career.

She recalled her debut in *Madras Cafe* as an important milestone that shaped her approach to cinema.

According to the actress, the film gave her an opportunity to be part of stories that mattered to her and introduced her to collaborators who supported her early career. "Looking back at *Madras Cafe* reminds me why I started. It gave me the chance to tell stories that matter to me, and I am grateful to every collaborator who has backed me along the way," she added. Over the past 13 years, Raashii has established herself across multiple Indian film industries. Her work in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam cinema has helped her build a pan-India profile, with the actress deliberately choosing projects across languages and genres. Her upcoming projects include the second season of Raj & DK's popular series *Farzi*. Raashii is currently filming the series and will reprise her role as RBI officer Megha Vyas. She will once again share the screen with Shahid Kapoor and Vijay Sethupathi. *Farzi* is a crime thriller centred on a disillusioned artist who turns to counterfeiting after becoming frustrated with his financial circumstances. The series is created, directed and produced by Raj & DK. Raashii also has several high-profile film projects in the pipeline. She will be seen opposite superstar Rajinikanth in the Tamil action thriller *Dharman*. The actress is also set to star opposite Akshay Kumar in filmmaker Anees

Nandamuri Balakrishna's upcoming Bazmee's upcoming comedy-drama. With several major projects lined up, Raashii Khanna's 13-year journey appears to be entering another promising phase as she continues to expand her presence across Indian cinema. The film, directed by Gopichand Malineni, is currently progressing amid heightened expectations from Balakrishna's fans. The actor recently suffered an injury during the shoot and is expected to return to the sets in September 2026. He is keen to resume filming and ensure that the project does not face further delays. If the December 24 date is finalised, *NBK 111* will stay away from the Sankranti 2027 race and instead target the Christmas holiday window. The period has proved favourable for Balakrishna in the past, with both *Akhanda* and *Akhanda 2* reportedly enjoying strong theatrical success following their December releases.

However, the proposed release date could bring intense competition. *Avengers: Doomsday* is expected to release in Telugu during the same period, while Denis Villeneuve's *Dune: Part Three* is also scheduled around Christmas. Shah Rukh Khan's *King* is another major title targeting the festive season. With big-ticket Hollywood and Bollywood projects competing for screens and audience attention, *NBK 111* could face a challenging theatrical battle if it retains the December 24 date. The makers will have to carefully assess the release landscape, particularly across the Telugu-speaking states and other major markets. Kajal Aggarwal is paired opposite Balakrishna in the film. Venkata Satish Kilaru is producing the project under the Vriddhi Cinemas banner, while S. Thaman is composing the music. The project has already generated considerable interest among Balakrishna's fans, with its teaser creating buzz around the actor's action-packed appearance. The film is expected to showcase him in another powerful mass-oriented role. With Balakrishna planning to return to the sets in September, the coming months will be crucial for the production. If the team manages to complete the remaining shoot and *NBK 111* could arrive on December 24 and enter one of the most competitive release windows of the year.

NBK 111 Eyes Christmas Release

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