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QUOTE OF THE DAY
The Pioneer

Without considering peaceful solutions to eradicate Naxalism, the Centre is committing misdeeds through 'Operation Kagar,' citing peace and security as an excuse. Through this operation, attempts are being made to facilitate the looting of mineral wealth in forest areas by private companies. After coming to power at the Centre, the BJP has been weakening constitutional institutions



— *B. Mahesh Kumar Goud, TPCC chief*
P4

DON'T MISS...

Maintain quality at ration shops: DC

Eluru District Collector K. Vetri Selvi has directed ration shop dealers to ensure the quality of ration commodities and accurate weighing while distributing them to cardholders. The distribution of ration goods through fair price shops commenced on Sunday. The Collector inspected the distribution process at a ration shop in Tangellamudi village and observed operations at ration shop no. 127, accompanied by relevant revenue officials. Speaking on the occasion, she said that ration commodities are being supplied to 6,20,146 cardholders...
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Govt ready to address all concerns

With opposition parties demanding a special Parliament session in light of Operation Sindoor, Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Sunday asserted that the government has nothing to hide and they will have ample opportunity to ask questions during the Monsoon Session, which is a few weeks away. The BJP leader, however, expressed doubts about whether the opposition parties intended to seek answers and pointed out that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had spoken extensively...
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Gross GST collections rise 16.4 per cent

Gross GST collections rose 16.4 per cent to over Rs 2.01 lakh crore in May, as per government data released on Sunday.
This comes after a record high Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection in April, when the revenues touched an all-time high of Rs 2.37 lakh crore. In May, gross revenues from domestic transactions rose 13.7 per cent to about Rs 1.50 lakh crore, while GST revenue from imports grew 25.2 per cent to Rs 51,266 crore. In May, the gross Central GST revenues stood at...
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Saint-Germain wins Champions League

Paris Saint-Germain (PSG), Champions League winner. At long last the club that was transformed by Qatari billions and bought and sold a succession of the world's greatest players in an extravagant bid to get to the top has got its hands on the big one. European club soccer's grandest prize has a new home after PSG thrashed Inter Milan 5-0 in Saturday's final in Munich. "It's in the bag, it's coming home with us to Paris tomorrow," coach Luis Enrique said. "My first day at the PSG campus I said the...
-SPORTS

Ration shops back in AP

CIVIL SUPPLIES MINISTER MANOHAR SAYS FP SHOPS TO DOUBLE AS MINI MALLS

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Minister for Civil Supplies Nadendla Manohar has announced that ration shops in the State will gradually be transformed into mini malls, with a focus on protecting public health.

Inaugurating the new system of ration supply at an FP shop at Vakalapudi in Kakinada Rural constituency on Sunday, the Minister said that within just four hours in the morning, ration commodities were distributed to 8.15 lakh families through 29,761 ration shops across the State. He said the government is using Fair Price shops to ensure transparency in the public distribution system.

Later, the Minister personally delivered ration goods to an elderly man, Krishnamsetty Gopal, at his doorstep.

Speaking to the media, Manohar criticised the previous YSRCP government for allegedly ruining the established ration distribution system. "Fair price shops used to operate from 8am to 12 noon and 4 pm to 8 pm.

But the previous government misused Rs 1,650 crore on 9,260 Mobile Dispensing Unit (MDU) vehicles that failed to deliver rations properly. They were parked in street corners, leaving people waiting," he said.

He claimed the government had falsely reported that 93% of ration distribution was completed in a single day.

The Minister urged ration dealers to work sincerely and restore public confidence. He also assured that the alliance government would fulfil all pre-election promises.

Government Whip in the Legislative Council P. Hariprasad, Kakinada Rural MLA Pantham Nanaji, Civil Supplies Corporation Chairman Thota Sudhir, DCCB Chairman Tummala Babu, former Minister Chikkala Ramachandrarao, Civil Supplies Commissioner Sourabh Gour, and Joint Collector Rahul Meena were present.



- Essential commodities distributed to 8.15 lakh families through 29,761 ration shops in four hours.
- The Minister delivered ration items personally to an elderly beneficiary.
- He accused the previous YSRCP government of misusing Rs 1,650 crore on ineffective MDU vehicles.
- Manohar claimed false reports were issued showing 93% ration delivery in a day.
- Ration dealers urged to work sincerely and uphold the government's image.
- The Minister assures that all pre-election promises would be fulfilled.

JAGAN FLAYS GOVT FOR HALTING MDUs



VIJAYAWADA: YSRCP president and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy criticised the TDP-led coalition government for halting the Mobile Dispensing Units (MDUs) that ensured doorstep ration delivery. He said the move affected over 20,000 operators from BC, SC, ST and minority communities, who had served even during floods. Jagan, in a post on X, called the move vindictive and accused Chandrababu Naidu of branding the workers unfairly as smugglers. He said the MDU system curbed corruption and benefited the poor. He also slammed the government for abandoning village secretariat staff, volunteers, and welfare services like clinics and RBKs.



Pawan slams WB police over law student's arrest

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

"Blasphemy must be condemned, always! Secularism isn't a shield for some and a sword for others. It must be a two-way street."

Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj, K. Pawan Kalyan, expressed strong displeasure over the arrest of law student Sharmistha by West Bengal Police, questioning their inaction when leaders of the Trinamool Congress (TMC) allegedly mocked 'Sanatana Dharma'.

Taking to social media platform 'X', the Deputy Chief Minister said: "During Operation Sindoor, Sharmistha, a law student, spoke out — her words were regrettable and hurtful to some. She owned her mistake, deleted the video, and apologised. The West Bengal Police acted swiftly and took her into custody."

He further questioned the lack of action against TMC leaders: "But what about the deep, searing pain inflicted upon millions when elected leaders, MPs of TMC, mock Sanatana Dharma? Where is the outrage when our faith is called 'Gandha Dharm'? Where is their apology? Where is their swift arrest? Blasphemy must be condemned, always! Secularism isn't a shield for some and a sword for others. It must be a two-way street. West Bengal Police, the nation is watching. Act justly for all."

Pawan Kalyan's remarks have sparked political debate, drawing attention to the perceived selective application of secular values.

I & PR Minister urges caution amid rising COVID cases

PNS ■ NUZVID

Amid a rise in COVID-19 cases across the country, Andhra Pradesh Minister for Housing and Information & Public Relations, Kolusu Parthasaradhi, has appealed to the public to stay vigilant and adhere to safety protocols.

Addressing the media in Nuzvid, the Minister urged people to avoid large gatherings and strictly follow COVID guidelines at crowded public places like railway stations, bus stands, and airports. He underlined the importance of wearing face masks and maintaining social distancing in such areas.

Minister Parthasaradhi advised elderly persons and pregnant women to stay indoors unless absolutely necessary. He also recommended mandatory COVID testing for individuals arriving from abroad.

He directed health officials to ensure the availability of PPE kits and masks, and to remain on high alert. He asked the government machinery to be fully prepared to tackle any fresh outbreaks and to ensure that government hospitals are equipped to deliver quality treatment.

The Minister emphasised the need for coordinated efforts at village and mandal levels to raise awareness. Local officials were urged to actively educate the public and enforce safety protocols. Field-level surveillance and comprehensive health screenings should also be taken up as part of the preventive measures.

"By wearing masks and taking proper precautions, we can collectively overcome the threat of COVID," he said.



The minister directed health officials to ensure the availability of PPE kits and masks, and to remain on high alert. He asked the government machinery to be fully prepared to tackle any fresh outbreaks and to ensure that government hospitals are equipped to deliver quality treatment.

Thunderstorms, gusty winds likely in AP

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Thunderstorms accompanied by lightning are likely to occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the next 48 hours, and in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema over the next 24 hours, according to the Meteorological Centre.

In its daily weather bulletin issued on Sunday, the Met Centre also stated that gusty winds with speeds ranging from 30 to 50 kmph are likely at isolated places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema over the next four days.

Continued on Page 2

MASSIVE EXERCISE

15,000 Health dept staff to be transferred

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Ministry of Health, Family Welfare and Medical Education has launched a large-scale general transfer exercise, expected to affect over 15,000 medical and administrative personnel across Andhra Pradesh. The transfers, which began on Sunday, mark the first such exercise since 2023 and have sparked significant interest and concern among government health employees following the issuance of new transfer guidelines.

The Finance Department had lifted the ban on general transfers on 15 May 2025, allowing individual ministries to formulate their own transfer policies based on functional requirements. In line with this, the Health Ministry released its special transfer guidelines on 31 May, after extensive consultations involving Health Minister Satya Kumar Yadav, the Special Chief Secretary, and heads of various departments. The revised rules are intended to streamline the system, address administrative challenges, and end prolonged postings that may have led to irregularities.



Under the new guidelines, administrative staff who have completed more than three years at a station will now be mandatorily transferred. This is the first time such a rule is being implemented to tackle inefficiencies caused by extended postings.

Continued on Page 2

Rare *Maha Kumbhabhishekam* after 270 years

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The famous Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple in Kerala is set to witness a rare consecration ritual after 270 years, an official said.

Maha Kumbhabhishekam (Grand Consecration) will take place next week following the recent completion of long-overdue renovation work at this ancient temple.

The objective of the ritual is to reinforce spiritual energy and reawaken the sanctity of the shrine, according to temple authorities.

Such a comprehensive renovation and the accompanying rituals are being held at the centuries-old shrine after a gap of over 270 years, and it is unlikely to occur again in the next several decades, temple manager B Sreekumar said here.



PADMANABHASWAMY TEMPLE

The 'Maha Kumbhabhishekam' ritual will be held at the temple complex on June 8, he said.

Various rituals, including the consecration of newly built 'thazhikakudams' (three above the sanctum sanctorum and one above the Ottakkal Mandapam), the reinstallation of the Vishwaksena idol, and the 'Ashtabandha Kalasam' at the Thiruvambady Sree Krishna Temple (located within the main shrine complex), will be held as part of the event, Sreekumar said.

"The renovation has been carried out as per the directive of the Supreme Court-appointed expert panel in 2017. Though the work began soon after, it could not progress much further due to the COVID situation," he said.

Later, various renovation works were completed in a phased manner from 2021 onwards, he said.

"The comprehensive renovation and the related rituals are being held at the shrine after centuries. It is a rare opportunity for devotees of Lord Padmanabha across the world to witness these rituals after all these years," he said.

He also said that steps are being taken by the temple management to ensure the smooth conduct of the sacred rituals, in adherence to the shrine's centuries-old traditions.

All-party delegations assert PoK priority talks

PNS ■ KUALA LUMPUR/ AGIERS/LONDON

EMPHASISE GLOBAL UNITY AGAINST TERRORISM



All-party parliamentary delegations on Sunday emphasised a unified global stance against terrorism and asserted that future dialogues with Pakistan should focus solely on reclaiming Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Interacting with the Indian diaspora in Kuala Lumpur, Trinamool Congress MP Abhishek Banerjee, who is part of an all-party parliamentary delegation visiting Malaysia, said the next dialogue with Pakistan should be only on reclaiming PoK.

"We have been in talks with them (Pakistan) for decades, despite changes in various paradigms and governments. But one thing remains constant – the conflict with Pakistan.

"After what happened on April 22, where 26 people were killed at point-blank range solely based on their religion and gender...I want the ruling dispensation to engage in dialogue with Pakistan only to discuss reclaiming Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Otherwise, these terror attacks will continue," Banerjee, who is part of the delegation led by JD(U) Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Kumar Jha, said.

India has made it clear that any talks with Pakistan will only be on terrorism and PoK. India has tasked seven multi-party delegations to visit 33 global capitals to reach out to the international community on Pakistan's designs and India's response to terror, especially in the wake of the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people.

Terrorism is a global menace to be addressed by humanity in unison was the all-party delegation's message as it concluded its visit to Algeria on Sunday.

The multi-party delegation was led by BJP MP Baijayant Jay Panda.

"Terrorism is a global menace to be addressed by humanity in unison. The all-party parliamentary delegation, led by Hon'ble Member of Parliament Mr. Baijayant Jay Panda, briefed the Algerian media, members of think tanks, a cross-section of the Indian diaspora, and friends of India in Algeria.

Continued on Page 2

TELUGU FAMILES CAUGHT IN SIKKIM FLOODS

AP govt launches rescue efforts

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has launched urgent rescue efforts to assist Telugu families stranded in flood-ravaged Lachung, Sikkim, after heavy rains and landslides disrupted normal life in the region.

Under the leadership of Union Minister for Civil Aviation Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu, coordinated operations are being carried out to ensure the safe evacuation of those affected. Among them is Kurmanadha Rao, Tahsildar from Vizianagaram district, who has been stranded with his family for the past three days. His family includes wife M Uma (38), daughter Deekshitha (15), and son Jayansh Narayana (6).

Following instructions from M Ravi Chandra, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, the AP Bhavan in New Delhi has been monitoring the situation closely and coordinating with key officials in Sikkim. The AP Bhavan team has established contact with Mangan District authorities, including District Collector Anant and Superintendent of Police Arun Tatal, to ensure timely assistance and logistical support.



Sikkim Director General of Police Sridhara Rao has also been actively engaged in tracking developments on the ground and facilitating support for the Andhra Pradesh families.

Currently, road access to Lachung remains blocked due to major landslides. However, restoration work is progressing swiftly and is expected to be completed by tomorrow. All stranded individuals are reported to be safe, with food, shelter and other essential supplies being provided.

The Andhra Pradesh Bhavan is taking all necessary steps to expedite the evacuation and ensure the safety of the affected families. The government has assured that every effort is being made to bring them home as soon as possible.

For assistance or updates, the public may contact Dr Arja Shriikantthh on 90598 24101.

Monday Mirchi

PASSES, PRESSURE, AND THE JAYESH RANJAN JURY GLARE

A day before the Miss World finale in Hyderabad, Jayesh Ranjan was in no mood for pleasantries. With preparations in overdrive and last-minute calls pouring in from ministers demanding extra passes, the Special Chief Secretary wasn't hiding his irritation. The overflow didn't just cause logistical headaches — it reportedly cost a few media houses their chance at a scheduled interview, which might explain the pointed tone in some coverage the following day. At the venue, it was clear the crowd was tighter than the seat count as even senior officials weren't spared. Health Secretary was seen being escorted around, searching for a seat — a search that stretched a good few minutes without result. But the most talked-about moment wasn't the chaos or the couture. It was Jayesh Ranjan himself — not behind the scenes, but seated squarely on the Miss World jury. For many watching, that single image spoke volumes. The bureaucracy's most familiar face in Hyderabad's event circuit had moved from backstage coordinator to centre-stage decider — and everyone noticed.

SPOT: BRS TARGETS BUREAUCRATS, EVEN SYMPATHETIC VOICES NOW CAUTIOUS

A year and a half into its role as opposition, BRS has made one thing clear — its criticism is no longer limited to political opponents. Bureaucrats have steadily become central to the party's narrative, and not everyone is comfortable with the direction it's taking. Last week's release of an audio clip involving Alugu Varshini was the latest in a string of moves that seemed calculated to cast serving officers as politically compromised. Sandeep Kumar Jha, the Collector of Sircilla, has been publicly labelled a Congress loyalist. Vikarabad Collector Prateek Jain finds himself under constant watch, with BRS circles dissecting even routine field visits for political intent. Jayesh Ranjan was been under crossfire due to the Miss World event. Names like Adityanath Das — the government advisor — keep surfacing in their statements, often positioned as shadow influencers behind key anti-Telangana decisions. Arvind Kumar, once cautiously defended by the party during the Formula E controversy, now finds that support noticeably subdued. Shikha Goel too has come under fire, with BRS questioning how cybercrime cases have been handled under her watch. What's telling is the growing discomfort even among those who once viewed BRS with some measure of goodwill. Several senior officials who previously described the party's criticism as "part of the game" are now privately noting a shift — the lines between political accountability and personal targeting are beginning to blur. In trying to corner the government, BRS seems to be cornering the bureaucracy — and even sympathetic voices are starting to take a step back.

PHONES KEPT BUZZING AS THE TOP COP SPOKE

During a recent media interaction involving top IPS officers, the usual decorum played out in front — statements, questions, formal responses. But behind the scenes, another pattern quietly unfolded. As the senior-most officer took the mic, phones among other officials in the hall began to buzz. Message after message. Silent chuckles. Momentary glances. It wasn't missed by the journalists in the room. While the address was in progress, several officers appeared more invested in their phones than in the mic. The contrast was hard to ignore. Some say it's typical — the kind of internal chatter that picks up precisely when public protocol demands silence. In police circles too, attention has its own quiet hierarchy. As corridors of power shift and change, some rituals — like silent group chats during briefings — remain timeless.

FOR 'IPS' TOO, MEDIA GETS A REMINDER

Journalists received a quiet reminder — not about a press event or protocol update, but about using designations correctly. A message circulated from the office of Shahnawaz Qasim, requesting that IPS be mandatorily included after his name in all reports. The preferred format, now well-circulated, reads: Shahnawaz Qasim, IPS, Director General, Drugs Control Administration, Telangana. This follows a similar instruction issued earlier by another senior officer, who had politely reminded the press to always include Director General after his name. With both DG and IPS now officially re-affirmed through written requests, newsrooms are treating these not as one-offs but part of a growing trend — formal title enforcement through informal channels. In a world where titles carry weight and headlines travel far, the press has once again been reminded: in bureaucracy, even the punctuation holds protocol.

--Yours truly

22 bikes, two autos seized in cordon search

PNS ■ NANDYALA

Police seized 22 motorcycles and two auto-rickshaws during a cordon and search operation in Govindapalli and Sanjamala villages, both known for faction-related violence.

Allagadda DSP Promod informed the media that, acting on the instructions of Nandyala SP Adhiraj Singh Rana, a police team led by Inspector Dastagiri Babu and SIs China Peerayya and Vara Prasad carried out the operation in Govindapalli during the early hours.

Ten motorcycles and two auto-rickshaws were seized as their owners failed to produce valid documents.

Swift ration distribution through Fair Price shops

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a major step towards improving public service delivery, the Andhra Pradesh Civil Supplies Department successfully distributed rice to 14.45 lakh beneficiaries in a single day through Fair Price Shops (FPS) across the state, according to department officials.

Anantapur district alone accounted for over 1 lakh beneficiaries receiving their Public Distribution System (PDS) rations, reflecting the effectiveness of the renewed system.

A festive atmosphere prevailed as 29,760 ration shops across Andhra Pradesh facilitated the distribution of essential commodities. The government's decision to resume PDS distribution through ration shops—replacing the earlier Mobile Dispensation Units (MDUs)—has resulted in faster and more efficient service.

This marks a significant improvement over the initial turnout in April and May, when the MDU system failed to serve more than 12 lakh beneficiaries on the first day. In contrast, the latest drive reached over 14 lakh people, indicating enhanced accessibility and public response.

Beneficiaries were able to visit their nearby shops from early morning at their convenience. Special arrangements were made for senior citizens above 65 years and persons with disabilities, with door-to-door delivery facilitated by ration dealers.

The government has announced plans to distribute rice and other essential commodities to 1.46 crore ration card holders between 1 and 15 June. To accommodate working individuals, ration shops will function in two shifts—from 8 am to 12 noon, and 4 pm to 8 pm.

Previously, under the MDU system, uncertainty over vehicle arrival often led to long waits, causing inconvenience and loss of daily wages.

With portability now enabled, cardholders can collect their rations from any nearby shop, adding flexibility and ease to the process.

The coalition government is also preparing a roadmap to further strengthen and streamline the ration distribution system through fair price shops, aiming to ensure that no eligible beneficiary is left behind.

Housing Corp staff meet APNGGO Assn chief



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh State Housing Corporation Employees Joint Action Committee (JAC) met the newly elected President of the AP State Government Gazetted and Non-Gazetted Officers (APNGGO) Association, A Vidyasagar, on Sunday and felicitated him on behalf of the employees' association.

During the meeting, JAC Chairman O Bhaskara Rao extended congratulations and conveyed the collective expectations of Housing Corporation employees. He urged the APNGGO Association President to take up their long-pending issues with the government and ensure their speedy resolution.

A key appeal raised was the extension of the retirement age for public sector employees from 60 to 62 years, in line with evolving service and workforce needs. The committee expressed optimism that their concerns would be effectively addressed under the new leadership. "We are hopeful that our issues will be given priority, particularly the retirement age extension," said Bhaskara Rao.

Prominent participants in the meeting included N Mallikharjuna Rao, Finance Secretary; Tirupathi Naik, Secretary; and Mastan, President of the Outsourcing Employees' Union. Employees from various districts also took part, showcasing statewide solidarity among the Housing Corporation workforce.



Spl Ritual held at Tirumala Temple

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

A special Sahasra Kalasabhishekam was solemnised in Ekantam at the Tirumala temple on Sunday to mark the consecration of the Kautuka Beram—Bhoga Srinivasa Murthy.

The sacred ritual was conducted at the Garudalwar Sannidhi from 6 a.m. to 8.30 a.m. The Utsava Murthies of Sri Malayappa Swamy, Sridevi, Bhudevi, Vishwaksenulavaru, and the silver idol of Bhoga Srinivasa Murthy—also known as Manavala Perumal—were placed at the Sannidhi for the occasion. The Kautuka Beram of Manavala Perumal was positioned facing the Mula Virat, while the Utsava Murthies and the deity's chief commander were arranged facing one another.

The ritual included a holy Snapanam (ritual bath) performed to the deities amid chanting of Vedic hymns. A sacred thread was tied from the Bhoga Srinivasa Murthy idol to the Mula Virat inside the sanctum, symbolising the performance of Sahasra Kalasabhishekam to the presiding deity.

The significance of the Kautuka Beram dates back to the 7th century AD, when Sri Perundevi, queen of the Pallava ruler Samavai, gifted the 18-inch silver idol of Sri Venkateswara—an exact replica of the presiding deity.

Present on the occasion were H.H. Pedda Jeeyar Swamy and H.H. Chinna Jeeyar Swamy of Tirumala, TTD Chairman B.R. Naidu, Additional EO Ch. Venkaiah Chowdary, Chief Priest Sri Venugopala Deekshitulu, Dy. EO Lokanatham, Peishkar Rama Krishna and other temple officials.

Two miscreants steal Rs 20 lakh from ATM

PNS ■ SURYAPET

A major theft took place at Huzurnagar in Suryapet district in the early hours of Sunday. Unidentified miscreants broke into the State Bank of India (SBI) ATM on Lingagiri Road during the early hours of Friday and made away with approximately Rs 20 lakhs. After committing the theft, the culprits set the ATM on fire, causing panic among locals.

According to police, the incident occurred around 2:40 am on Sunday. The culprits, it is assumed, arrived in a sports utility vehicle (SUV) and entered the ATM premises.

APCC demands clarification on jet loss in Pak strike

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



The Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) has urged Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to respond to the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan's admission that India lost fighter jets during recent military action against Pakistan.

Addressing the media here on Sunday, APCC Vice-President Kolanukonda Shivaji said the Defence Minister must explain the circumstances in which the jets were lost in retaliation for the Pahalgam massacre.

"CDS Anil Chauhan has clearly stated that India lost some fighter jets in the attack on Pakistan. It is the Defence Minister's responsibility to inform the people about what actually transpired," he said.

Shivaji also demanded a special session of Parliament to discuss both the Pahalgam massacre and India's response. He criticised the government's silence on former US President Donald Trump's claim that India agreed to a ceasefire due to his intervention, calling the response weak and inadequate.

Controversy erupts over Adani smart prepaid meters in AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) has vehemently opposed the Andhra Pradesh government's decision to install Adani smart prepaid electricity meters in residential homes, denouncing it as a betrayal of public trust and a handover of public infrastructure to corporate control.

Addressing a press conference in Vijayawada, CPI(M) state committee members Ch. Baburao and D. Kashinath presented official orders issued by the Andhra Pradesh Central Power Distribution Corporation Limited (APCPDCL) directing the installation of the meters. In the first phase, 41 lakh homes across the state — including 10.28 lakh in the major towns of Krishna, Guntur and Prakasam districts — are set to receive the meters, with plans to eventually cover two crore connections.

Baburao accused the government of turning "Andhra Pradesh into Adani Pradesh" by systematically transferring control of electricity distribution to the Adani Group under the guise of modernisation. He alleged that the alliance government (TDP-BJP-Jana Sena) was continuing the policies initiated by the previous YSRCP regime, which had entered into agreements for smart meter installation under the Central government's directives.

The CPI(M) leaders criticised the mandatory implementation of the smart meters,



estimating each unit would cost around Rs 13,000 to install and maintain, collectively burdening consumers with Rs 25,000 crore. The meters operate in prepaid mode, requiring users to pay in advance—similar to mobile phone top-ups—failing which, power supply will be immediately disconnected, disproportionately impacting poor and middle-class households.

They further raised concerns about the introduction of variable "Time of Day" tariffs, which could lead to higher charges during peak hours, escalating domestic electricity bills. The CPI(M) also flagged the lack of transparency in online billing systems, replacing physical meter readings with little accountability.

Terming the move a step towards privatisation of power distribution, the party warned that electricity workers' jobs could also be at stake. CPI(M) pledged to oppose the smart meter rollout through protests, awareness campaigns, pamphlet distribution, and direct confrontation if necessary.

Kashinath stated that in Vijayawada alone, over 3.5 lakh homes have been identified for installation, and residents would resist the initiative. The party demanded that the government cancel its contracts with Adani, withdraw the smart meters from both residential and commercial premises, and roll back recent power surcharge hikes.

Thunderstorms...

Continued from Page 1

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers are expected at one or two locations in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema over the next seven days. Rainfall was reported at one or two places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh, while dry weather prevailed over Rayalaseema during the past 24 hours, the report added.

1.20 lakh MT of paddy being procured in Nidadavole segment

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY



Minister for Tourism, Kandula Durgesh, has announced that 1.20 lakh metric tonnes of paddy is being procured in Nidadavole constituency as part of the ongoing procurement drive.

Speaking to the media after launching the distribution of ration commodities at a fair price shop in Nidadavole, the Minister said that the target for paddy procurement in East Godavari district has been set at 3.40 lakh metric tonnes, of which Nidadavole alone accounts for 1.20 lakh metric tonnes.

Durgesh said that he had taken stock of farmers' issues even while on a tour in Vietnam and had worked to resolve their problems. Owing to a good crop yield, surplus paddy had been reported in some areas, he noted.

The Minister said steps were being taken to procure the entire produce from farmers and that he had already discussed the matter with Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar. He added that an additional 10,000 metric tonnes of paddy should be procured in the constituency.

He assured farmers that any issues faced with millers would be addressed. The government had already taken measures to ensure a 1:2 bank guarantee ratio, as requested by millers, he said.

Durgesh added that if necessary, grain would be procured through millers at the government-declared price. "The government's priority is farmer welfare. From tomorrow, 1,800 metric tonnes of paddy will be procured daily, and payments are being credited to farmers' accounts within 48 hours—sometimes even within six hours," he said.

He further stated that officials had been directed to prepare a proper plan for e-cropping registration, bagging, and procurement through Rythu Seva Kendras (RSKs). He encouraged farmers to voice their concerns on pricing.

Durgesh said the issue of input subsidy would be taken up in the Cabinet. Acknowledging delays in procurement in Nidadavolu, Peravali, and Undrajavaram mandals due to technical issues, he informed that Rs 11 crore in MGNREGS funds had been brought in.

He also announced that works on CC roads, Roads and Buildings (R&B) roads, and other infrastructure are underway at a cost of Rs 31 crore, with efforts to bring in central funds for further development.

State Skill Development Corporation Chairman-designate B. Sesharao, JC S. Chinna Ramudu, and RDO Rani Sushmit were present.

All-party...

Continued from Page 1

Senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Community Abroad and African Affairs of Algeria graced the occasion," the Indian embassy in Algeria said in a post on X.

"After the briefing and interaction, tributes were paid to the innocent victims of the Pahalgam terrorist attack by observing a minute of silence and laying a wreath," the post said.

The all-party delegation led by DMK MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi began its visit to Spain by paying homage to the bust of Mahatma Gandhi. The delegation arrived Madrid from Latvia on Saturday. During its three-day visit to Spain, the delegation will meet members of the Spanish government, the Indian diaspora and civil society representatives to present India's stance on zero-tolerance against terrorism.

"The all-party parliamentary delegation began its visit to Madrid by paying homage to the bust of Mahatma Gandhi, a powerful tribute to the enduring force of peace over violence and truth over fear," the Indian embassy in Spain said in a post on X.

15,000 Health...

Continued from Page 1

Union office bearers who have served between three and nine years at a location will be shifted within the same station if vacancies exist; otherwise, they will be posted elsewhere.

The transfer exercise also aims to correct posting mismatches across the system. Doctors of ADME rank and medical professors will be moved based on administrative needs, and all staff with over five years of service at one location will be compulsorily transferred.

To ensure clarity and avoid misinterpretation, the Ministry is expected to issue a special memo shortly, explicitly listing the offices and departments that fall under the three-year transfer norm, especially those related to district headquarters administrative units.

During the transfer ban period of 2023–24, only a few exceptions were considered on humanitarian grounds.

Since the lifting of the ban, around 30 such cases have been approved by the Minister, amounting to just 0.2% of the total transfers.

These include a young medical officer who was widowed days after marriage, a senior assistant undergoing regular dialysis, and a doctor receiving treatment for advanced cancer.

The current transfer round has been carefully structured after reviewing past complications and aims to strike a balance between administrative efficiency and personal as well as humanitarian considerations.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:	Sukla Paksha
Tithi:	
Saptami:	Jun 01 07:59 PM to Jun 02 08:35 PM
Ashtami:	Jun 02 08:35 PM to Jun 03 09:56 PM
Nakshatram:	
Magha:	Jun 01 09:36 PM to Jun 02 10:55 PM
Purva Phalguni:	Jun 02 10:55 PM to Jun 04 12:58 AM
Rahukalam:	7:22 AM to 8:59 AM
Yamagandam:	10:36 AM to 12:14 PM
Varjyam:	07:36 AM to 09:20 AM
Gulika:	1:51 PM to 3:28 PM
Amritakalam:	08:23 PM to 10:04 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham:	11:48 AM to 12:40 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Light Rain
Temp: 37°c
Humidity: 59%
Sunrise: 5:34 AM
Sunset: 6:37 PM

Updated: June 1, 2025 5:00 PM

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VIJAYAWADA | MONDAY | JUNE 2, 2025

Kollu inaugurates FP shop in Masula

Govt reintroduces distribution of essential goods through FPS





PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

To ensure that essential commodities reach the public without diversion, the Andhra Pradesh government has resumed distribution through Fair Price Shops (FPS) based on public demand, said State Minister for Mines, Geology and Excise, Kollu Ravindra. The Minister, along with APSRTC Chairman Konakalla Narayana Rao, District Collector DK Balaji and Joint Collector Geethanjali Sharma, inaugurated Fair Price Shop No 7 in Rajupeta, 37th Division in Machilipatnam, on Sunday morning. They distributed five kg of rice, 0.5 kg sugar and one kg of toor dal to cardholders.

The officials also visited the houses of two elderly beneficiaries, 65-year-old Boyina Suseela and Godavarthi Mahalaxmi. Suseela, a holder of an Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) card, was provided with 35 kg of free rice, one kg of sugar and one kg of toor dal. Mahalaxmi received five kg rice, 0.5 kg sugar, and one kg of toor dal.

Addressing the media, the Minister said that the State government, under Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan, HRD Minister Nara Lokesh and Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar, is committed to good governance and ensuring transparency in the public distribution system (PDS). Responding to public appeals, the government decided to reintroduce distribution of essential goods through FPS starting June 1.

He noted that previously, rice distribution was marred by irregularities, including illegal diversions and described it as a "major scam" under the previous government. To prevent such issues, the CM has mandated that cardholders can collect their rations anytime from the 1st to the 15th of each month. Shops will operate in two sessions: 8 AM–12 PM and 4 PM–8 PM.

Each beneficiary is entitled to five kg of rice, 0.5 kg of sugar at ?17, and 1 kg of toor dal at ?67. For senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and bedridden individuals, door-to-door delivery will be ensured by the dealers.

The district has around 5.22 lakh ration cards, with 1,059 FPS operational, confirmed Joint Collector Geethanjali Sharma. New ration cards are being processed, with 20,000 fresh applications in Machilipatnam alone. The State is also exploring distribution of millets like ragi and jowar as alternatives to rice.

Ambati flays Naidu for 'hawk eye' remarks

Jagan to visit Tenali tomorrow to console victims of police brutality

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Pooh-poohing Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's remark that he has a hawk eye, the YSRCP questioned as to what happened to its vision when Dalit and minority youth were beaten up at Tenali.

Speaking to media here on Sunday, former minister Ambati Rambabu said the coalition is foisting false cases on the Opposition, and that YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy will visit Tenali on June 3 to console the victims of police brutality.

"An attempt to murder case was booked against three youngsters -- John Victor, Doma Rajesh and Sheikh Babulal -- on charges of attacking a constable. They should be arrested and produced before court, but they were brutally beaten up in full public view to terrorise them. Filing false cases against those who question the government has become a norm showing no respect to democracy," he said.

"Chandrababu has no moral right to speak on corruption as there is rampant corruption and his remarks during the pension disbursal at Konaseema Ambedkar district only shows his shallowness. He and his son have institutionalised corruption, and at the same time he said that he would bring in a corruption-free State. It's ridiculous," Rambabu said.

Farmers are not getting MSP for any crop and all sections of people are unhappy with the coalition government, he added.

GVMC rolls out monsoon action plan to curb vector-borne diseases

Focus on mosquito control, public awareness, and improved sanitation

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM



A healthcare worker sharing health tips with women and children at a Primary Health Centre in Visakhapatnam

With the monsoon fast approaching, the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) has put together a comprehensive action plan to tackle seasonal ailments and prevent the spread of vector-borne diseases across the city. The strategy is centred on three key pillars: intensified mosquito control, public awareness, and improved sanitation.

GVMC Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Naresh Kumar, revealed that 106 water stagnation points have been identified across Visakhapatnam. "Sanitation teams are on the ground clearing these areas. We're spraying drains, dropping oil balls in stagnant water, and even using drones to spray pesticides in hard-to-reach places," Dr. Kumar said. As part of its pre-monsoon preparedness, anti-larval operations are already in motion, with enhanced focus on fever-prone areas. The civic body has also rolled out fogging machines and initiated large-scale pesticide spraying, especially in localities with a history of high disease incidence.

To strengthen operations, GVMC plans to recruit an additional 430 sanitation workers, supplementing the current workforce of 230 personnel dedicated to mosquito control. This recruitment drive is expected to be tabled in the GVMC council meeting in early June. A dedicated sanitation and vector control drive will be launched across schools and colleges from June 15, coinciding with their reopening. GVMC teams will conduct fogging and spraying in all hostels to safeguard student health.

GVMC is working closely with the Health Department, along with ASHA workers, ANMs, and sachivalayam staff, to implement an intensive door-to-door awareness campaign. Residents will be educated on the need to eliminate stagnant water and maintain hygienic surroundings. "We request citizens to support the field teams and follow simple precautions at home. Preventing mosquito breeding is the first line of defence against disease," said Dr. Naresh Kumar.

While dengue remains the most commonly reported vector-borne illness, officials noted a steady decline in malaria and chikungunya cases in recent years. GVMC has also urged citizens to remain alert, report early symptoms like fever, and seek timely medical care to avoid health complications during the rainy season.



Multispecialty health camp held at Burripalem

PNS ■ BURRIPALEM

Marking the occasion of actor Krishna's birthday, a comprehensive multispecialty health camp was organised in Burripalem by Andhra Hospitals the other day, in association with actor G Mahesh Babu. Medical experts provided free consultations, diagnostic services and medicines to local residents.

The health camp was led by Andhra Hospitals' senior medical team, covering key specialties such as General Medicine, General Surgery, Paediatrics, Cardiology and ENT. In addition to individual consultations, an awareness session was conducted to educate the public on common adult and paediatric health concerns, heart diseases, and the prevention of viral infections typically seen during summer months.

Dr PV Rama Rao, chief of Children's Services and Director at Andhra Hospitals, stated that this was the 44th medical camp held in Burripalem so far. "We are proud to continue this tradition of service. Today, 146 children and adults availed themselves of the consultation and treatment facilities," he said.

A team of dedicated doctors including Dr Mudassir, Dr Sai Kiran, Dr Amar, Dr Pavan Kumar and Dr Ramesh, along with nurses, lab technicians and pharmacists, ensured smooth and efficient camp operations.

Whitathon run held to raise awareness on retinoblastoma

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A Whitathon run was organised to raise awareness on retinoblastoma, a rare but serious eye cancer that primarily affects children under the age of three. The event, organised by LV Prasad Eye Institute (LVPEI), also aimed to generate funds to support free treatment for underprivileged children diagnosed with the condition.

Held as part of the World Retinoblastoma Awareness Week (May 11–17), the run was flagged off at 6 am on BRTS Road, Vijayawada, by Prof Venkateswara Rao Paruchuri, Vice-Chancellor of Siddhartha Academy of Higher Education. Around 450 participants took part in the event.



Dr Anasua Ganguly, head of LVPEI's Kode Venkatadri Chowdary campus in Vijayawada, stressed the importance of early detection. "A white reflex in a child's eye could be a sign of retinoblastoma. Timely diagnosis can save life, vision, and the eye itself," she said.

Prof Paruchuri urged attendees to spread awareness. "If we each share this message, we can help ensure early detection and treatment," he said.

Funds raised will support free treatment and future research in retinoblastoma care, reinforcing LVPEI's commitment to equitable eye health.



Minister reviews management of Masula Beach Festival

Festival to commence on June 5 with unveiling of a 100-foot national flag

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Mines, Geology, and Excise, Kollu Raviendra, has directed all officials to work in coordination for the successful organisation of the Masula (Machilipatnam) Beach Festival scheduled for the first week of June. On Sunday, the Minister held a review meeting with officials and party leaders at the Guest House in the Road Buildings in Machilipatnam to discuss the management of the festival.

Kollu Ravindra announced that in order to ensure a well-organised festival, several committees will be established, focusing on various aspects such as publicity, invitations, stages, sports, cultural programmes and media coordination. The Minister confirmed that officials and leaders will serve as members of these committees, which are expected to function effectively until the conclusion of the festivities. Additionally, he indicated that steps will be taken soon to form a permanent committee for the development of Manginapudi Beach.

The Minister explained that the Masula Beach Festival will commence on June 5 with the unveiling of a 100-foot national flag, followed by continuous sports, cultural, and entertainment events from June 6-8, according to the schedule.

Ration shops reopen to ensure transparent PDS system

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

5,90,243 cardholders in Krishna district to benefit



As part of the State government's efforts to ensure transparent and efficient distribution of essential commodities through the Public Distribution System (PDS), ration shops across Andhra Pradesh have been reopened. Krishna District Collector Dr G Lakshmisha formally relaunched the distribution process on Sunday at the ration shop in Vidyadharapuram, operated by dealer Gurunatham, along with local public representatives.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Lakshmisha said that the government has decided to resume the distribution of essentials through ration shops, benefiting a total of 5,90,243 cardholders in Krishna district. Distribution is being carried out through 957 ration shops, with 8,000 metric tonnes of rice allocated.

He stressed that special arrangements have been made to deliver ration supplies directly to the homes of 57,690 senior citizens and persons with disabilities, with instructions to complete deliveries by the fifth of every month. Regular distribution through ration shops will take place between the 1st and 15th of every month, with shops operating from 8 AM to 12 PM and 4 PM to 8 PM.

To further improve transparency, QR-code enabled flex boards are being installed at all ration shops, allowing beneficiaries to scan and share their feedback via mobile phones. The Collector inspected the quality of the fortified rice being distributed and expressed satisfaction with beneficiary responses. He warned that strict action will be taken against any dealer found guilty of malpractice.

Arya Vysya Corporation Chairman Rakesh, DSO A Paparao, ASO Challa Lakshminarayana Reddy and local Corporator M Ratnakumari were present.

Two youths killed in road mishap

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a tragic incident, two youngsters lost their lives after their two-wheeler reportedly rammed into a road divider on Saripalli Road under Pendurthi police station limits on Sunday. The deceased have been identified as S. Avinash (19) and Sri Ram (20), both residents of Pendurthi. According to the police, the duo was on their way to Anandapuram when the accident occurred. The impact of the crash left both with severe head injuries, leading to their death on the spot. Pendurthi traffic police rushed to the location and began preliminary investigations to determine the exact cause of the mishap. The bodies have been shifted to King George Hospital (KGH) for post-mortem examination. A case has been registered, and further investigation is underway.

YSRCP to observe June 4 as 'Vennupotu Dinam'

Day marks one year since formation of the NDA government

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), on Sunday, announced its decision to observe June 4 as 'Vennupotu Dinam' (Day of Betrayal), marking one year since the formation of the NDA government in Andhra Pradesh. The party plans to organise Statewide protests highlighting what it terms the government's failure to deliver on its promises over the past year.

A preparatory meeting was held at the YSRCP district office in Visakhapatnam, chaired by Visakhapatnam district YSRCP president K.K. Raju. Senior party leaders including former minister and MLC Botcha Satyanarayana, Rajya Sabha MP Golla Babu Rao, MLC Varudu Kalyani, and former MLA T. Nagi Reddy were present.

During the meeting, the leaders formally unveiled the campaign poster for 'Vennupotu Dinam'. Speaking on the occasion, Botcha Satyanarayana alleged that the NDA government had failed to implement the majority of its pre-election promises, with only a marginal increase in pensions being executed.

Spike in fatal road accidents raises alarm in Visakhapatnam

Two-wheeler riders account for majority of accident victims

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

An alarming rise in road accident fatalities—primarily driven by over-speeding and irresponsible two-wheeler riding by youth—has become a serious concern in Visakhapatnam. The tragic deaths of two youngsters on the Telugu Thalli flyover late Thursday night have underscored the city's worsening road safety scenario.

Despite barricades and night-time restrictions, the victims are believed to have violated the rules, mistakenly assuming that reduced traffic will make late-night riding safe. The crash occurred shortly after midnight, highlighting the persistent disregard for safety regulations. Key city roads—including flyovers, Beach Road, and other main arteries—are increasingly turning hazardous, with frequent violations reported. These include underage riding, drunk driving, triple riding without helmets, and dangerous stunt performances. "We live in constant fear when our children are out. We don't know if they'll come back safely," said a concerned resident from the city's north.



According to traffic police, two-wheeler riders account for the majority of accident victims. Speeding and helmetless riding are the most common factors behind fatal crashes. "From Beach Road to Sagar Nagar, reckless riding is rampant. Post-sunset, some stretches resemble race tracks," said a senior traffic official. The numbers reflect the seriousness of the problem. While 2022 saw 346 deaths from 1,353 road accidents, fatalities dipped to 209 in 2023 despite 1,180 crashes. However, in just five months of 2024, the death toll has already reached 263 from 1,094 accidents.

Despite regular enforcement through speed checks, awareness campaigns, and penalties, officials acknowledge that change remains elusive. "Fines alone can't instil accountability," one officer said, citing instances of youth performing stunts with three riders on a single bike. Doctors at King George Hospital confirm that head injuries from helmetless crashes remain the primary cause of death in two-wheeler accidents. "Helmets are life-saving devices. Skipping them often seals one's fate," said a senior surgeon.

Authorities are now urging a shift in public attitude. "Tough laws help, but without a sense of responsibility—especially among youth and parents—our efforts won't suffice," a senior enforcement officer said.

Min Durgesh reopens ration shops



PNS ■ NIDADAVOLE

In a key move to enhance food security for the underprivileged, Minister for Tourism, Culture and Cinematography Kandula Durgesh inaugurated the reopening of ration shops at Satyavada village in Undrajavaram Mandal. Replacing the previous mobile delivery system, the new coalition government under Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has reinstated the distribution of essential commodities through fair price shops, ensuring uninterrupted access to necessities for poor families.

On the occasion, Minister Durgesh personally distributed ration supplies to beneficiaries and reaffirmed the government's commitment to efficient service delivery. He announced that ration shops will operate from the 1st to the 15th of every month. For senior citizens above 65 years and persons with disabilities, a doorstep delivery system has been introduced to improve accessibility.

The Minister criticised the former government for limiting ration distribution to designated points via mobile vans, which he said caused significant inconvenience. He stated that the current system, revived after detailed cabinet discussions led by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, is designed to serve people directly and fairly.

Durgesh also addressed issues surrounding ration card distribution, assuring that the government is actively correcting errors and facilitating comprehensive updates.

Highlighting Nidadavolu's agrarian profile, the Minister noted that of the 3.4 lakh metric tonnes of paddy targeted for procurement in East Godavari district, 1.2 lakh metric tonnes were allocated to Nidadavolu. In response to a good harvest, plans are underway to procure an additional 10,000 metric tonnes. He added that payments to farmers are being made within 48 hours of procurement—sometimes in as little as six hours.

Reiterating his dedication to public service, the Minister said he has no private business interests and has been committed to addressing constituency issues since his student days.

Among those present at the event were TDP leader and Skill Development Chairman B. Shesarao, Joint Collector Chinna Rayudu, RDO Rani Sushmita, and local leaders from the TDP, Jana Sena, and BJP.

Ration shop dealers told to ensure quality



PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector K. Vetri Selvi has directed ration shop dealers to ensure the quality of ration commodities and accurate weighing while distributing them to cardholders.

The distribution of ration goods through fair price shops commenced on Sunday. The Collector inspected the distribution process at a ration shop in Tangellamudi village and observed operations at ration shop no. 127, accompanied by relevant revenue officials.

Speaking on the occasion, she said that ration commodities are being supplied to 6,20,146 cardholders through 1,123 ration shops across Eluru district. She reiterated that the State Government is committed to delivering ration supplies to people above 65 years of age and the differently-abled at their doorsteps.

The Collector instructed shop dealers to maintain transparency and ensure proper delivery of commodities. She also directed them to clearly display the price list and stock details of items supplied by the Civil Supplies Department.

She emphasised that ration shops must operate as per the government-mandated hours — from 8 am to 12 noon and 4 pm to 8 pm. All cardholders must receive their monthly ration by the 15th, while senior citizens and differently-abled individuals should receive theirs at home by the 5th of each month.

The Collector inspected the use of the e-POS machines and the weighing of rice during her visit. She urged dealers to carry out their duties without giving room for public complaints and interacted with beneficiaries to check the quality of supplies.

She was accompanied by Special Deputy Collector Devaki Devi, Tahsildar Seshagiri Rao, Deputy Tahsildar Ramesh, and District Ration Dealers' Association President Rajulapati Gangadhar.

Nasanakota MJP School to be upgraded as jr college: Savitha



PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

Andhra Pradesh BC Welfare Minister S. Savitha has announced that the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule (MJP) Girls' School in Nasanakota, located in Ramagiri mandal of the Raptadu constituency, will be upgraded into a junior college.

During her visit on Sunday, accompanied by Raptadu MLA Paritala Sunitha, the Minister inspected classrooms, rest areas, computer laboratories, toilets, and other infrastructure, expressing satisfaction with the development of the school, which stands on a spacious 10-acre campus.

Minister Savitha said the coalition government led by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu is giving top priority to the education of Backward Classes (BCs). She added that funds had been sanctioned to complete construction of MJP schools that were left unfinished during the previous regime. The Nasanakota school, she noted, was built on land donated by MLA Sunitha in memory of her late husband, former Minister Paritala Ravi.

Highlighting the school's modern facilities, including air-conditioned classrooms and ceiling fans, the Minister remarked that it now stands on par with corporate educational institutions. Responding to requests from students and parents, the government will now offer Intermediate (Junior College) education at the school, enabling students to continue their studies locally.

Taking a swipe at the previous YSRCP government, Minister Savitha accused former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy of neglecting BC welfare, claiming that several nearly-completed MJP schools were abandoned under his rule. She credited former CM N.T. Rama Rao and successive TDP governments for establishing the state's network of residential schools and hostels.

Minister Savitha also praised MLA Paritala Sunitha for her continued efforts in promoting BC education, acknowledging her role in providing land and infrastructure support. The visit concluded with a warm reception from students, teachers, and local leaders, followed by the distribution of trunks and blankets to students.



Social activist Dr Chiranjivini Kumary passes away

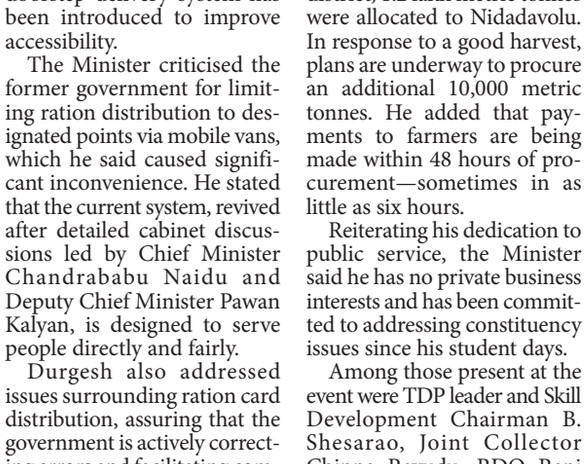
PNS ■ KAKINADA

Progressive writer, social activist, academician, and correspondent of Ideal Colleges, Dr P. Chiranjivini Kumary (94), passed away at her residence here on Sunday after a brief illness.

Dr Kumary was also the honorary president of Arasam, Sahrudaya Sahiti, and the Combined East Godavari District Writers' Association.

Noted poet Vedula Srirama Sarma, V. Somayajulu, Chinthapalli Subbarao, CPI leader Thatipaka Madhu, and several other prominent figures from the city have expressed their condolences on her passing.

Minister Subhash's gesture to paralysis patient



PNS ■ KAKINADA

Labour Minister Vasamsetti Subhash extended a helping hand to a paralysed man, Anusuru Veerraju, of Kundurusavaram village in K Gangavaram Mandal, by offering financial assistance of Rs 10,000.

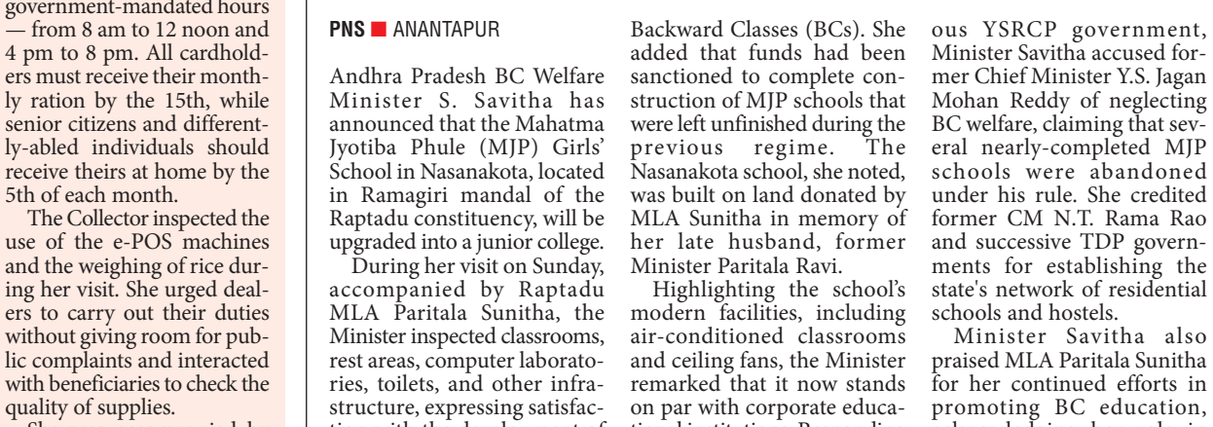
The Minister was visiting the village on Sunday to inaugurate the distribution of ration commodities through the local fair price shop when he was informed of Veerraju's dire condition. Veerraju has been bedridden due to paralysis and is struggling financially.

Moved by the family's plight, Minister Subhash immediately handed over Rs 10,000 from his personal funds to Janakamma, Veerraju's wife, and assured her of all possible support for her husband's recovery.

The Veerraju family and local alliance leaders expressed their gratitude to the Minister for his compassionate gesture.

Preparations underway for Masula Beach Fest

PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM



Minister for Excise and Mines, Kollu Ravindra, has directed officials of all departments to work in coordination to ensure the grand success of the forthcoming 'Masula Beach Festival'. The Minister chaired a review meeting with officials and political leaders to discuss the arrangements for the event, which is scheduled to be held from June 6 to 8 at Manginapudi Beach, near Machilipatnam.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister announced that various committees would be constituted to oversee different aspects of the festival, including publicity, invitations, venue management, sports, cultural programmes, and media coordination. Officers and political leaders would be part of these committees, which will function effectively until the completion of the festival.

He further stated that steps would soon be taken to form a permanent committee for the development of Manginapudi Beach. The festival will be formally launched on 5th June with the unveiling of a 100-foot national flag. A series of sports, cultural and entertainment programmes will follow on June 6, 7 and 8 as per schedule.

To facilitate public participation, special buses will be arranged from various areas. The Minister also said that a one-way traffic system would be implemented from Chilakalapudi to the beach to avoid congestion. Return traffic will be routed through villages such as Pothepalli, Gokavaram, and Pedapatnam to connect with National Highway 216.

To ensure uninterrupted power supply during the festival, a significant number of transformers have been installed and generators arranged as a backup. Minister Ravindra also announced that a rally themed on the Masula Beach Festival will be held on June 3 from Koneru Centre in Machilipatnam.

MEPMA PD Saibabu, SAAP officer Jhansy Lakshmi, and former municipal chairman M. Baba Prasad were among those present at the meeting.

PM will talk only if Trump gives him a hard time: Mahesh

Country witnessing 'fascist' type rule, says Mahesh

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



TPCC chief B. Mahesh Kumar Goud said the country is currently being governed in 'fascist' style in a manner contrary to democratic values.

"We strongly condemn the Centre's 'Operation Kagar.' We consider this to be a destructive act against peace and the Constitution. The Prime Minister, who did not listen when the Maoists said they were ready for talks, is ready to talk to terrorists if US President Trump gives a hard time," he said.

"Why is the Centre, which offered a ceasefire to Pakistan, committing 'genocide' without talking to the Maoists, who are our citizens? Governments should act according to the Constitution. This is the basic principle of democracy," he said.

Mahesh Kumar Goud and the AICC Secretary Bastar in-charge, SA Sampath Kumar, attended a round table meeting at the Sundarayya Vignana Kendram on Sunday, organised by the Peace Dialogue Committee regarding the recent encounters.

Mahesh said the Congress is built on the foundation of non-violence. "We condemn violence by anyone. In the past, Naxalism was born due to economic inequalities. During that time, Naxalism reduced feudal atrocities in villages to some extent. But it gradually went astray and became a platform for settling personal differences.

"At the same time, without considering peaceful solutions to eradicate Naxalism, the Centre is committing misdeeds through Operation Kagar, citing peace and security as an excuse. Through this operation, attempts are being made to facilitate the looting of the mineral wealth in forest areas by private companies. After coming to power, the BJP has been weakening constitutional institutions," he said.

He said that attempts are being made to gain political mileage by using religion and caste. Instead of implementing the promises made in 2014, the BJP is trying to remain in power by using religious sentiments.

He said there is a great need for secular forces to unite and that the time has come for people with democratic sentiments to unite. There is a need to teach a befitting lesson to the 'fascist' regime at the Centre, Mahesh added.

Inspector, head constable caught taking bribe



PNS ■ KURNOOL

A police inspector and a head constable from the Fourth Town Police Station in Kurnool were caught red-handed while accepting a bribe of Rs 80,000, according to Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) officials.

The bribe was allegedly demanded by Inspector B Madhusudhan Goud from one B Ravi Kumar, who was booked along with his brother in an attempt to murder case registered at the station.

Ravi Kumar approached the ACB and informed them that the Inspector had demanded Rs 80,000 to have the case withdrawn. Acting on the complaint, the ACB registered a case under 2/RCT-ACB-KUR/2025, under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2018.

On Sunday, ACB officials laid a trap and caught the Inspector accepting the bribe through the Head Constable. Both officials were taken into custody and will be produced before the ACB court on Monday, officials added.

Collector Vetri Selvi flags off 5K walkathon against drug use

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector K Vetri Selvi, accompanied by Denduluru MLA Chintamaneni Prabhakar, flagged off a 5K walkathon to raise awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse and illegal transportation.

The rally, held as part of the 'Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyan' and international drug abuse and anti-trafficking awareness initiatives, began at CRR College in Vatluru and concluded at the Indore Stadium. It was organised by the Department of Special Talents in coordination with the Police, Excise Department, Eagle Team, and the Medical and Health Department.

Over 600 participants, including officials from various departments, elected representatives, women, students, sportspersons, and NCC cadets, took part in the event. A drug control pledge was administered on the occasion, and both Collector Vetri Selvi and MLA Prabhakar signed a signature board pledging to work towards a tobacco-free society.

Addressing the gathering, Collector Vetri Selvi said the Central Government was taking concrete steps under the 'Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyan' to eliminate drug use and trafficking. She urged the public to report drug-related information to the State Toll-Free Number 1972 and the National Helpline 14446.

She highlighted the need for de-addiction centres and stressed that today's youth are jeopardising their futures by falling prey to substances such as cannabis. She called for widespread awareness campaigns in schools and colleges to educate young people about the dangers of drug use.

Ahead of the 'International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking' on June 26, the Collector instructed officials to conduct awareness drives throughout the month.

"Special vigilance must be maintained against the transport of drugs like ganja, and strict action should be taken against those involved. Public participation is crucial to making the district drug-free," she said.

MLA Chennamaneni Prabhakar stressed the need for widespread awareness and alleged that Andhra Pradesh had turned into a hub for ganja and narcotics during the YSRCP's tenure from 2019 to 2024.

Medals were presented to winners of the 5K walkathon. Among those present were Additional SP Nakka Suryachandra Rao, DRO V Visweswar Rao, Municipal Commissioner A Bhanupratap, and SC Corporation ED M Mukkanti.



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ACROSS THE STATES



Delhi minister flags off 'Sundays on Cycle' campaign

Delhi Education Minister Ashish Sood flagged off a special edition of the 'Sundays on Cycle' campaign as part of the ongoing Fit India Mission organised in Janakpuri on Sunday to mark World Bicycle Day. According to a statement by the education minister's office, the campaign, supported by the Directorate of Education, saw participation from school students, local youth, senior citizens and members of residents' welfare associations. Participants cycled together through the neighbourhood in Janakpuri in a show of support for fitness and community engagement. Addressing the gathering, Sood said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken several significant steps to strengthen the sports ecosystem in the country. Initiatives like the 'Fit India Movement' and 'Khelo India Movement' have become widely popular across India." He said that cycling offers more than physical health benefits. "This initiative is not just about cycling, it is a major step towards promoting fitness, community participation, and building a healthier India," he said.



Woman held for killing landlord in Odisha

A 57-year-old woman was arrested for allegedly setting her landlord on fire in Odisha's Ganjam district, a police officer said on Sunday. The woman, a widow allegedly killed the landlord, a retired revenue inspector, by setting him on fire on Thursday at Subash Nagar under Baidyanathpur police station limits here to grab the properties of the deceased, the police said. The deceased, identified as Harihar Sahu (72) and the accused Sudeshna Jena of Amrutul in Sorada were staying alone on the first and ground floor of the house respectively in the area. While a daughter of the accused was staying in Hyderabad, another daughter was staying at Ambapua of the city, they said. On Thursday early morning, the accused entered into the room of the deceased and poured kerosene and set him afire while he was sleeping, the police said, adding, that Sudeshna has free access to the deceased's room.



Passenger caught with 48 highly venomous snakes

An Indian who arrived at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport from Thailand was found to be carrying 48 highly venomous snakes and five turtles, an official said on Sunday. Customs officials intercepted the passenger on Saturday night after he got down from a flight from Bangkok, he said. During a search of his baggage, the Customs officials discovered 48 highly venomous viper snakes and five turtles, he said. A team from RAWW (Resqink Association for Wildlife Welfare) assisted in the identification and handling of these species, he said.The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has ordered that the reptiles be sent back to the country from where they had been brought, as per the provisions of the Wildlife Protection Act, the official added.

Mamata opposing Op Sindoor to appease minorities: Shah

PNS ■ KOLKATA



Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday launched a blistering attack on West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, accusing her of "stooping low" by opposing Operation Sindoor and the Wakf Amendment Bill to appease the Muslim vote bank, and alleged that the Murshidabad riots were "state-sponsored".

Addressing party leaders and workers in Kolkata, Shah gave a clarion call to uproot the TMC government from power in the 2026 assembly elections.

"The tenure of Mamata Banerjee as the CM will end in 2026. The BJP will uproot this TMC government in the next elections. To appease the Muslim vote bank, Mamata didi opposed Operation Sindoor. By doing so, she is insulting the mothers and sisters of this country. You have not only opposed the military operation, but you have also played with the lives of crores of mothers and sisters," Shah claimed.

The home minister said he has come to Bengal to "appeal to the women of the state and explain the value of sindoor (vermilion) to those who are against Operation Sindoor". Shah claimed the mothers and sisters of Bengal would teach Banerjee and her party a lesson in 2026 for opposing the military strike, launched in retaliation to the Pahalgam terror attack in April that left several tourists, including some from Bengal, dead.

Banerjee had recently accused the Centre of politicising Operation Sindoor for electoral gains.

Responding to the allegation, Shah said, "During previous regimes in which Mamata didi was also a minister, no steps were taken to deal firmly with terror attacks. But our PM Narendra Modi took firm measures against terror attacks. But Mamata didi has a problem with it."

For the sake of her vote bank, Mamata didi has "crossed all limits of stooping low", he alleged.

"Pakistan-backed terrorists killed our innocent citizens in front of their families after asking them about their religion. Operation Sindoor was carried out to punish these terrorists. The headquarters of the terrorists were destroyed by entering Pakistan. However, Mamata didi was pained over the death of these terrorists. She opposed Operation Sindoor by issuing a cheap political statement," he claimed.

Shah asserted that the Centre had launched a "deep strike 100 km into Pakistan, targeting terrorist headquarters. "Numerous terrorists were killed, but this seems to trouble Mamata ji. By doing so, you are not only opposed to the mission but also disregard the sentiments and emotions of the women of our country," he alleged.

Referring to the killing of tourists from the state in the Pahalgam attack, Shah claimed, "When tourists from Bengal were killed in the assault, Mamata didi remained silent, but now she is having problems with Operation Sindoor."

Govt ready to address all concerns: Shekhawat

Says Oppn will have opportunity to seek answers

PNS ■ JODHPUR



With opposition parties demanding a special Parliament session in light of Operation Sindoor, Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Sunday asserted that the government has nothing to hide and they will have ample opportunity to ask questions during the Monsoon Session, which is a few weeks away.

The BJP leader, however, expressed doubts about whether the opposition parties intended to seek answers and pointed out that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had spoken extensively in recent days on key national issues, including Operation Sindoor, that they have been raising.

The Congress on Sunday demanded the immediate convening of a special session of Parliament to discuss the military and foreign policy strategy in the wake of remarks by Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan.

The Congress also asked that the government take all parties and the nation into confidence and discuss India's defence preparedness and strategy after Operation Sindoor.

Speaking to the media on Sunday, Union Culture and Tourism Shekhawat pointed out that India's parliamentary system already has well-established procedures for members to raise issues in both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and seek answers.

"The Monsoon Session is about to start in the next 20-25 days, everyone will get an opportunity" to raise their issues, Shekhawat said.

He emphasised that the government is willing to resolve any confusion or concerns raised by the opposition and there is nothing to hide.

"In my view, the opposition should first decide what exactly they want to hear from the prime minister.

"If their intention is truly to seek answers, then over the past three days, the prime minister has already spoken in detail from three different parts of the country on the current state of the nation, Operation Sindoor, and all the key issues the opposition has been raising," Shekhawat said.

Delhi HC passes order protecting Sadhguru's personality rights

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The Delhi High Court has passed an order protecting the personality and publicity rights of Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, founder of Isha Foundation, and restrained various rogue websites and unknown entities from misusing his personality traits through the use of Artificial Intelligence in any medium or platform.

Justice Saurabh Banerjee passed an ex-parte interim order, saying the balance of convenience is tilting towards the grant of relief in favour of the plaintiff -- Sadhguru.

The court passed a 'dynamic+' injunction in favour of Sadhguru, a form of injunctive relief which is being granted by courts in similar matters in recent years, primarily to protect parties like the plaintiffs herein against rapidly developing online infringement platforms.

"Therefore, the position of law apparent therefrom, which has since developed with the passage of time, clearly reflects that the rights of a plaintiff, cannot be rendered otiose in this world of rapidly developing technology and for that, enforcement of intellectual property rights on any social platform, including but not limited to, the internet as well alongwith the real world, ought to be visible and effective," the court said.

Himachal to develop 77 new eco-tourism sites

PNS ■ SHIMLA

The Himachal Pradesh government will develop as many as 77 eco-tourism sites in different forest circles across the state under the Eco Tourism Policy-2024 in the next five years, an official said here on Sunday.

Eco-tourism means travelling to natural places without harming the environment.

The new eco-tourism policy 2024 has been specially made to support this idea, keeping both tourism and nature safe.

The goal is to attract tourists in a way that protects nature, creates local jobs, and helps the economy grow in a clean and sustainable manner, a statement issued here said.

Focus on the enemy, stop self-boasting: Kharge

Asks Modi to recuse himself from election campaign

PNS ■ BENGALURU



Commenting on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's public speeches after Operation Sindoor, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge urged him to "focus on the enemy instead of self-boasting" and to recuse himself from election campaign.

"I don't like reacting to all his (Modi's) statements," Kharge said while addressing reporters in Bengaluru. "But my only request to him is that those in power should sometimes keep their mouth shut."

Kharge questioned the Prime Minister's recent public statements and political activities, suggesting that Modi should temporarily step back from electoral campaigning. "Modi should recuse himself from elections and focus on the country.

He should understand whatever has happened in the country and speak," he remarked.

"I am saying without any political differences that he (Modi) should focus on the enemy instead of self-boasting that no one except for him would have done it.

Our full support is with the Armed Forces," he said.

Referring to ongoing developments linked to Operation Sindoor, Kharge noted that Congress delegations had travelled abroad for consultations. "Let them come back.

Till they return, it is not proper to be touring around and giving speeches," he said.

The opposition leader in the Rajya Sabha reiterated the Congress party's unwavering support for the Indian Armed Forces.

Expedite works under PMGSY in Wayanad

Priyanka urges Union Minister Chouhan

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM



Congress leader and Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has urged the Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan to expedite works to be taken up under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-IV (PMGSY-IV) in Wayanad district.

In a letter to the union minister of rural development, agriculture and farmers welfare, she said that out of the 331 habitations without all-weather road connectivity identified in Wayanad district, only proposals related to 64 habitations in Kalpetta block have been approved by the National Rural Infrastructure Development Agency (NRIDA).

She said all the 331 roads have already been approved by the Kerala State Rural Roads Development Agency.

The works related to a total of 267 habitations across Sulthan Bathery, Mananthavady and Panamaram blocks are still awaiting approval from the NRIDA on the online management, monitoring and accounting system (OMMAS), she said in the letter.

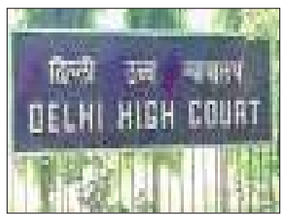
"These blocks have significant tribal population.

The PMGSY guidelines stipulate that tribal villages in aspirational blocks will be prioritized," the letter said, adding the works should be given approval and taken up at the earliest.

Vadra also said she has been informed that 25 unconnected habitations have been incorrectly categorized as connected on the OMMAS.

Armed forces united by uniform not divided by religion: HC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The Delhi High Court has upheld the termination of services of a Christian army officer over his consistent refusal to fully participate in the weekly regimental religious parades and said the armed forces were united by their uniform rather than being divided by their religion.

A bench of Justices Navin Chawla and Shalinder Kaur rejected the petition by the Indian Army Lieutenant, who served as a 'Troop Leader' of a squadron, against the termination order passed on March 3, 2021, that dismissed him from the Indian Army without pension and gratuity.

The court opined that the petitioner kept his religion above the lawful command from his superior, and disobedience was an offence under the Army Act.

FISH THROWN AT GOVT OFFICIAL

Maha minister Rane acquitted in 2017 case

PNS ■ MUMBAI



A court in Maharashtra's Sindhudurg has acquitted BJP minister Nitesh Rane and 30 others in a 2017 case in which he was accused of throwing fish at a government official as well as abusing and threatening him.

As per the prosecution, Rane and around 100 others, on July 6 that year entered the Malvan office of assistant commissioner in the fisheries department Pradeep Vast to discuss issues related to the sector, abused him and then threw mackerel, which hit the latter on the cheek. Rane and others also allegedly threatened to burn fishing boats.

Rane and others were booked at the time under Indian Penal Code sections 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), 341 (wrongful restraint), 332 (voluntarily causing hurt to deter public servant from his duty), 141 (unlawful assembly), 143 (being a member of an unlawful assembly), 147 (rioting), 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace), and 506 (criminal intimidation).

In its order of May 21, details of which were made available on Sunday, the court of additional sessions judge (Sindhudurg) mentioned that Vast in his testimony did not state that Rane threw mackerel at him.

Delhi CM pledges to make Yamuna as clean and beautiful

PNS ■ HARIDWAR

TAKES A HOLY DIP IN THE RIVER GANGA



Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, who is on a short trip to Uttarakhand after completing 100 days in office, on Sunday took a dip in river Ganga at Haridwar's Har Ki Pauri ghat.

Gupta sought Maa Ganga's blessings to make Yamuna river clean and also prayed for the prosperity of the country and the state.

The Delhi Chief Minister was accompanied by her husband Manish Gupta and son Nikunj. After taking a dip in the river, Gupta performed Ganga Puja at Brahmakund.

While talking to reporters, Gupta said after completion of 100 days of BJP-led Delhi Government, she has come to devbhoomi Haridwar.

"Today, while paying my obeisance to Maa Ganga, I prayed for the development and prosperity of our country and also of Delhi," she said.

Gupta said that wants to make Yamuna as clean and beautiful as Ganga. "May we get the blessings of Maa Ganga to make Yamuna as clean and beautiful as Ganga."

When asked about her future plans as the Delhi CM, she said her goal is to move forward in the direction of development and do better work for the city.

Gupta also attended the inauguration program of Sadhvi Ritambhara's newly built ashram 'Ganga Vatsalya' in Haridwar where she was warmly welcomed by the saint community and devotees.

Gupta also met Acharya Mahamandaleshwar Swami Avdheshanand Giri, Peethadheeshwar of Juna Akhara and took his blessings.

According to sources, the CM will likely visit Kedarnath on Monday.

The BJP government in Delhi led by Gupta completed 100 days in power on Friday. The BJP won the Assembly polls held in February this year, forming the government in Delhi after 27 years.

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Editor's TAKE

Voices from the sidelines in the mainstream

Booker prize for 'Heart Lamp' is a defining moment for India's vernacular literature which has been on sidelines for long

In a watershed moment for Indian regional literature, 'Heart Lamp,' a short story collection by Banu Mushtaq, translated into English by Deepa Bhasthi, has won the 2025 International Booker Prize. This is the first time a Kannada literary work has received this prestigious honour, making it not only a personal triumph for the author and translator but also a landmark moment for Indian vernacular literature on the global stage. 'Heart Lamp' is a piercing and poetic collection that centres on the lives of women navigating the grip of patriarchy. The stories are deeply rooted in the spirit of the Bandaya Sahitya movement — a literary rebellion that began in the 1970s in Karnataka. The Bandaya movement, meaning "rebellion literature," was born out of a fierce resistance to caste oppression, social injustice, and gender discrimination. It gave rise to a generation of writers and activists who used literature as a tool to confront the brutalities of the everyday, particularly those experienced by Dalits, women, and the working class.

Mushtaq's stories continue that legacy with boldness and empathy. They do not seek to flatter or pacify; they seek to reveal. The women in her stories are not merely victims — they are witnesses, rebels, and survivors. Through Bhasthi's nuanced and faithful translation, these voices have transcended linguistic boundaries and reached a global audience without losing the cultural texture that gives them life.

The International Booker Prize, one of the most esteemed literary awards in the world, is awarded annually for the best work of translated fiction published in the UK or Ireland. With a prize of £50,000, split equally between the author and the translator, it recognises not just storytelling, but also the essential art of translation — the bridge that carries one culture into the soul of another. Heart Lamp's win is a recognition of the power of collaboration and the importance of making regional voices legible and resonant to the world.

Historically, the global literary stage has mostly spotlighted Indian writers who write in English. While these voices have undeniably contributed to India's literary identity abroad, they have also, unintentionally, overshadowed the abundance of storytelling happening in Indian vernacular languages. With scores of scheduled languages and hundreds of dialects, India possesses an incredibly rich literary heritage. Yet, much of it remains under-translated, under-promoted, and under-read. This disparity has created a kind of cultural silence around the lives, struggles, and imaginations of millions who speak and think in languages other than English.

The recognition of Heart Lamp signals a necessary shift. It invites international publishers, literary institutions, and readers to turn their gaze toward the immense, untapped potential of regional Indian literature. More importantly, it affirms the belief that stories rooted in local realities — whether of gender inequality in rural Karnataka or caste dynamics in a small town — have universal resonance when told with honesty and craft.

The all-party voice against terrorism

Across party lines, ideologies, and regional divides, the all-party delegation stood not as politicians but as patriots, sending a clear and powerful message to the world: when it comes to confronting terror, India speaks in one voice



In the cacophony of India's bustling democracy — where debates are heated, elections are passionately fought, and ideological lines run deep — it's easy to believe that political discord defines our national character. Yet, beneath this noisy surface lies a quieter, more powerful truth: when the sovereignty and safety of the nation are threatened, Indians — across party lines — stand as one. The recent formation and international engagement of an all-party parliamentary delegation, following the horrific Pahalgam terrorist ambush and the resolute military response in Operation Sindhoor, stands as a poignant and necessary reminder that in the battle against terrorism, unity is not an option — it is a national imperative.

The terrorist strike in Pahalgam was not just another act of senseless violence; it was an attack on the soul of India. When extremists target not only human lives but also the spirit of democracy, the very idea of India comes under siege. The appropriate response to such horror cannot be drawn along partisan lines; it must emerge from a shared national conscience. Operation Sindhoor, a swift and courageous military action against cross-border terrorist elements, demonstrated the Government's readiness to act decisively. But it was what came afterward — the dispatch of an all-party delegation to take India's voice to the global stage — that truly reflected a maturing democratic ethos.

This delegation, led by BJP MP Baijayant Jay Panda and comprising representatives from the Congress, DMK, TMC, and other parties, travelled to Bahrain and the United States. They met high-ranking officials, including Bahrain's Deputy Prime Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, to present a united case against international terror networks. In their diplomatic engagements, the delegation did more than just speak; they represented a rare and powerful display of India's multiparty consensus.

The symbolism was profound. When the world sees India's political rivals — who often spar vociferously in Parliament — standing side by side to address a global issue, it takes notice. This wasn't a Government delegation in the narrow sense — it was an Indian delegation. The message was clear: terrorism is not a political issue to be leveraged for electoral gain, but a shared threat that requires collective resolve.

That message was underscored by Congress MP Dr. Shashi Tharoor in Washington, D.C., where he made a pointed and statesmanlike observation. He clarified that the delegation did not represent just the ruling Government but the Indian people as a whole. He openly acknowledged that while Operation Sindhoor was not flawless, its necessity and purpose transcended political fault lines. His words captured the essence of true bipartisanship — not the denial of differences, but the prioritisation of national interest above all else.



AMAL CHANDRA

This maturity in tone and intent marked a significant shift in our national dialogue. For too long, issues of national security have been fodder for political mudslinging. But terrorism is not saffron, green, or red — it is a dark and indiscriminate force. And to fight it effectively, we need all the democratic colors of India aligned.

The significance of this delegation goes beyond symbolism. The world today is interconnected, and terrorism is a transnational beast. Its networks operate across continents, its financing moves through shadowy channels, and its propaganda infects minds across cyberspace. No single party, no matter how strong, can confront this alone. Nor can a single Government shoulder this burden in isolation. India's voice is strongest on the global stage when it emerges from a united Parliament, not just a ruling coalition.

BJP MP Daggubati Purandeswari's comments before the delegation's visit to Europe reflected this sentiment. She reiterated India's zero-tolerance stance toward terrorism, not in the tone of a partisan leader seeking credit, but as a national representative. Her words were devoid of political jabs and rooted in conviction. That's the kind of leadership India needs — firm, clear, and unifying.

India's strength as a democracy is built on its diversity: linguistic, cultural, religious, and political. That we continue to function — despite these complexities — is a tribute to our institutional resilience. But moments of national crisis demand more than functionality; they demand cohesion. From the trauma of the 26/11 attacks to Pulwama and now Pahalgam, we've seen glimpses of this unity. We now need to make it a habit, not just a reflex. Critics often dismiss all-party delegations as symbolic or ineffectual. True, they may not pass binding resolutions or sign treaties. But in international diplomacy, symbols matter. They shape perception, and perception shapes outcomes. When the world sees India united — not fractured — it strengthens our moral argument, elevates our credibility, and earns the respect of allies and adversaries alike.

This unity also counters dangerous narratives. By bringing together MPs of different faiths, regions, and ideologies — be it a Muslim Congress leader, a Sikh BJP representative, or a southern regional party figure — the delegation visibly refuted the claim that India's fight against terrorism is politically or communally driven. It underscored a critical truth: India's fight is not against any religion or community, but against those who threaten democracy and peace through violence.

However, the bipartisan spirit must not remain confined to overseas missions or emerge only during tragedy. It needs to be woven into the fabric of our domestic political culture. Imagine a standing National Security Council that includes leaders from both the Government and opposition. Picture regular all-party briefings on counterterrorism, cybersecurity, and intelligence reforms. These aren't utopian dreams — they're pragmatic steps toward institutionalising cooperation in matters of national interest.

Bipartisanship, importantly, does not mean the end of criticism. On the contrary, constructive critique strengthens democracy. But the ability to differentiate between electoral contests and existential threats is what defines a mature nation. When terrorism strikes, there is no ruling party or opposition — there is only India. And in those moments, the tricolour must fly higher than any party banner.

India is fortunate to possess a formidable defence establishment, skilled intelligence agencies, and a diplomatic corps that punches above its weight. But these pillars of national strength can only reach their full potential when supported by a united political will. The all-party delegation, in its spirit and substance, offers a hopeful glimpse of what that political will can look like when freed from petty rivalry. As the delegation concludes its travels, it would be a mistake to file away this moment as a brief detour from routine politics. The unity it represents must endure. Because terrorism is not a passing storm — it is a persistent threat. And our response must be equally enduring. Let it be a call to action. A reminder that when the stakes are high, our divisions can — and must-give way to a deeper allegiance: not to party, not to ideology, but to the Republic. If we can stand together abroad, we can surely listen better at home. And if we can do that, we will not only defend the idea of India — we will elevate it.

(The writer is an author, political analyst and columnist. Views expressed are personal)

PIC TALK



A man pulls his rickshaw as he wades through a waterlogged road after heavy rainfall, in Guwahati. PTI

From Sile- ce to Stre- gth: Bihar's me- strual health revolutio-

SECOND Opinion

For too long, a girl's period was something she had to hide. Whispers in classrooms. Embarrassed glances at homes. Silence where there should have been support.

But in Bihar today, that silence is breaking — and what's taking its place is powerful. Menstrual hygiene, once tucked away at the fringes of public policy and social conversation, is now entering our schools, community halls, Government offices, and most importantly, our homes. We're seeing a cultural shift — one that doesn't just improve access to pads or sanitation but fundamentally changes how we treat our girls and women.

This change matters. Because when girls can manage their periods with dignity, they stay in school. When women have access to proper hygiene, they show up fully — to work, to lead, to live. When communities understand menstruation without shame, the ripple effects reach education, health, gender equality, and ultimately, the kind of society we want to build. This is more than just hygiene. It's about justice. Progress is visible.



BANDANA PREYASHI

Under the Govt. of India's Menstrual Hygiene Scheme (MHS), and its dedicated implementation by Govt. of Bihar departments, the number of young women using hygienic methods in Bihar has nearly doubled in recent years — from just 31per cent (NFHS-4) to almost 59per cent (NFHS-5).

This is better compared to the national average improvement from 57.6per cent to 77.3per cent. That's not a statistic — it's a sign of our collective effort: from frontline ASHA workers and teachers to mothers, fathers, and girls themselves. But let's be clear: we are not done.

A recent Sulabh Sanitation Mission study (2023-24) in Khagaria and Katihar reveals the harder truth — more than half the women surveyed lacked adequate menstrual materials during their last cycle, and 62per cent had no safe place to dispose of them. These numbers speak not only to a gap in services but to something deeper: a lack of choice, a lack of dignity, a lack of voice. That's why Bihar's Menstrual Health Management Road Map (2022-25) isn't just another policy. It's a promise — a coordinated, cross-sector commitment to treat menstrual health not as a side issue, but as central to our vision of an equitable Bihar. This means health departments working with education, rural development teaming up with sanitation, and everyone — from Government officials to local leaders — treating menstrual dignity as a priority, not an afterthought.

Real change is happening at the ground level. With UNICEF's support, we've introduced Saheli Kaksh — safe spaces in schools where girls can rest, change, and manage their periods with comfort and confidence.

Over 50 Government schools in Araria and Purnia now host these rooms, and more are on the way. But safe spaces must go beyond brick and mortar — they must live in the attitudes of teachers, classmates, and community leaders. We're also aligning existing schemes like the Mukhyamantri Kanya Utthan Yojana and RKSK with our menstrual health goals. These programs have potential — but only if last-mile delivery becomes more accountable and more responsive. The gap between policy and people must close. And let's not forget this isn't just a "women's issue." Men and boys, fathers and brothers, teachers and panchayat leaders — every voice matters. When they step up, listen, and support, they help dismantle shame and build trust. That's what inclusion looks like. We must ensure that every Anganwadi has staff trained to support adolescent girls, that every health worker knows how to speak about menstruation with empathy and confidence, and that every school treats periods as a part of life, not a reason to leave class. The roadmap shall evolve. The programs shall deliver. And we shall keep listening to the girls whose lives we seek to change. Because this isn't just about managing a biological process. It's about unlocking potential, ensuring equality, and fighting for a future where no girl is held back by something as natural as her period.

(The writer is Managing Director at Women and Child Development Corporation and Margaret Gwada, Chief of UNICEF Bihar Field Office. Views expressed are personal)

Letters to the Editor

Seized vehicles must be taken care of

Through your esteemed newspaper, I wish to draw urgent attention to the deteriorating condition of seized vehicles held by various departments, including the police, excise, forest, and transport authorities.These vehicles are often abandoned in open areas, left exposed to harsh weather conditions such as sun and rain.

Over time, they become severely damaged due to prolonged neglect and inactivity. This leads to a sharp decline in their market value and usability.Moreover, prolonged custody delays lead to mounting motor vehicle taxes, placing undue financial strain on vehicle owners and contributing to revenue losses for the Government.It is imperative that the concerned departments act swiftly.

Either the vehicles should be released promptly to their rightful owners or auctioned off, or at the very least, stored in protected spaces to prevent further damage. Besides, it is such a waste of national resources and lead to environmental hazard as these vehicles find their place in the junkyards and scrapped before their age

Proper maintenance and timely decisions will serve both public justice and financial prudence.I sincerely hope this long-standing issue is addressed with the seriousness it deserves.

SARAT CHANDRA BEHERA | BHUVNESHWAR

World 'No Tobacco Day'

Every year, May 31, World No Tobacco Day, gives us a chance to fight this fire. This day is not just a date but a warning — a mirror reflecting our negligence, silence, and habits. Tobacco is no style statement; it's a slow poison that weakens the thread of life with every puff and every pouch. It not only hollows out the user but also engulfs their family, society, and the nation's economy. According to the World Health Organisation's (WHO) 2024 report, tobacco claims over 8 million lives annually, including 1.3 million victims of second-hand smoke. In India, the crisis is even graver. Data from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in 2023 reveals that 1.35 million people in India die prematurely each year due to tobacco-related diseases — cancer, heart disease, lung ailments — with 70% of these deaths occurring between the ages of 30 and 69, when a person is most vital to their family. The economic toll is equally staggering, with over ₹1.5 lakh crore lost annually to healthcare costs, treatment, and lost productivity. Tobacco's impact isn't limited to the body; it emotionally and financially devastates families. A single cigarette or gutkha pouch may cost a few rupees, but its true price is paid in lakhs for treatment, shattered dreams, and broken relationships.

RK JAIN ARIJEET | BARWANI

Crucial Decade for American Power

The US under Trump is at a peak of hubris, issuing diktats at will. Historically, empires and superpowers often decline when they overextend themselves and currently the US perceives an overconfidence in its political, economic, or ideological dominance.

It faces deep political polarisation, with growing distrust in institutions, electoral legitimacy, and media. An institutional paralysis or authoritarian drift could weaken governance and stability. Majoritarian hubris provokes backlash to destabilise the system.

Past empires declined as they failed to adapt. The U.S. is not immune, but its flexible institutions, innovation capacity, and geographic advantages can delay decline.But unchecked arrogance in power could hasten a relative decline in influence. The next decade will be critical.

The U.S., under Trump, exhibits classic signs of imperial overreach — majoritarian hubris, institutional distrust, and political polarisation. History warns that empires fall when arrogance blinds them to change. While America's flexible institutions and innovation may delay decline, unchecked overconfidence could erode global influence. The coming decade will determine whether the U.S. adapts to preserve its leadership or succumbs to the very forces that have undone great powers before it.

R NARAYANAN | MUMBAI

CHINA HAS ALREADY WON THE WORLD WITHOUT A WAR

The article, China's warfare without war (30.05.25) deals with one part of the subject. Every country has its territorial ambitions and dreams. The US wants Panama, Greenland and even Canada to be its part. China wants Taiwan back. India has its dream of Akand Bharath. Pak has its dream about Kashmir. Dreaming is a pleasure. But working to make dreams come true is a task to accomplish.

China has territorial claims with many countries. So it has built a strong army capable of facing any sort of threat from any quarters. Still it is not in a hurry to win territories. But it is vigorously pursuing its task of winning markets first.

It has achieved it to a greater extent. Even the flags Americans have in their hands to celebrate their independence day is made in China. It is not that the US cannot make them in their country. But not at the cost China can offer. China made even the American manufacturing giants make their products in China. India is importing above 70 per cent of active pharmaceutical Ingredients from Chima. Even dolls are imported from China.

India is bestowed with abundant natural resources and manpower as in the case of China. But India is looking at its huge population as a burden whereas China is using it as s precious resource. Chiana meticulously plans its activities even taking climate concerns into account.

India is prepared to even turn predatory in destroying forests to open mines for exploitation by private players. But China, in spite of having rich iron ore mines, buys it from India. Its main agenda is to develope its nation. India is overworking to develope a small affluent section. With such plans and national spirit China has already won the world. Its warfare without war is unimitable by any country that is subjugated by the power of capital.

AG RAJMOHAN | ANANTAPUR

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

The Pioneer
VIJAYAWADA | MONDAY | JUNE 2, 2025

Bengaluru deluges spark urgent call for urban resilience

The unprecedented downpour overwhelmed the city's outdated stormwater infrastructure. The chaos exposed not only the city's fragile urban planning but also the wider ecological risks of climate change, as rising global temperatures amplify extreme weather events

FIRST Column



A record rainfall of 130 mm in 12 hours from the 18th May evening till the dawn of 19th May led to the flooding of houses, overflowing of city lakes, streets and underpasses being reduced to waterways, flyovers remaining closed for traffic for several hours, and halting public bus services in many parts of the city etc. Essential travels in the city remained disrupted for a large part of 19th May. Branches of trees have fallen and in some cases, the whole tree has been uprooted. Power outage in the city made matters worse and BESCOM received 33,000 calls in this period for restoration of power.

More than 20 lakes in Bengaluru have overflown adding further misery to the citizens. It was the second-highest rainfall in a single day in a decade and BBMP found that things had gone out of hand. Agencies do their best to mitigate the misery of the people. The worst part of the story was that the two persons were electrocuted while trying to connect power to run the motors to drain out water from the houses and another human death also took place in the floods. State disaster response force deployed boats to evacuate people from flooded locations.

While Bengaluru's stormwater drains have a capacity of 70 mm of rain in 24 hours, the rain gauges located at Kengeri, Vaderhalli, Chikkabanavara, Chowdeshwarinagar and Kempegowda wards registered 132 mm, 131 mm, 127 mm, 104 mm, and 103 mm of rains in 12 hours' period respectively. Other areas like Kormangala, Baswangudi, Marthahalli, and HAL Airport also recorded more than 90 mm of rain. When the rains exceed the capacity of stormwater drains, flooding the streets and houses is inevitable. Flooding was not limited to low-lying areas alone but the areas at higher altitudinal locations like Koramangala, BTM, Jayanagar etc were also flooded.



BK SINGH

India's vaunted tech capital was paralysed as Manyata Tech Park, White Field and Electronic City tech companies also faced the brunt. Manyata Tech Park has been flooding in routine rains too. It was flooded eight months ago, flooded last week and experienced very heavy flooding following the 19th May rains. Bengaluru tech giants and real estate groups must rethink their urban design especially in and around Manyata.

It is located squarely in Hebbal Nagwara Valley, just below Nagwara and Rachenhalli lakes and the overflow of these lakes flows through the tech park to reach downstream lakes like Kalkere. The drains through Manyata Teck Park carry treated and untreated water, which gets mixed during flooding. Mixing of toilet water with rainwater is not only confined to the tech park area but is also a characteristic of all flooded lands in urban areas.

Urban centres including Bengaluru are increasingly paved over with concrete and built surfaces, and rainfall no longer seeps/ percolates into the soil and rushes in overloaded drains. Increasing the size and quantity of flow in the drains through Manyata will not be a proper and valid solution, as the downstream areas will face heavier flooding. 300 acres Manyata campus must be provided with a natural solution to capture rainwater during heavy floods. Water must be allowed to infiltrate the ground by minimising the pavements and concrete.

Bioswales comprising vegetation, mulch, biorentation soil, gravel and perforated pipes can treat the water and can also cut the velocity of the flow of water thereby increasing the seepage of water in the soil and improving underground recharge. The commercial buildings should have green roofs and walls, which can reduce the runoff on the ground and support underground recharge. Manyata campus has the potential to handle large volumes of flood water efficiently, if the suggestions are kept in mind.

The main reason for the heavy downpour is the convergence of two low-pressure systems. It also brought thunderstorms on 18th and 19th May. As the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is reaching a dangerous level of nearly 425 ppm, from 350 ppm in the pre-industrial period, the planet is continuously warming.

> INDIA'S VAUNTED TECH CAPITAL WAS PARALYSED AS MANYATA TECH PARK, WHITE FIELD AND ELECTRONIC CITY TECH COMPANIES ALSO FACED THE BRUNT. MANYATA TECH PARK HAS BEEN FLOODING IN ROUTINE RAINS TOO. IT WAS FLOODED EIGHT MONTHS AGO, FLOODED LAST WEEK AND EXPERIENCED VERY HEAVY FLOODING FOLLOWING THE 19TH MAY RAINS

The record of the warmest year 2023 was shattered in 2024, and 2025 is on course to shatter even this record. Despite Scientists cautioning against fossil fuel burning, world leaders have not shown any respect for Science and increasing the dependency on the consumption of fossil fuel as energy to boost growth.

This results in continuous warming of the planet. Sea surface temperature is rising and a lot of moisture is pumped into the atmosphere through an increased rate of evaporation. The accumulation of relatively more moisture in the cloud formation is inevitable and whenever temperature, pressure and wind conditions are favourable, heavy downpour occurs.

Further, when there are two low-pressure systems conversing, the downpour is even more intense. The permanent solution is to cut the consumption of fossil fuels and transition away towards renewable sources of energy. Renewable energy in undeveloped and developing countries is dependent upon the finance and technology from the US, other Western countries and China. UNCCC's annual climate conference at Baku, Azerbaijan has failed to address the issue and has brought a crack between the global north and global south. US President Trump has repeatedly abandoned the Paris Climate Accord, and other developed nations are also not prepared to finance and transfer technology to the global south. As a result, the world is not hopeful of containing the warming of the planet within 1.5 degrees Celsius.

We are left to face the warming world and its consequences like heavy downpours causing flooding, long dry spells followed by drought etc. disrupting our lives and livelihood.

In a situation when countries have to deal with increasing floods and droughts, the civic infrastructures would need modifications. The stormwater drains, which are designed to fully carry the flood water from incessant rainfall of 50 to 70 mm in 24 hours, will have to be remodelled for rains up to 200 mm in 24 hours. The natural drainage pattern and setting of the area should not be altered as far as possible.

Urban centres, where there is hardly any ground without concrete and pavements, must reorient themselves and form layouts where more areas are open for growing vegetation and infiltration of water in the soil. Underground structures/ basements especially in low-lying areas can be very dangerous for living and commercial activities. The entry and exit in such cases are often narrow and can pose a danger during emergency evacuation. Flood water can gush in and can cause human casualties.

At the most, basements should be earmarked for water storage and for the storage of serviceable and unserviceable articles. We should not forget the drowning of students in an IIT coaching centre, in Delhi during one such flooding last year. The wetlands in urban areas, stormwater drains and lakes must be kept free from encroachments. The green space in urban areas is quite important for countering the heat generated by concrete structures.

The choice of species for planting urban landscapes should be smart and shallow-rooted trees like Gulmohr, Peltoforum, rain trees etc. should not be grown. In the stormy weather and with incessant rainfalls, trees/ branches fall off leading to power outages and disruption of traffic. We should also not cover all around the base of the trees with concrete. Such trees do not get adequate seepage water from rainfalls are weak and malformed and are prone to getting uprooted in heavy winds.

(The writer is retired Principal Chief Conservator of Forests — Head of Forest Force — Karnataka. Views expressed are personal)

A Soldier's Plea for Real-Time Patriotism, Not Posthumous Applause



Jai Hind! Today, I write to you not as a critic, nor as a cynic — not even as a disappointed fan — but as someone who has lived to be a so-called hero in real life and in real life as well. One in olive green, where orders are followed without question and sacrifice is routine. The other is under studio lights, where scripts replace strategy and stories stir the soul. My journey, from battlefields to film sets, has shaped me into a storyteller, a voice that speaks today not just from experience, but also for a purpose & cause — as an international TEDx speaker.

I am Major (Dr) Mohommed Ali Shah (Veteran). I have commanded troops as a Major in the Indian Army, and I have performed on screen in National award-winning films like 'Haider', 'Bajrangi Bhaijaan', 'The Tashkent Files', 'Agent Vinod', 'Yaara', 'Avrodh' aagdesh, Vodka Diaries, Majaz — Ae Ghame dil kya karun and many more. My heart has always stood at this strange, beautiful intersection — between the real and the reel, between uniformed action and cinematic expression. It is from that very space that I write to you today — with both understanding and anguish.



MOHOMMED ALI SHAH

Operation Sindoor was not just a military triumph — it was a moment steeped in symbolism. Even the name was chosen with cinematic flair and reverence. Sindoor — evoking images of sacrifice, soil, blood, and valour. It could easily be the title of a powerful film. And yet, what followed has been disheartening silence from those who have long worn the uniform on-screen and draped the tricolour in their reels.

The film fraternity, the cricketing heroes, the influencers — those whose voices echo far and wide — have not spoken a word as yet and it is very disheartening, to say the least.

We've seen the outpouring of support when a film trailer is launched, or when a cricketer scores a century. We've seen hashtags trend for birthdays and box office milestones. So why does a real victory — Operation Sindoor — go unnoticed by you so-called stars & celebrities?

And yes — there have been a couple of murmurs. A stray comment here, a passing tweet there. A few individuals, almost cautiously, have begun to say something — but where is the thunderous, united voice? Where is that collective heartbeat of the industry that roars when a film releases or when an award is won? What we're hearing right now feels like whispers in a storm — barely audible, quickly forgotten. We're not asking for slogans.

We're not asking for parades. Just presence. Just one powerful, unmissable voice that tells every soldier returning home: You are seen. You are celebrated. You are our country's real heroes.

And here's what hurts a little more: Right now, when the wounds are fresh when our jawans are still returning from the line of fire, there is silence. But give it a few months, and someone somewhere in the industry will write a gripping script. A stellar cast will be signed. The promotional drums will beat, and the box office will roar. It'll be called Sindoor: The Untold Story or something equally poetic. And suddenly, everyone will remember.

But that's not fair, is it? To ignore the sentiment now, and cash in on it later. Patriotism isn't a plot device — it's a pulse. And it deserves presence in real-time, not just posthumous applause. I say this not with bitterness, but with a quiet ache. Because I know how closely our worlds are tied. The soldier and the storyteller. The player and the patriot. The screen and the sky. Not long ago, I wrote an open letter addressed to terrorists — challenging them with nothing but words, courage, and conviction. That letter went viral. Why? Because I spoke of Hindu-Muslim unity. Because I spoke not from a political platform, but from the heart of a soldier who loves his country — whole and undivided. I'm trying, in my small way, to bring sanity where there is noise, and hope where there is fear.

But I am just a Major — not a General. I am a passionate artist — not a celebrated star. My voice is small, and yet I try to make it count. I do not have millions hanging on to my every word — but you do. And that's exactly why your silence resounds so deeply. I have had the honour of safeguarding our National frontiers in the difficult terrains of J&K & the North East part of India.

I along with my brave colleagues have risked our lives on several occasions so that you all are safe & peaceful. We have lived at the border in bunkers barely a few meters away from the Pakistani post, where grenades were thrown at us with a frequency one never forgets. In those bunkers, we didn't sleep — we waited. For the next grenade. For the next breath. For dawn. We learnt to embrace uncertainty, to celebrate survival, and to carry on without applause and yes we did give a befitting reply to the enemy.

I have witnessed life and death not through the lens of a camera, but through the fog of war. I have invaded terrorist hideouts not only on screen — but in actual counter-insurgency operations. That is not fiction. That is my memory.

And yet, I've also stood on a film set, correcting an actor's insignia out of reflex — not because I was acting, but because I had worn the original with pride and responsibility. That's how blurred the lines are for someone like me. And that's why I feel this silence so deeply.

To our respected cons like Amitabh Bachchan, Shah Rukh Khan, Akshay Kumar, M.S. Dhoni, Virat Kohli, Ranveer Singh, and Deepika Padukone — you have inspired millions with your talent, skill and charm. You've united this country in stadiums and cinemas alike. Your voice, even in a whisper, has the power to move a nation. If Pakistani actors could find the courage to post messages praising their army, despite the consequences they may face, then what is stopping us — citizens of a free and proud nation — from standing by our own?

So all I ask from you with an open heart: will you speak up when real-life heroes return from real — life missions after putting their lives in danger for you? This is not a boycott call. This is not outrage. This is an invitation — to remember that your influence reaches hearts the way even battle cries sometimes cannot. A post. A word. A gesture of respect — can go a long way in reminding the soldier that his courage is not invisible, not unacknowledged. You do not have to raise slogans. You just have to raise awareness.

(The writer is an Arny veteran and a renowned TedX speaker. He has also an actor. Views expressed are personal)

The Silent Architect: How geology shapes every structure we build

When we look at the marvels of modern construction — soaring skyscrapers, sprawling industries, intricate networks of highway and railway bridges and embankments, airports, and energy infrastructure — it is obvious to focus on the visible achievements.

Yet, beneath every asset we build, there lies an often complex and critical partner: the ground itself. The science, mechanics and behaviour of soils and geology profoundly shape what, where, and how we build.

Without a deep and artful understanding of the ground beneath us, even the most ambitious construction projects can falter, while those that respect the principles through science, technology and sound engineering stand the test of time. Every infrastructure development project, whether it is a bridge, a tunnel, a power plant, or a logistics hub, begins with a simple but fundamental question: what lies beneath? This question is far from simple. The nature of the soil and rock at a site determines not only the type of foundation required, but also the feasibility, cost, and long-term safety of the entire structure. In some locations, solid bedrock offers a stable base for heavy loads, while in others, weak or waterlogged soils demand sophisticated engineering solutions to prevent settlement or collapse. The assessment of terrain and stability is not just a matter of routine; it is the first and most vital step in any construction process.



SOMNATH BISWAS

Geology is also very important for finding risks and lowering them. The Earth is not a static entity; it is shaped by forces that can be both gradual and catastrophic. Earthquakes, landslides, subsidence, hydraulic flows, and flooding are all rooted in the geological history of a region. A thorough geological survey can reveal hidden faults, ancient landslide zones, or underground cavities that might otherwise go unnoticed until disaster strikes. By understanding these risks in advance, engineers can design resilient structures, incorporating features such as flexible foundations, retaining walls, or drainage systems to safeguard lives and investments.

The influence of geology extends beyond safety and stability; it also guides the selection of materials. The properties of local soils and rocks determine the suitability of aggregates for concrete, the durability of construction stone, and even the availability of groundwater for industrial use. In regions where high-quality materials are scarce, engineers may need to import resources from elsewhere, increasing costs and environmental impact. Conversely, a favourable geological setting can make a project more economical and sustainable. Engineering relies on a suite of advanced techniques to investigate the ground beneath our feet. Seismic surveys, movement monitoring, ground — penetrating radar, borehole sampling, and laboratory testing provide detailed information about subsurface conditions. This data is essential for designing safe and efficient structures. In some cases, engineers may need to stabilise soft soils with grouting or reinforcement or to divert groundwater to prevent flooding during excavation.

Urban environments present their unique geological challenges. Over centuries, cities accumulate layers of artificial ground — debris, ash, construction waste, and fill material that become part of the urban geology. This manufactured ground can be unpredictable, containing everything from old foundations to buried utilities and even archaeological remains. Building in these areas needs careful study and sometimes creative engineering to make sure everything stays safe and stable. In cities like Manchester or Rome, the legacy of past generations literally forms the ground on which new development must stand.

The relationship between geology and construction is not just technical; it is also deeply practical. Ignoring the lessons of geology can lead to costly mistakes, delays, or even catastrophic failures. There are countless examples, from buildings that have settled unevenly due to weak soils, to tunnels that have flooded because of unexpected groundwater, to roads that have been destroyed by landslides. Each of these failures underscores the importance of understanding the ground beneath us.

Geology also informs the responsible management of resources. Industries such as mining, oil and gas, and groundwater extraction depend on geological expertise to locate and extract resources efficiently and sustainably. Their work not only optimises yield but also helps protect the environment by minimising unnecessary disturbance and preventing contamination.

Amid climate change and rapid urbanisation, the significance of geology is becoming more critical than ever. Rising sea levels, more frequent extreme weather events, and expanding cities all place new demands on our understanding of the ground. Engineers and planners must work hand in hand with geologists to design infrastructure that can adapt to changing conditions, whether that means building on reclaimed land, stabilising slopes in hilly regions, or managing groundwater in drought-prone areas.

Ultimately, geology is the silent architect of industry. It shapes our cities, guides our resource extraction, and ensures the safety and sustainability of what we build. By respecting and understanding the ground beneath us, we lay the true foundation for progress — one that is resilient, responsible, and enduring. The next time you cross a bridge, enter a factory or travel a new highway, remember that it is the unseen ground beneath — studied and respected through the science of geology that truly supports our progress.

(The writer is the Managing Director at Geoquest India. Views expressed are personal)

The Pioneer
VIJAYAWADA | MONDAY | JUNE 2, 2025

MONEY MATTERS



Air India to retrofit legacy A321 ceo planes

Amid supply chain woes, Air India has decided to retrofit its 13 legacy A321 ceo planes that were earlier planned to be taken out of service while the first of the airline's legacy Boeing 787-8 aircraft will go for retrofit in July. Air India, which is slowly expanding its fleet and networks, has a total of 191 planes, including 64 wide-bodies and 127 narrow-bodies. Airline's CEO and MD Campbell Wilson told PTI that the first batch of the B 787s will go in for retrofit in July as there has been a little bit of push back because of certification delay of seats. "By the end of this financial year, hopefully about 68 per cent of the wide- body fleet will be upgraded and the complete fleet will be upgraded sometime in calendar 2027," he said in an interview. There are 27 legacy B787-8s with Air India. The carrier has already started the heavy refresh programme of the legacy B777s and two of them are already back in service. Heavy refresh of an aircraft includes having new carpets, seat covers, cushions and fixing broken seats. The refresh of these planes is expected to complete by the end of this year. According to Wilson, the supply chain situation is getting progressively better.



Coal India arm BCCL files IPO papers

State-owned CIL arm Bharat Coking Coal Ltd (BCCL) has filed draft papers with market regulator Sebi for its initial public offering. The issue will be entirely an offer for sale, as BCCL will not issue any fresh shares. Coal India Ltd (CIL) plans to sell up to 46.5 crore shares. "The draft red herring prospectus...of Bharat Coking Coal Ltd was filed with SEBI, BSE and NSE," CIL said in a filing to BSE. DRHP is a preliminary document that a company files with Sebi for a public offer. "The DRHP filing pertains to the proposed initial public offering (IPO) of BCCL comprising an offer for sale of up to 465,700,000 equity shares by Coal India Limited, which remains subject to receipt of applicable approvals, market conditions, and other relevant considerations," the company said. BCCL, established with a mandate to mine and supply high-grade coking coal, plays a pivotal role in fuelling the nation's steel sector, which relies heavily on the company's coal for production and manufacturing processes. The development comes days after CIL arm Coal Central Mine Planning & Design Institute Ltd (CMPDIL) filed draft papers with Sebi for its initial public offering. Coal India accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal output.



LIC tops PSUs chart with record Rs 19,013 cr profit

State-owned Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has emerged as the highest profit making company among PSUs in March quarter FY25, netting a little over Rs 19,000 crore. Last week, LIC reported 38 per cent jump in net profit for January-March FY25 at record Rs 19,013 crore as compared to Rs 13,763 crore in the corresponding quarter in the previous year. The insurance behemoth was followed by the country's biggest lender State Bank of India (SBI) with Rs 18,643 crore profit during the fourth quarter. However, SBI was ahead of LIC in terms of annual profit as it earned Rs 70,901 crore in FY25 as against Rs 48,151 crore of LIC. Among other PSUs, Coal India earned a net profit of Rs 9,604 crore in the quarter followed by Power Finance Corporation (PFC) earning Rs 8,358 crore and NTPC Rs 7,897 crore, as per the data available on stock exchanges. In the oil sector, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) closed the fourth quarter with a net profit of Rs 7,265 crore followed by exploration giant ONGC at Rs 6,448 crore. Other Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) like REC Ltd posted a net profit of Rs 4,304 crore, Power Grid Corporation of India (Rs 4,143 crore) and Steel Authority of India Ltd (Rs 1,251 crore).

Indian aviation market emerging stronger: IATA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian aviation market is emerging stronger with growth in connectivity, networks and airport infrastructure, and the country also has the potential for producing sustainable aviation fuel, global airlines' grouping IATA said on Sunday.

However, the grouping also said that there is a high cost environment in India and also high uncertainty for tax planning.

Amitabh Khosla, Country Director India, Nepal & Bhutan at the International Air Transport Association (IATA) on Sunday said the Indian aviation market is witnessing a significant improvement on the back of emergence of stronger airlines within the country, the growth of connectivity and networks.

RBI expected to deliver 3rd consecutive rate cut

PNS ■ MUMBAI



The Reserve Bank is likely to go for a third consecutive rate cut of 25 basis points on Friday as inflation continues to remain below the median target of 4 per cent, to push growth amid continued global uncertainty triggered by the US tariff moves.

Reserve Bank's rate-setting panel Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will start deliberations on the next bi-monthly monetary policy on June 4 and announce the decision on June 6 (Friday).

The RBI reduced the key interest rate (repo) by 25 bps each in February and April bringing it to 6 per cent. Six-member MPC headed by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra also decided to change the stance from neutral to accommodative in its April policy.

In response to the 50-bps cut in the policy repo rate since February 2025, most of the banks have reduced their repo-linked external benchmark based lending rates (EBLRs) and marginal cost of funds-based lending rate (MCLR).

"We do believe that given the rather benign inflation conditions and the liquidity situation which has been made very comfortable through various measures of the RBI, the MPC would go in for a 25 bps cut in the repo rate on the (June) 6th. The commentary on both growth and inflation will be important as there are expectations of revisions in their forecasts for both the parameters," said Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist, Bank of Baroda.

He also expects that the RBI will detail its analysis on how the global environment would be affecting the Indian economy considering that the tariff reprieve provided by the US would end in July.

Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, ICRA said with CPI inflation forecast to trail 4 per cent for a large part of this fiscal, monetary easing by the MPC is likely to continue.

"A 25 bps rate cut is expected next week, followed by two more cuts over the subsequent two policy reviews, taking the repo rate to 5.25 per cent by the end of the cycle," she said.

In its annual report released on Thursday, the RBI said monetary policy is committed towards achieving durable price stability, which is a necessary prerequisite for high growth on a sustained basis.



Gross GST collections rise 16.4% to over Rs 2.01L cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gross GST collections rose 16.4 per cent to over Rs 2.01 lakh crore in May, as per government data released on Sunday.

This comes after a record high Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection in April, when the revenues touched an all-time high of Rs 2.37 lakh crore.

In May, gross revenues from domestic transactions rose 13.7 per cent to about Rs 1.50 lakh crore, while GST revenue from imports grew 25.2 per cent to Rs 51,266 crore.

In May, the gross Central GST revenues stood at Rs 35,434 crore, State GST revenues at Rs 43,902 crore and Integrated GST at about Rs 1.09 lakh crore. Revenues from Cess was at Rs 12,879 crore. In May, 2024, the mop up was Rs 1,72,739 crore.

Meanwhile, total refunds during the month fell 4 per cent to Rs 27,210 crore.

Net GST mop-up stood at about Rs 1.74 lakh crore, a 20.4 per cent year-on-year growth.

Deloitte India Partner M S Mani said the wide variations in the growth of GST collections across states require a thorough analysis across the sectors that are important in each state.

While large states like Maharashtra, West Bengal, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have reported collection increases of 17 per cent to 25 per cent, similar large states like Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have shown increases of up to 6 per cent.

RBI's interest rate decision, macroeco data to drive mkts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

RBI's interest rate decision, macroeconomic data announcements and global trends are the key factors that would dictate the momentum in the equity market this week, analysts said.

Moreover, trading activity of Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) and developments on the tariffs front would also guide investors' sentiment, experts noted. "Looking ahead, all eyes will be on the outcome of the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting scheduled for June 6."

Singapore retains top spot as India's largest FDI source

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Singapore continued to be India's largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) for the last seven years, as the country received the highest inflows of about USD 15 billion in 2024-25.

The overseas inflow grew 13 per cent to USD 50 billion in the last fiscal.

The total FDI, which includes equity inflows, reinvested earnings and other capital, grew by 14 per cent to USD 81.04 billion during the last financial year. It is the highest in the last three years.

FDI from Singapore in 2024-25 increased to USD 14.94 billion from USD 11.77 billion in 2023-24, according to the latest government data.

Singapore accounted for around 19 per cent of total inflows in 2024–25.

Since 2018-19, Singapore has been the largest source of such investments in India. In 2017-18, India attracted the maximum FDI from Mauritius.

ADB commits US$ 10 bn plan for urban renewal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has committed up to USD 10 billion for India's urban transformation, including metro extension in the next five years, ADB President Masato Kanda has said.

"Cities are engines of growth...ADB will mobilize capital, accelerate delivery, and scale solutions that keep India's urban economy moving and people thriving on the road to Viksit Bharat by 2047," Kanda said after meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Saturday.

The transformation plan includes sovereign loans, private sector financing, and third-party capital, ADB said in a statement.

The initiative is anchored by India's flagship Urban Challenge Fund (UCF), which ADB is supporting to attract private investment for urban infrastructure, it said. Analytical work on growth hubs, creative city redevelopment, and water and sanitation upgrades in 100 cities across India are laying the groundwork for the UCF.

ADB is also committing USD 3 million in technical assistance to design bankable projects and strengthen the capacity of states and urban local bodies, it said.

As per estimates, India's towns and cities are projected to house more than 40 per cent of the population by 2030.



'India needs to be watchful of any trade diversion risk due to steel tariff challenges'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India needs to be watchful of any increased risk of trade diversion into the country due to changing global tariffs, top steel industry executives said reacting to the tariff-related announcement by the US.

Major steel players JSW Steel and AMNS India said there is a need to implement necessary trade measures proactively as every country is protecting their industry.

US President Donald Trump on Friday told Pennsylvania steelworkers that he would double the tariff on steel imports to 50 per cent to protect their industry, a dramatic hike that could further increase prices for a metal used to make housing, autos and other goods.

In a post later on his Truth Social platform, he said aluminum tariffs would also be doubled to 50 per cent, and both tariff hikes would go into effect Wednesday.

"We need to implement necessary trade measures proactively and in time," JSW Steel Joint MD and CEO Jayant Acharya told PTI.

Sharing his views, the industry leader said there is likely to be increased risk of trade diversion into India due to changing global tariffs. India is vulnerable given its strong domestic demand.

Ranjan Dhar, Director & Vice President, Sales and Marketing, AMNS India said,"We hope more protection will come for domestic industry. Every country is protecting their industry. India should also do that as long as India focuses on protecting its industry from low price imports."

EARLY ARRIVAL OF MONSOON

Power consumption dips over 4% to 148.71 bn units

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



India's power consumption dipped over 4 per cent to 148.71 billion units (BU) in May, compared to a year-ago period, mainly due to unseasonal rains and early arrival of monsoon.

Power consumption was recorded at 155.15 BU in May, 2024, according to official data.

Experts believe the early arrival of monsoon as well as seasonal rains affected the power consumption as well as demand in May. According to the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), the monsoon hit the Kerala coast on May 24, 2025, eight days ahead of its normal schedule.

The unseasonal rains also reduced consumption of electricity especially by cooling appliances like desert coolers and air conditioners during May, the experts said.

The highest supply in a day (peak power demand met) in May dipped to about 231 GW last month, from around 250 GW in May 2024.

The peak power demand touched an all-time high of about 250 GW in May 2024.

The previous all-time high peak power demand of 243.27 GW was recorded in September 2023.

According to government estimates, peak power demand is expected to touch 277 GW in the summer of 2025.

Experts said that power demand and consumption will be steady in the coming months.

According to the Meteorological Department, India is expected to experience hotter-than-usual temperatures from April to June, with more heatwave days in Central and Eastern India and the Northwestern plains.

Flouting of rules by pan masala manufacturers

NGT issues notice to Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The National Green Tribunal has sought a reply from the Centre regarding the strict enforcement of the Plastic Waste Management Rules by the manufacturers of gutkha, pan masala and tobacco products.

A bench of NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava and expert member A Senthil Vel noted the submissions of the petitioner's counsel that in October 2021, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) issued certain directions to 25 such manufacturers, including immediately closing down operations until they switched to environmentally sound alternatives, which were not complied with.

The bench, in its order dated May 30, noted that according to the counsel, Anuj Aggarwal, certain provisions of the plastic waste management rules were being flouted.

These included the clause that "sachets using plastic material shall not be used for storing, packing or selling gutkha, tobacco and pan masala" and "plastic material, in any form including vinyl acetate, maleic acid, vinyl chloride copolymer (used in plastic coating) shall not be used in any package for packaging gutkha, pan masala and tobacco in all forms", the bench noted.



Reliance Infra targets Rs 3,000 cr defence exports in 2 yrs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Infrastructure Ltd, the flagship company of Anil Ambani's Reliance Group, is targeting Rs 3,000 crore from the export of 155 mm ammunition and aggregates by the end of financial year 2027, sources said.

In the current year itself, the company is estimated to export Rs 1,500 crore of large calibre ammunition. Reliance Infrastructure has already clocked exports of up to Rs 100 crore of artillery ammunition and aggregates and is aiming to be among the top three exporters of defence equipment in India, sources aware of the matter said.

The key export market for Reliance includes countries in the European Union, focusing on large restocking demand for artillery ammunition.

According to the experts, the market size for restocking is estimated at Rs 4,00,000 crore.

Swedish firms upbeat on India's investment climate

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A large number of the companies surveyed by the Swedish Chamber of Commerce India are expecting their turnover to increase over the next year, especially those involved in sectors such as construction, aerospace, defence, IT and electronics.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Sunday said that the Business Climate Survey 2025-26 by the Swedish Chamber of Commerce India, has given a thumbs up to the favourable business environment in the country.

"One of the main highlights of the survey is the resounding approval of the current business climate and rate of business satisfaction, reaffirming the positive impact of 'Make In India'," he said in a post on X.



Over the last decade, the government has worked to enhance the Ease of Doing Business in the country and the impact has been that global companies are increasingly choosing India as the trusted partner in their growth plans, Goyal said. "A large number of the companies surveyed are expecting their turnover to increase over the next year, especially those involved in construction and building, aerospace and defence,

IT and electronics, and business services," he said adding the growing confidence in India's business climate also reflects in the majority of companies surveyed, especially those in manufacturing, looking to increase their investment in the coming year.

He also said that India has become more important in their sourcing strategy in the last couple of years, with cost efficiency being a big focus.

"The report reconfirms the confidence in India's growth story and also their focus on developing India as a hub in global value chains," the minister added.

Goyal will be visiting Sweden in the second week of this month.

Trade in goods between the two countries has increased from USD 2.86 billion (2016) to USD 6.96 billion (2024).

The number of Swedish companies with business presence in India has increased to 280 in the last 7-8 years.

The Pioneer
VIJAYAWADA | MONDAY | JUNE 2, 2025

Diljit Dosanjh promises 'Love, Laughter & Goosebumps' as *Sardaarji 3* locks June 27 release



Punjabi superstar Diljit Dosanjh is all set to bring back the magic—and madness—with the third installment of his popular fantasy comedy franchise, Sardaarji. Titled Sardaarji 3, the film is locked for a global release on June 27, 2025, and Dosanjh promises that fans are in for a rollercoaster of "love, laughter, and goosebumps." The actor-singer took to Instagram to share the official motion poster of the film, creating an instant buzz. In the vibrant visual, Diljit stands at the center with his signature charm, surrounded by women whose faces are veiled with traditional ghoonghats, setting a mysterious yet playful tone.

Adding his trademark humor to the caption, Diljit wrote:

"Jidey Ton Bhoot Thar Thar Kamban ?? Te Chudelan Kissian Mangan… JAGGI JI on the way 27th JUNE 2025. TEASER COMING SOON.

Love. Laughter. Goosebumps. This time, SardaarJi is back with triple the madness! Romantic, comic, and terrifyingly fun – #SardaarJi3 releases worldwide on 27th June! Ready for the wildest ride of the year?"

The original Sardaarji, which debuted in 2015, made waves for being one of Punjabi cinema's earliest ventures into the fantasy-horror-comedy space. Directed by Rohit Jugraj, it starred Diljit alongside Neeru Bajwa and Mandy Takhar and became an instant classic. The 2016 sequel saw Diljit in a triple role and featured Monica Gill and Sonam Bajwa. This time around, the franchise is helmed by director Amar Hundal, and reunites Diljit with Neeru Bajwa and Manav Vij, sparking anticipation among fans who have followed the journey since its inception. While excitement builds for Sardaarji 3, Diljit has also been making international headlines. Earlier this year, he made a spectacular debut at the Met Gala 2025, turning heads with a regal look that paid tribute to his Punjabi heritage. He wore a custom ivory and gold sherwani by Prabal Gurung, paired with a traditional tehmat, feather-adorned turban, and a jaw-dropping diamond necklace by Golecha's Jewels, inspired by the legendary Patiala necklace crafted by Cartier.

On the film front, Dosanjh continues to dominate, with a powerful lineup including the much-anticipated sequel to the war drama Border. He will be seen alongside Sunny Deol, Varun Dhawan, and Ahan Shetty in what's being pegged as one of the biggest action ensembles in recent times.



NARGIS FAKHRI ON HER COMEBACK WITH *HOUSEFULL 5*

'Back like I never left'

Actress Nargis Fakhri is all set to make her silver screen return after a two-year hiatus, and she's doing it with full throttle in the upcoming comedy extravaganza Housefull 5. The actress, known for her bold screen presence and striking performances, took to Instagram to mark her much-talked-about comeback, dropping a powerful message:

"Back like I never left—louder, bolder, and too hot to handle. #forceofnature."

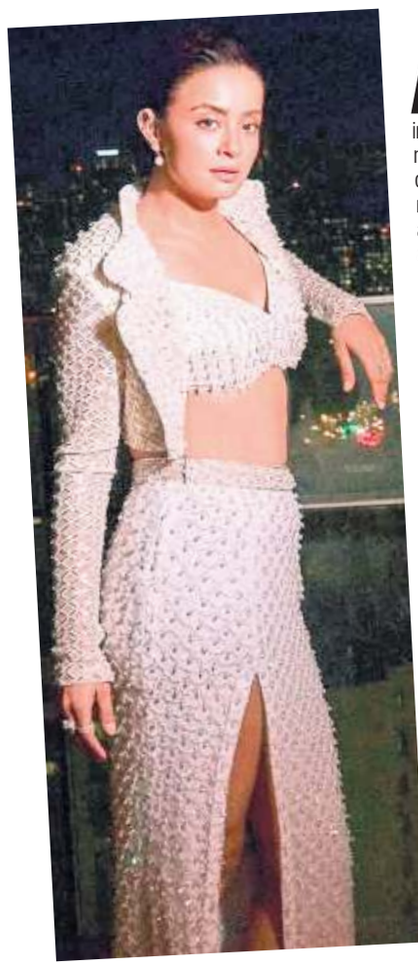
The post was accompanied by a series of glamorous pictures from a recent photoshoot during the trailer launch of Housefull 5, where Nargis stunned in a fierce red ensemble, reminding fans of her signature sass and confidence.

The last time audiences saw her on the big screen was in the 2023 comedy-drama Shiv Shastri Balboa, directed by Ajayan Venugopalan and featuring an ensemble cast including Anupam Kher, Neena Gupta, and Jugal Hansraj. While that film had a modest run, Housefull 5 marks a high-octane return for the actress into a commercial comedy space where she has previously delivered hits. Directed by Tarun Mansukhani and produced by Sajid Nadiadwala under Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment, Housefull 5 is gearing up for release on June 6. The fifth installment in the blockbuster franchise promises triple the madness with a star-studded cast, featuring Akshay Kumar, Abhishek Bachchan, Riteish Deshmukh, Jacqueline Fernandez, Sonam Bajwa, and a powerhouse of veteran talent like Sanjay Dutt, Jackie Shroff, Nana Patekar, and Johnny Lever.

The franchise, which began in 2010, has been known for its outrageous humor, vibrant ensemble casts, and larger-than-life storytelling. While Sajid Khan helmed the first two films, Housefull 3 was directed by Sajid-Farhad, and Housefull 4 by Farhad Samji. With Tarun Mansukhani taking over for the fifth, fans are excited to see the new energy he brings.

Nargis, who shot to fame with her Bollywood debut in Imtiaz Ali's Rockstar (2011) opposite Ranbir Kapoor, quickly became a fan favorite. From her gritty performance in Madras Cafe (2013) to her comedic timing in Main Tera Hero and Housefull 3, she has showcased a range that's equal parts glam and grounded. She's also made a mark internationally, with a role in the Hollywood spy comedy Spy (2015) starring Melissa McCarthy.

Surveen Chawla recalls saying no to director's 'code language' advances



Actress Surveen Chawla, known for her compelling performances in Sacred Games, Rana Naidu, and Decoupled, has spoken out about the darker side of the entertainment industry—opening up about facing the casting couch multiple times during her career. In a candid conversation on The Male Feminist podcast by Hauterrfly, Surveen recounted harrowing experiences from both Bollywood and the South film industry, shedding light on the subtle and overt ways women are often objectified and propositioned in the name of work. Speaking in Hindi, she shared an incident where a filmmaker tried to forcibly kiss her despite knowing she was married.

"After the meeting in his cabin, he came to see me off at the gate. He had a huge office, and we had discussed my marriage during the meeting. Suddenly, he leaned in to kiss me. I literally had to push him back and asked, 'What are you doing?' Then I just walked away."

Another shocking instance involved a National Award-winning director who couldn't speak Hindi and communicated through an intermediary. Surveen revealed that the man tried to use vague, coded language to suggest spending time with her—an implication she wasn't willing to ignore.

"At first, I gave them the benefit of the doubt," Surveen said, "but eventually I had to ask, 'Are you really saying the director wants to sleep with me?' I told them clearly: 'Sir, I'm sorry, you're knocking on the wrong door. I am not in for bartering myself in exchange for work.'"

These lines, she admitted, are etched in her memory. Surveen's courage in speaking up comes at a time when conversations around power dynamics, safety, and dignity in the film industry are gaining momentum. By choosing to share these stories publicly, she joins the growing list of actors who are pushing for a safer, more transparent creative space for all.

ILEANA D'CRUZ ON SKIPPING RAID 2

'My priorities changed after motherhood'

Actress Ileana D'Cruz, who won hearts as Malini Pathak in Raid (2018), has revealed why she isn't a part of the much-anticipated sequel Raid 2 starring Ajay Devgn. The reason? Diapers, baby bum cream, and a whole new chapter of life—motherhood.

During a candid Q&A session on Instagram early Sunday morning, the actress shared heartfelt updates about her life as a new mom and addressed fans who missed her in the upcoming film. When a follower mentioned they missed seeing her in Raid 2 and on Indian screens in general, Ileana replied with honesty and warmth.

"I miss working in movies too and I would have loved to be a part of Raid 2," she said. "Raid was a special film, but Malini was such a special character to play. Working with my director Raj Kumar Gupta was a wonderful experience, as was working with Ajay again."

She confirmed that the makers of Raid 2 did approach her for the film, but things didn't align.

"Unfortunately, we couldn't work out the schedule given that I had just had my baby, and my priorities are very different at the moment," she added.

Ileana tied the knot with her partner Michael Dolan in May 2023, and the couple welcomed their first child, a son, in August 2023. Since then, the actress has largely stayed away from film sets, focusing entirely on her new role as a mother.

A fan asked her why she isn't appearing on the silver screen anymore, to which she humorously responded:

"Because I'm busy with diapers and baby bum cream."

She also took a moment to compliment Vaani Kapoor, who plays the female lead in Raid 2:

"That said, I think Vaani looked lovely in all the promos I've seen, and I'm sure she brought her own lovely charm to her character. Hope that clears any confusion."

On the joys and challenges of motherhood, Ileana was refreshingly honest.

"The hardest thing I've ever had to do. Wasn't like anything I expected. All consuming and 24/7. No off days. But my god, the feeling I get to see my little one smile, or hold me, or just thrive and be a happy healthy boy, makes me feel like I'm superwoman."

She also shared some insight for new moms struggling to accept help.

"I found it hard to accept the help initially because I wanted everything to be done a specific way for my baby and didn't feel like anyone else would understand. You know what's best for your baby, but sometimes you need a little break too."



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBES



GARFIELD



NANCY



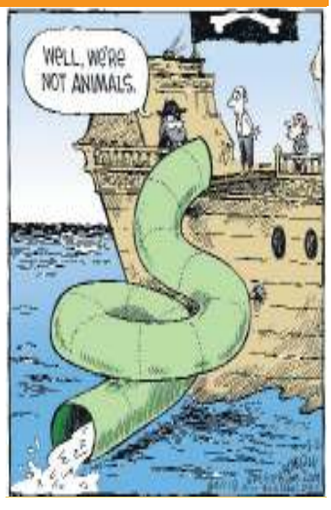
GINGER MEGGS



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

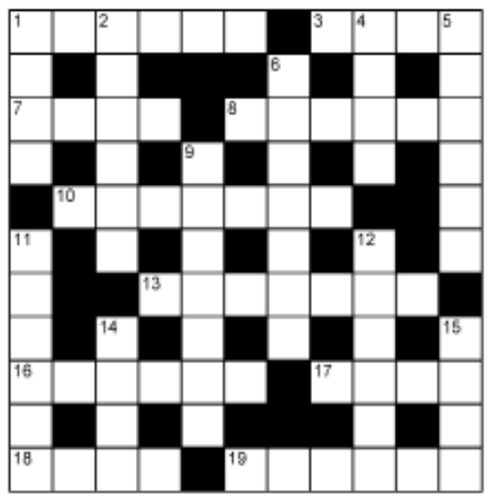
Yesterday's solution

6	9	8	3	2	1	7	4	5
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4	3	1	5	7	6	9	8	2
3	7	2	1	8	4	6	5	9
8	1	9	6	5	7	3	2	4
5	4	6	2	3	9	8	1	7
9	6	3	8	4	5	2	7	1
1	8	5	7	6	2	4	9	3
7	2	4	9	1	3	5	6	8

Rules

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1 A hole in a hill for a train
3 Unlock
7 Very uncommon
8 An animal with a shell
10 An erupting mountain
13 A long sort of table where you are served in a shop
16 A restaurant worker
17 Meat and vegetables cooked slowly in liquid
18 Scraps of material
19 A planet

DOWN

1 Ripped and ragged
2 Opposite of wide
4 Tame animals kept at home
5 Required
6 On fire
9 A month
11 Reply
12 Defeated
14 Make music with the voice
15 These birds hunt at night

SOLUTION



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MONDAY JUNE 2, 2025

'WE PUSH THROUGH SAYING 'ALL GOOD'—BUT IS IT REALLY?'

TEJAL SINHA
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

Known for her bold artistic choices and genre-bending experiments, Shalmali Kholgade continues to carve her own path in the music industry with a voice that's as fearless as it is versatile. In an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer*, the acclaimed singer-songwriter delves into the inspiration behind her compelling new English single *All good?*, offering insights into her creative process, the deeper themes woven into her independent work, and how she navigates the modern-day pressures of image, identity and expression



All good?—a phrase we casually toss around, often to mask the chaos simmering beneath. But in Shalmali Kholgade's latest single by the same name, the question lingers, demanding introspection. With this striking new English release, now streaming across all major platforms, she returns to the spotlight, blending addictive pop rhythms with a poignant take on the illusion of modern-day perfection.

Renowned for her dynamic stage energy and genre-defying artistry, the *Pareshaan* singer has once again been turning heads with her viral performances and inventive reinterpretations of beloved tracks. *All good?* marks another fearless step in her ever-evolving musical journey. While its sonic surface is playful and infectious, the song digs deeper—unpacking the performative habits of consumerism, digital appearances and the endless pursuit of approval. Crafted with layered production, a punchy chorus and sharp lyrical honesty, the track encourages listeners to dance along—and perhaps, pause and reconsider what truly feels "all good."

"I wrote this song in the lockdown when there was actually time to observe oneself and reflect," Shalmali shares, talking about how *All Good?* came to be. "Like most people of my generation and next, I found myself doing things that are superficial and obsessive—buying things you don't need, appearances on social media, trying to fit in. Even when something feels unnatural, we push through saying 'all good, all good'. But is it really all good?"

The song's title, posed as a question, does exactly what it's meant to: start a conversation. Not just with the listener, but within oneself. "Absolutely," she affirms, when asked if the track is meant to challenge the surface-level optimism people often project. "I've used the phrase 'all good?' in two contexts over the song. In the verses, it is used as a self-assuring phrase—'it's all good. Keep doing what you're doing!' And in the chorus, it is a question to self—'is it all good?'"

True to Shalmali's artistic temperament, All Good? steers clear of typical pop structures. "Sonically, *All Good?* is like nothing I've released before," she explains. "It's a wordy song without a conventional pop song structure—almost like a sung rap in parts. It was more important for me to say the words in this song over anything else." The track's producer, Clifr, known for blending electronic elements with live instrumentation, lent a distinct character to the track with touches like horns, adding eclectic texture to her candid lyrics.

While the song's soundscape pushes boundaries, its music video plays out like a satire of excess, dripping with stylised irony. "The visual is my dear friend and choreographer Dev Narayan Gupta's vision," she says. "We share common aspirations and interests so it was very easy for me to explain what I wanted to say in the video. I wanted to show excess—of clothes, food, bags, pretence. So the narrative of the video just takes you through the lyric."

Shalmali also took on the mammoth task of styling herself for the video, a process she describes as "exhausting" but ultimately fulfilling. Dev's choreography, in tandem with cinematographer Karan Shelar's lens and CGI work, tied together a visual language that walks the line between theatre and commentary. For the *Aga bai* singer, her independent work has always been more than just music—it's her personal space to reflect, speak freely, and experiment. "I don't see *All Good?* even within independent music as a pop track that has commercial appeal," she says. "It is songs like this, that are topics I'd like to speak about, genres I'd like to sing in, that I wouldn't get to otherwise. I often don't want to write about love, or breakups and those are the more popular topics to write on. So my independent music gives my emotions a place to live."

The creative process behind *All Good?* was intimate and unfiltered. "I wrote the entire track by myself in my home studio. It was on a very different production bed then. Clifr really changed the direction of the production for the better." She reflects on her writing method at the time, which involved writing an essay to explore her thoughts before discovering the title or hook. "The song is a reminder to me to make better use of my time and do meaningful things," she adds.

As much as *All Good?* is introspective, it's also a social commentary—holding up a mirror to millennial and Gen Z culture. "The song holds a mirror to this generation's culture. Not everything about our present way of living is wonderful, so I hope it makes listeners reflect on their actions. The emotional connect of the song is what matters most to me, over anything else. It'll be a cherry on the cake if listeners dig the song sonically!"

While the *Balam Pichkari* fame's indie work continues to carve out a distinct path, her versatility also shines through in her playback singing. One of her latest ventures, a remake of the cult classic *Saat Samundar*, is proof of her effortless genre-hopping. "*Saat Samundar* is a huge song from back in the day. I've been singing it in my live shows long before I sang it for *Hai Junoon*. So I always knew how it sounds in my voice," she shares. "I think it is a super quirky song, so I was very happy to sing it."

Despite the pressures and comparisons that usually accompany remakes, she approached it with grounded simplicity. "I think there's only one way to sing *Saat Samundar* given the precedent set by the original. The only originality I could bring to it is by virtue of the tone of my voice. All I did was sing the melody as I was instructed and the rest of the job was done by my god-given voice," she laughs. Surprisingly, she wasn't given much insight into how the song would be filmed. "I wasn't aware of how the song would be filmed when I sang it. I knew the basic premise of the show and by the sound of the production, it looked like there'd be choreography on it. So I sang it the way I would a dance number."

As for the pressure to stand out in a sea of remakes, she's refreshingly candid: "I didn't really [try]. It wasn't my decision to make a remake, so I shouldn't be the one stressing about it—this is my understanding of it. I always just concern myself with doing the job at hand well." Then there's the viral moment that came almost unexpectedly—her mashup *Ag Bai X Taambdi Chamdi*, which took the internet by storm. The idea, like many of her creations, began organically. "One day, these two songs just played in my head back to back and I started doodling with the arrangement on my music software. What made me smile is that the lyric of both songs were in the same vicinity. *Aga Bai* is quite a sexual song and T*aambdi Chamdi* hookline is talking about brown skin shining in the sun… It fit like a glove."

The mashup is a bold rhythmic celebration—rooted in Marathi folk, yet globally resonant. "I haven't changed anything from the original as far as the rhythm of *Taambdi Chamdi* goes. *Aga Bai* is definitely a significantly new arrangement on the chorus, mostly because this song is for the band to perform over," she clarifies. Seeing the track take off on reels and social media was a new experience for her. "Even though I've been in the industry for a while now, going viral or having a reel view in millions is alien to me. I'm amazed. I think I finally understand what my audience likes and I've found a rhythm with them."

Her music—whether deeply emotional or wickedly playful—has always been grounded in honesty. Her independent discography in particular speaks of a woman who's constantly evolving, both sonically and spiritually. "For a long time I could write only when I was deeply moved—by either happiness or sorrow or anger or any emotion really. So the music that was born out of those states of mind was naturally layered."

Looking ahead, Shalmali has her eyes on something big. "I have my biggest song this year releasing in June," she reveals. "It's one I've been waiting to put out, only because I really wanted it to get the right treatment. We will be shooting the music video for it in the coming week." In addition to that, collaborations with artists like Dhruv Vishwanath, Jai Karkii, and Rutvik are also lined up.

With *All Good?,* Shalmali reminds us that not everything has to be polished and perfect to be powerful. Sometimes, just asking the question—"Is it really all good?"—is where the most honest art begins.



'EFFORTLESS SHOULDN'T MEAN LIFELESS'

Acclaimed actor Pankaj Tripathi, who is currently receiving widespread appreciation for his nuanced portrayal in the fourth season of the hit crime-legal drama *Criminal Justice*, has offered a thoughtful reflection on the fine balance every actor must strike between comfort and complacency.

Tripathi emphasised the importance of staying grounded and avoiding the pitfalls of overconfidence that can follow a period of artistic ease. "The sense of comfort is not a dangerous thing," he explained, "but following up the sense of comfort with the sense of confidence can be dangerous. A lot of effort is required to look effortless, and when one appears effortless while acting, people think it is very easy to do."

Tripathi, known for his subtle yet powerful performances, believes that true mastery lies in making complex emotions appear natural. However, he draws a clear line between being "effortless" and being "lifeless" in one's portrayal. "There is a fine difference between being bloodless and effortless. The performance may become dull or lifeless. It should be lively—there should be a touch, some flesh and blood in it."

The *Criminal Justice* star stressed that striving for simplicity in performance doesn't mean removing the soul from it. Instead, he advocates for an approach that combines ease with emotional richness—an invisible labor that, when done right, makes acting look deceptively simple.

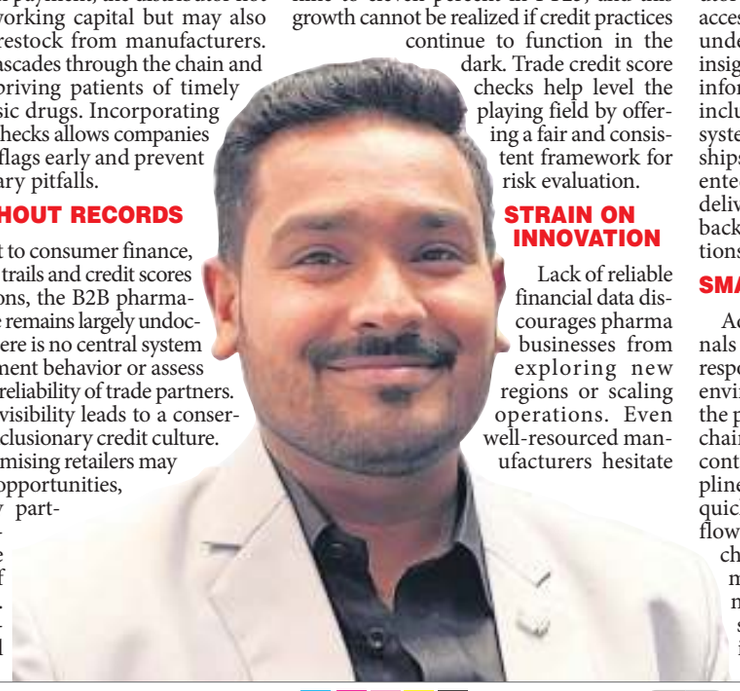
Earlier, Tripathi had quipped that slipping into the skin of his character, Madhav Mishra, has become so natural that it feels like his "Aadhaar is linked" to the role—a humorous nod to the ubiquitous 12-digit identity system in India. The statement reflects how deeply he's connected with the character over the show's multiple seasons. The fourth season of *Criminal Justice*, now streaming on JioCinema, continues to delve into the complexities of law, morality and justice. Directed by Rohan Sippy and produced by Applause Entertainment in association with BBC Studios India, the series also features Surveen Chawla and Shweta Basu Prasad in pivotal roles.

Strengthening healthcare supply chains with credit risk checks

India's pharmaceutical and healthcare sectors are globally recognised for their scale, innovation and affordability. The country enjoys a distinct advantage with a low cost of manufacturing—30 to 35 percent lower than in the US and Europe—alongside cost-efficient R&D and a vast pool of skilled labour. However, for all these strengths, a latent weakness continues to weaken the effectiveness of pharma supply chains. Most companies are still working on unverified credit terms, relying on oral commitments and oral agreements. In an industry that has a direct impact on public health, such financial obscuration can have alarming effects. Enforcing trade credit score checks as a routine procedure is no longer an option but an absolute requirement for long-term stability.

HIDDEN MONEY TRAPS

Pharma supply chains are often stretched across multiple layers from manufacturers to stockists to retailers. Most players extend credit informally based on past experience or goodwill. A medical distributor in Mumbai, for example, may offer lakhs worth of medicines to a local pharmacy without verifying its current financial health. If the retailer delays or defaults on payment, the distributor not only loses working capital but may also struggle to restock from manufacturers. Such delay cascades through the chain and ends up depriving patients of timely access to basic drugs. Incorporating trade credit checks allows companies to catch red flags early and prevent such monetary pitfalls.



RISK WITHOUT RECORDS

In contrast to consumer finance, where digital trails and credit scores guide decisions, the B2B pharmaceutical space remains largely undocumented. There is no central system to track payment behavior or assess the financial reliability of trade partners. This lack of visibility leads to a conservative and exclusionary credit culture. New and promising retailers may be denied opportunities, while legacy partners can misuse the absence of scrutiny. Indian pharmaceutical companies are expecting revenue growth of nine to eleven percent in FY25, and this growth cannot be realized if credit practices continue to function in the dark. Trade credit score checks help level the playing field by offering a fair and consistent framework for risk evaluation.

STRAIN ON INNOVATION

Lack of reliable financial data discourages pharma businesses from exploring new regions or scaling operations. Even well-resourced manufacturers hesitate to enter untapped markets where distributor credibility is uncertain. This limits access to essential medicines in remote and underserved areas. With verified credit insights, businesses can take confident and informed steps toward expansion. More inclusive and transparent trade credit systems would help in building partnerships that are sustainable and growth-oriented. Innovation, reach, and service delivery improve when financial trust is backed by real data rather than assumptions.

SMARTER BUSINESS CULTURE

Adopting trade credit score checks signals a powerful shift toward a more responsible and forward-thinking business environment. When companies across the pharmaceutical and healthcare supply chain know their credit behavior is being continuously monitored, payment discipline naturally improves. This leads to quicker inventory cycles, stronger cash flow and deeper trust between supply chain partners. Modern credit assessment platforms enhance this transformation by providing unbiased credit scores tailored for the pharmaceutical industry, real-time alerts on shifting payment patterns, and customized insights aligned with each business's needs.



These platforms integrate effortlessly with enterprise systems, ensuring smooth operations and greater consistency. They also support regulatory compliance by issuing timely alerts on critical matters such as drug license expiry. Clear visual dashboards offer an instant overview of financial health, while robust data security protects sensitive information. With expert support available at all times, businesses are better equipped to make informed decisions. As India strengthens its global position in pharma, this culture of financial transparency and operational intelligence becomes essential for equitable and sustainable growth.

(The author, Mannuri Vamshi Krishna, is the founder & CEO of MedScore.)

The Pioneer
VIJAYAWADA | MONDAY | JUNE 2, 2025

Paris Saint-Germain wins Champions League

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Munich

Paris Saint-Germain (PSG), Champions League winner. At long last the club that was transformed by Qatari billions and bought and sold a succession of the world's greatest players in an extravagant bid to get to the top has got its hands on the big one.

European club soccer's grandest prize has a new home after PSG thrashed Inter Milan 5-0 in Saturday's final in Munich.

"It's in the bag, it's coming home with us to Paris tomorrow," coach Luis Enrique said. "My first day at the PSG campus I said the ultimate goal was to fill the trophy cabinet. The only trophy missing was the Champions League. Here we have ticked that box." It was the trophy that not even Lionel Messi, Neymar or Kylian Mbappe could deliver to the French club. Luis Enrique has achieved it after overseeing PSG's shift from the era of galactico signings to one of genuine team-building.

Fitting then that Désiré Doué, the 19-year-old French forward, emblematic of the club's new generation, was the chief inspiration and player of the match as PSG recorded the biggest win in a final in the competition's 70-year history. In a scintillating performance, Doué scored two goals and set up another goal in little over an hour on the field before being substituted. Achraf Hakimi, Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and substitute Senny Mayulu all scored around Doue's double in a game in which PSG could have run out an even bigger winner.

PSG joins European royalty

Now PSG can truly sit alongside the royalty of European soccer. Not by virtue of turnover or merchandizing but on the merits of its achievements on the field. The Champions League is the ultimate barometer of the continent's elite clubs and up until now PSG has been a flashy contender that always came up short.

That all changed at Allianz Arena, the home of Bayern Munich, one of the titans of Europe, and a fitting stage for PSG's crowning moment. Not least because it was against Bayern that it lost its only other Champions League final in 2020, leaving Neymar in tears in an empty stadium in Lisbon where fans were locked out because of the pandemic.

On this occasion, thousands of PSG supporters were there to revel in the moment, waving flags, lighting flares and drowning out their rivals from Inter, many of whose supporters left the stadium long before the final whistle.



PSG's Marquinhos holds up the trophy as he celebrates with his teammates after winning the Champions League final soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Inter Milan at the Allianz Arena in Munich, Germany PTI

They'd been partying in the streets of Munich throughout the day, but that was nothing compared to the scenes of joy when captain Marquinhos held the trophy aloft with fireworks and golden confetti exploding behind him.

After so many setbacks in this competition, PSG truly delivered on the night.

It took just 12 minutes for the French champion to go ahead with a move of speed and precision when Vitinha's threaded pass into the box found the feet of Doué. The forward could have shot, but instead slid in Hakimi to tap into an open net.

Former Inter player Hakimi muted his celebrations, but the PSG fans went wild.

Eight minutes later and the lead was doubled when Doué's shot from the right of the box deflected off Federico Dimarco and past Inter goalkeeper Yann Sommer.

He got his second in the 63rd, sliding the ball into the bottom corner when through on goal.

Kvaratskhelia added the fourth 10 minutes later and Mayulu struck in the 86th, just two minutes after coming on.

Doué and Mayulu became the third and fourth teenagers to score in a Champions League final following Patrick Kluivert in 1995 and Carlos Alberto in 2004.

Luis Enrique doubles and trebles

Luis Enrique, who won the 2015 Champions League with Barcelona, became the seventh coach to win the trophy with two different teams, joining greats Carlo Ancelotti, Pep Guardiola and Jose Mourinho. He also led PSG to a first treble of trophies - the Champions League added to Ligue 1 and the French Cup - matching his achievement with Barcelona 10 years ago.

His players threw him high in the air in celebration after the whistle.

For PSG, this moment has been 14 years in the making since it was bought by Qatar Sports Investments in 2011 and, awash with newfound riches, targeted marquee signings to speed up its route to the top.

Galacticos era

In came superstars Zlatan Ibrahimovic, David Beckham and Edinson Cavani. The ante was further upped with the arrivals of Neymar for a world record $262 million, Mbappe and finally Messi, allowing PSG to field possibly the richest array of forwards ever assembled, but still no Champions League trophy to show for it.

The departure of that last stellar trio over the past two years has been the turning point, with a greater focus on the team rather than a collection of stars. Not that PSG's transformation hasn't come at a cost. It may make for a nice narrative that it has eschewed the big spending approach of before to organically assemble a team to beat all-comers from across Europe.

The opposite is true. While it is without the marquee players of the past, this is still one of the most expensive squads in world soccer.

The win will also raise more questions about nation state involvement in soccer and so-called sportswashing, given Qatar's lavish backing of PSG in enabling it to conquer Europe.

Djokovic reaches fourth round of French Open


Serbia's Novak Djokovic returns against Austria's Filip Misolic during a third-round match of the French Tennis Open at the Roland-Garros stadium in Paris PTI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Paris

Novak Djokovic reached the fourth round of the French Open for the 16th consecutive year with a 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 victory over qualifier Filip Misolic in a match marked by noise from Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) fans cheering for goals as they watched the Champions League final on their phones.

There also were frequent sounds of fireworks popping from PSG's stadium, which is just a few blocks from Court Philippe-Chatrier. The French club won its first championship in the top soccer competition for European clubs, beating Italy's Inter Milan 5-0 in Munich, Germany. Djokovic originally was hoping to avoid playing at the same time as the soccer match so he could watch it on TV. "It was interesting.

The crowd was really following the game. And I could hear when they scored. It was way too many times that they were celebrating," Djokovic said about the spectators in the Chatrier stands. "I was like, Wow, this is a lot of goals from Paris! What's going on?' Now I heard it's 5-0. Quite a result, to be honest."

During one lengthy tennis point in the third set, some shouts accompanied PSG's fourth goal, and afterward, the chair umpire asked the tennis ticket-holders spectators to keep it down, drawing boos and whistles in response.

"Night sessions are always different. They're always louder. The people are always more excited. Everything is always loud and different from a day session," said Djokovic, who has won all nine sets he's played so far in this year's tournament. "I knew I was going to have to be scheduled once to play at night. And it's OK. It's fine. I mean, I would be watching football, for sure. ... (PSG) won it for the first time, so I don't know how we're all going to go back to our hotels. It's going to be quite a journey. Quite an adventure. But I think we are in for a long celebration and probably not much sleep tonight. It's a fun night to be in Paris, I guess." Djokovic has never lost to anyone ranked as low as No. 153 Misolic at a Grand Slam tournament, and this one was never really in doubt. There was just a slight delay for him to take control: In the second game, with Misolic serving, Djokovic held seven break points - and failed to convert any.

That made it 1-all. But Djokovic kept accumulating break chances and, eventually, cashed in on his 10th, to lead 4-2. That was essentially that. Against a man 15 years his junior, who was appearing in only his second Grand Slam tournament, the 38-year-old Djokovic made only 14 unforced errors - compared to 33 winners - and saved the only break point he faced. "Solid when I needed to be," Djokovic said.

"There's always something to improve. Something to get better at. But overall, I have to be pleased with the level of tennis so far." He improved his career record at the French Open to 99-16, equaling his number of match wins at the Australian Open.

He's won three of his 24 major championships in Paris. A year ago in a fourth-round victory, Djokovic tore his the meniscus in his right knee and needed to withdraw from the tournament before his next match.

England tour is exam for Shubman Gill, good batting key to good captaincy: Karim

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi



The upcoming England tour will be an exam for new Test leader Shubman Gill and his success as captain may depend on his own batting performance, reckons former India selector Saba Karim.

India kick-started a new era in Test cricket with the appointment of Gill as captain following retirements of stalwarts such as Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Ravichandran Ashwin in quick succession.

Gill is a gifted player but he is yet to flourish as a Test batter, managing just 1,893 runs in 32 Tests at an average just under 32, with four centuries.

While his technique is compact and batting has flair, he's yet to deliver the kind of consistent, match-winning performances that mark elite Test batters. Yet, Saba Karim remains confident.

"This is an examination for him. I am sure he's ready and up for it," Karim told PTI Videos on the sidelines of FIT India: Sunday on Cycle event on Sunday. "This is a big opportunity for him as a player. He needs to perform with the bat there, if he is able to do so then automatically his captaincy will also flourish," said Karim, suggesting that success in one area will boost confidence in the other.

The former wicket-keeper batter however, sees the bigger picture. He acknowledged the balance in the current Indian squad, especially the mix of young blood and experienced names.

"I do expect some good results from this young Indian side. The matches will really competitive and I think they are ready for it," he added.

Karim also praised Karun Nair for his double hundred against England Lions and named Sai Sudharsan as the batter to watch out for alongside Nair in the series.

"Karun (Nair) played well, he now has experience. Sai seems to have grown in stature as an all-format cricketer. He is gaining experience now, I am excited to see how this combination does in England."

In the bowling department, India will miss seasoned Mohammad Shami, who remains out due to fitness concerns. Punjab pacer Arshdeep Singh is part of the squad and is expected to make an impact.

"He (Arshdeep) is a very talented seamer, the previous experience in England will help him and the conditions as well team had to look beyond Shami and I think they picked the right guy, excited to see him in action as well," he said.

Karim was the chief guest at the 25th edition of the Fit India Sunday cycle event.

"Such initiatives are crucial in inspiring people to make fitness a priority and build a stronger, healthier nation. It's great to see widespread community involvement and enthusiasm," he concluded.

Goal is to break into top-75, then to top-50: Ghorpade

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Ahmedabad

Having made her senior debut in 2024, young Indian women table tennis player Yashaswani Ghorpade has fast risen in the sport, breaking into world top 100 the same year. But Ghorpade, ranked 84 in the world currently, is now determined to break into top-75 and then to top-50 to seal her place in next year's Asian Games in Japan and the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

"I was in 8th standard when I won my first national championships in Under-15 and then I won with Under-19 national championships. Last year, I did well in the domestic circuit. I finished second in the national rankings. I also got into top 100 world rankings last year," she told PTI.

"(But) my first goal is to be in the top-75 and to become India no.1 this year only. These are my short-term one-year goals. But of course Asian Games is the next target. The next big Games after that are the Olympics. So after getting into top 75, the goal is to get into top 50 and get a good seeding to make it to the Olympics. "Asian Games there is a criteria that we need to maintain good national ranking as well as world rankings to qualify directly," she added.

Arjun Erigaisi upsets Hikaru Nakamura in Norway Chess

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Reigning world champion D Gukesh's roller-coaster ride continued with the Indian suffering a defeat in an Armageddon tie-break as he slipped to tied-fifth place, while Arjun Erigaisi upset American world number two Hikaru Nakamura to maintain his fourth position in Norway Chess. Defending champion Magnus Carlsen continued to shine on Saturday, taking his points tally to 9.5 following his Armageddon tie-break victory against another American GM Fabiano Caruana with black pieces.

On a day when the tournament delivered gripping action across all boards, all three games in the 'Open' category ended in draws, with the Armageddon tie-break being applied to break the deadlock.

In a match, where fortunes swung wildly, Chinese GM Wei Yi was winning in the middlegame, while Gukesh, playing with black pieces, had the advantage in the endgame. But the Classical game finally ended in a stalemate after a lot of uncertainty. Wei, who has proved a difficult customer in Armageddon having defeated Carlsen and Nakamura in earlier games here, registered his third tie-break win as Gukesh was left searching for answers to overturn his fortunes.

The Chinese conceded he had missed a great opportunity to outmanoeuvre Gukesh in the Classical game, which would have fetched him three full points, instead of 1.5. "I hope I can win in a Classical game. But I missed a great chance today, I think," said Wei. Nakamura observed that Gukesh's tendency to go after Wei from the get-go despite having black pieces would explain why the Indian ran into trouble in the Classical game. In the end, it was the world champion who came close to winning the game, but a draw was fair to both the exponents. Erigaisi came up with a rare idea in

Erigaisi came up with a rare idea in the Slav Defense to surprise Nakamura but the American was quite familiar with the move

the Slav Defense to surprise Nakamura but the American was quite familiar with the move. Despite the American having a great chance of winning, he fumbled as the games ended in a draw.

The Armageddon tie-break too ended in agony for Nakamura, who was winning until he nonchalantly played a move even though he had three minutes on the clock to surrender the initiative.

With his Armageddon win against Caruana, Carlsen is leading the standings with 9.5 points. Caruana, is a close second with 8 points, while Nakamura is on 6.5.

In the women's section, two-time world rapid champion, Koneru Humpy took the lead with 8.5 points following a tie-break win against China's Lei Tingjie, while R. Vaishali scored a decisive win against Iranian-Spanish player Sara Khadem to log three points and move to fourth spot with 6.5 points. Vaishali, who climbed out of last place after securing three full points, said: "'This win feels good. The first few games did not go my way. I hope I'll have a good tournament from here on."

Messi scores as Inter Miami defeats 5-1 Columbus Crew

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Fort Lauderdale



Inter Miami was in a midseason slump just a week ago. Lionel Messi made sure it didn't last long. Messi scored for the fifth time in three Major League Soccer matches to help Inter Miami rout the Columbus Crew 5-1 on Saturday night for its second straight win.

Messi played a role each of Miami's goals. He scored twice - in the 15th and 24th minutes - giving him 10 goals this season, which leads his team and is tied for third in MLS. He set up Tadeo Allende's goal in the 13th, Fafà Picault's in the 89th and was also involved in Luis Suarez's score in the 64th. That makes it two straight matches that the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner has recorded at least two goals and an assist. His 16 goal contributions are the most in the league.

"I see him every game. We see the same thing," Miami coach Javier Mascherano said through an interpreter. "We try to help him as much as we can. ... Clearly he is the best player that has ever played this game. And we have to understand that when he is not brilliant, that's because one of us is failing. That's the reality." Miami was the more aggressive team early. The Herons had seven shots - four on goal - in the first 25 minutes against a Columbus team that does not give up many. The Crew entered Saturday ranked eighth in MLS with just 19 goals allowed.

Allende opened the scoring with a cross-body finish set up by Messi's long ball over the top. A few minutes later, Messi took advantage of a poor decision by goalkeeper Nicholas Hagen and lofted the ball over despite the keeper getting a hand on it.

On Messi's second goal, Sergio Busquets set up his former Barcelona teammate for the second straight game, sending a long pass to a streaking Messi for an easy finish over Hagen.

It was an important win for Miami, which entered Saturday with just two wins in its past eight matches and was sixth in the Eastern Conference. Miami beat Montreal 4-2 on Wednesday, and Saturday's win over Columbus put last year's Supporters' Shield winner in a tie for third place with 29 points in their final match before the start of next month's Club World Cup.

"Winning this way gives us confidence," Mascherano said. "It shows that we're brave and calm and can play against anybody, especially in the MLS. The tournament is another story. The rivals are are different level."

Miami will face Al Ahly of Egypt on June 14 at Hard Rock Stadium, the home stadium of the NFL's Miami Dolphins. Before that, Messi will join the Argentina national team for World Cup qualifiers against Chile on June 5 and Colombia on June 10. Saturday was the second match of the season between Columbus and Miami, winners of the last two League's Cup tournaments.

Inter Miami also beat Columbus to win the Supporters' Shield in 2024. They were the only remaining undefeated teams in MLS when they met in front of a record crowd of 60,614 fans to Huntington Bank Field on April 19. It was a single-game record for a Crew home match and the largest non-NFL event in stadium history. Miami won 1-0.

Columbus made it 3-1 when Dylan Chambost's corner was headed home by Cesar Ruvalcaba against goalkeeper Rocco Ríos Novo, who replaced Oscar Ustari in the second half. Mascherano said Ustari was experiencing discomfort in his leg and the team didn't want to risk an injury.

Suarez restored Miami's three-goal lead with his second goal in as many matches.

Magnus not retiring anytime soon, says Henrik Carlsen

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Stavanger

Henrik Carlsen does not believe his son Magnus, the world No. 1, will retire anytime soon though he is a bit concerned about how long the five-time world champion will be able to keep checkmating a rising group of mature young Indian players.

At 34, Magnus is not getting any younger, with young players, especially from India, excelling on the international stage. The prime example is D Gukesh, who became the youngest world champion at just 18 last year.

With R Praggnanandhaa, Arjun Erigaisi and others rising from India, the world number one is feeling the heat, and his father conceded it was time to be "realistic". "You have to be realistic. You now have a generation of Indian players, which… let me say that one thing is the strength of the Indian players. That's a bit boring for the rest of us, but the real worry is that they are so mature.

"Their mental state is more mature than their playing level. That's really worrying because they are young, so they should still be lacking that (maturity), but they seem to (have that). They seem to be psychologically prepared for becoming the top guys.

"As the father of a competitor, that worries me because that used to be an advantage that Magnus had against this up-and-coming player.

Magnus maybe still has a little bit of that intimidation factor, but it's not enough (to keep that supremacy for a very long time," added Henrik, a former chess player who reached a peak rating of around 2100 in 2007.

Henrik said with Gukesh competing in this edition of Norway Chess, Magnus was "thinking more" about facing the world champion, but in terms of preparation, he was following his regular regimen.

"I think he (Magnus) thought more about it because Gukesh is here. But in terms of preparations, well I shouldn't be revealing too much… but Magnus' way of preparing for tournaments are quite different from what you guys might expect. You have (he has) a regimen in a certain way.

"For Magnus, it's more about 'he's thinking about upcoming tournaments'. He's trying to adjust his tournament schedule so that it kind of fits into a pattern. He talks to his trainer a little bit; he has some ideas."

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Narne Nithin distances himself from debut film *Sri Sri Rajavaru*

NTR's brother-in-law, Narne Nithin, is gearing up for the release of his long-delayed film *Sri Sri Rajavaru*, which is finally set to hit the screens on June 6. Directed by Satish Vegesna of Sathamanam Bhavathi fame, the film stars Sampada as the female lead. Interestingly, this project was meant to be Nithin's debut nearly three years ago but faced multiple delays. A pre-release event was held in Hyderabad, but the lead actor was notably absent. According to a source, Nithin deliberately skipped the event and has shown no interest in promoting the film.

Sri Sri Rajavaru was initially planned for a grand release, but in the meantime, Nithin gained popularity with hit films like *Mad*, its sequel *Mad Square* and another successful venture, *Aay*. The source claimed, "The actor is not showing interest in releasing his debut film as it may affect his current success streak. That's why he was absent from both the event and the promotions."

It is also believed that Nithin requested the producers to shelve the film altogether. However, with significant investment already made, the producers decided to proceed. "They approached Nithin because he is NTR's brother-in-law and they expected support. Unfortunately, he is not cooperating," added the source. Director Satish Vegesna, a National Award winner, has worked on the film for nearly three years and hopes to move on to his next project after this release. Even though this is technically Nithin's debut, the makers are presenting it as his fourth film to capitalize on his recent popularity.

Despite repeated requests, Nithin reportedly claimed he was out of station and refused to participate in video promotions. Now, the promotional activities will proceed with the director, producer, lead actress, and other cast members. Sri Sri Rajavaru is a remake of the 2018 Malayalam film *Theevandi*.

NIKHIL STEPS INTO A WARRIOR'S SHOES FOR 20TH FILM *SWAYAMBHU*

After the massive success of *Karthikeya 2* (2022), actor Nikhil Siddhartha is gearing up for another Pan-India venture titled *Swayambhu*. This film marks his 20th film and promises to be a grand-scale historical action epic directed by Bharat Krishnamachari.

The film is currently in production and will showcase Nikhil in a never-before-seen avatar as a legendary warrior. It promises a powerful blend of drama, cultural depth and visual grandeur. Produced by Bhuvan and Sreekar, the film also stars Samyuktha and Nabha Natesh.

To mark Nikhil's birthday on June 1, the makers released a massive poster featuring Nikhil and Samyuktha. Set against a war-ravaged backdrop, the poster introduces the ancient Sengol, a symbol of righteousness and power. Nikhil looks intense, wielding a sword, while Samyuktha stands beside him with a bow and arrow, embodying strength and resolve. Historically, the Sengol was a token of righteous rule, from ancient kingdoms to post-independence India. Lord Rama received it as a symbol of just leadership. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had installed the Sengol near the Speaker's seat in the new Parliament building to honour its legacy.

With such a powerful historical reference, Swayambhu is weaving its narrative around legendary themes. The teaser is expected to drop soon, offering a deeper glimpse into this mythological epic.





Aggressive promotions begins for *Paramapada Sopanam*

Arjun Ambati, known for *Bigg Boss*, is all set to return to the silver screen with his upcoming film *Paramapada Sopanam*, which releases on July 11. The film features Jenifer Emmanuel as the female lead and is directed by Naga Shiva, who also handled the screenplay and dialogues. This marks his directorial debut after assisting Puri Jagannadh.

Dave Jhand, the music director of Ravi Teja's big-budget film Eagle, has composed music for *Paramapada Sopanam*. The team had few days back released their second song, a peppy mass number titled *Boom Boom*, sung by Geetha Madhuri. "I really enjoyed singing *Boom Boom*. It has a great swing and will entertain everyone," Geetha shared. The lyrics by Rambabu Gosala and Dave Jhand's energetic tune are aimed at captivating mass audiences. The film is produced by Gudimitla Siva Prasad.



Bharath joins Vijay Milton and Raj Tarun's bilingual film

Bharath, known for impactful performances in films like *Premisthe (Kaadhal)*, *Pattiyal* and *Kaalidas*, is now joining director Vijay Milton and Raj Tarun for their upcoming bilingual film. The actor will portray a role with emotional depth, internal conflict, and transformation.

Director Vijay Milton praised Bharath's contribution, saying, "He brings discipline and emotional precision. His character is at the emotional core of the story — someone standing at the crossroads of choice, consequence, and redemption."

This bilingual film is already building anticipation, with actor Aari playing a police officer for the first time and Raj Tarun making his Tamil debut. Adding to the excitement, music sensation Paal Dabba will also debut as an actor. The film is rooted in realism, social relevance, and gritty storytelling, characteristic of Vijay Milton's previous works. The official title will be announced on June 15.



Manchu Manoj voices concern over re-releases affecting new films

Bhairavam, featuring Bellamkonda Sai Srinivas, Manchu Manoj and Nara Rohit, released on May 30, followed by a media conference on May 31. During the event, Manchu Manoj spoke about the impact of re-released films on current releases.

"The re-release films should avoid weekends. If they release on weekdays, it would be ideal. One film is killing another Telugu film, which is not good. Weekends are when audiences go to theatres, so re-releases should avoid those slots," Manoj said.

While he did not name any film, it's worth noting that Mahesh Babu's *Khaleja* re-release coincided with *Bhairavam*. Manoj's comments suggest a direct impact on *Bhairavam's* collections.

He also pointed out that festival dates and holidays are already locked by big films, and now re-releases are adding pressure on smaller releases.

When asked about rumors surrounding the missing hard drive of his brother Manchu Vishnu's Kannappa, Manoj declined to comment. Vishnu had allegedly claimed that Manoj was involved in the matter. Manoj responded, "I don't want to comment on that hard drive. I'm focused on *Bhairavam* promotions. My best wishes to *Kannappa*."

STANDALONE



Actor Nagarjuna Akkineni and his wife Amala met with Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy to personally invite him to the wedding of their son, Akhil Akkineni. The wedding is set to take place on June 6 in Hyderabad. Joining the couple during the visit were Zainab Ravdjee's parents, as the families came together to extend the warm invitation. Akhil and Zainab, who got engaged last year, are all set to begin a new chapter in their lives with the blessings of their loved ones.



Playback singer Aditi Bhavaraju turns actress in rural drama *Dhandoraa*

The upcoming film *Dhandoraa*, set in rural Telangana, is a gritty drama that explores themes of love, honor, and societal issues. Backed by Ravindra Banerjee, who produced *Colour Photo* and *Bedurulanka 2012*, the film features an ensemble cast including Sivaji, Navdeep, Nandu, Ravi Krishna and Bindu Madhavi.

Marking a new chapter in her career, renowned singer Aditi Bhavaraju will make her acting debut with this film. Known for several chartbusters, Aditi will be playing a crucial role in the story. The announcement has generated buzz among fans eager to see her on screen.

Directed by Muralikanth with music by Mark K Robin, *Dhandoraa* has already completed major portions of its shoot in rural Telangana.