

Minister Kondapalli Srinivas participates in Polamamba Ammavari seva



Gajapathinagaram, August 26: State Minister for MSME, Rural Poverty Eradication and NRI Empowerment Relations Kondapalli Srinivas participated in seva of village goddess Polamamba Ammavaru at Vasantha village, Gantyada mandal in constituency. On Wednesday evening, he participated in procession of Polamamba Ammavaru being held in village, offered dhanyam naivedyam to goddess and took

blessings. Temple committee members gave grand welcome to minister Kondapalli Srinivas with tappetagullu musical instruments and bursting crackers and performed special pujas at temple. Speaking on occasion, Minister Kondapalli Srinivas said he wishes that blessings and grace of Polamamba Ammavaru be abundantly on people of constituency. Temple committee members and alliance leaders participated.

Foster team to fine tune Amaravati icons



Amaravati: An international team of architects from Norman Foster, the firm responsible for designing several iconic buildings in Amaravati, is touring Andhra Pradesh to finalise key design and execution aspects as the State government races to complete the first phase of the capital by August 2028. The team, which will remain in the State till August 27, held detailed discussions with Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu at the Secretariat on Tuesday. With tenders for several major buildings already finalised and construction

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Repati Ramanjaneyulu is APWJF Anantapur district president



Anantapur: Senior journalist Repati Ramanjaneyulu (iNews) was unanimously elected as the Anantapur District President of the Andhra Pradesh Working Journalists Federation (APWJF) at the IMA Hall on Tuesday. Shiva Prakash (Prajasakti) was elected APWJF General Secretary. Simultaneously, the Andhra Pradesh Broadcasting

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Andhra Pradesh to roll out Sanjeevani healthcare project statewide from January 1

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday directed officials to implement the Sanjeevani project—an initiative aimed at improving healthcare delivery—across the State from January 1. He stated that the full-scale implementation of the Sanjeevani project, featuring digital health records, could bring about revolutionary changes in medical services. The Chief Minister urged officials to make the Sanjeevani project a success so that other states would look to Andhra Pradesh as a model for healthcare services. He held a review meet-



ing with officials regarding the Sanjeevani project at his camp office. Noting the excellent results already achieved through the project's implementation in the Kuppam constituency and

Chittoor district, he instructed that it be rolled out across the entire State. The Chief Minister observed that families in the State currently incur heavy ex-

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Coalition govt committed to irrigation projects in Rayalaseema: Ministers



Rayalaseema: Ministers News Kurnool: The AP coalition government remains fully committed to delivering reliable drinking and irrigation water across Rayalaseema by completing key pending infrastructure initiatives, Ministers Nimmala Ramanaidu

and Gottipati Ravi Kumar declared on Tuesday. Addressing a meeting of coalition party in-charges and cadre at Mantralayam, the ministers highlighted that TDP-led governments have historically prioritized major regional projects

like Handri-Neeva, Galeru-Nagari, Telugu Ganga, Gandikota, and Gorakallu. They pointed out that while the previous YSRC regime spent only Rs 2,000 crore on Rayalaseema irrigation between 2019 and 2024, the earlier TDP administration invested Rs 12,000 crore from 2014 to 2019. Furthermore, out of Rs 27,000 crore spent on statewide irrigation over the past two years, nearly half was dedicated

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Some more mandals to be merged with GVMC



Visakhapatnam: Bheemunipatnam constituency MLA Ganta Srinivasa Rao on Tuesday said a field-level inspection is underway as part of the expansion process of the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) from the existing 98 to 120 wards. Addressing the media here on Tuesday, Srinivasa Rao informed that special focus was laid on the expansion of the GVMC and the upcoming local body elections as part of the government's broader vision to transform Visakhapatnam into a global city. He mentioned that plans have been prepared to merge

Anandapuram, Padmanabham, Bheemili rural and Pendurthi mandals, which fall under the Bheemili and Pendurthi constituencies with the GVMC. The four mandals together have 79 gram panchayats, including 26 in Anandapuram, 22 in Padmanabham, 16 in Bheemili and 15 in Pendurthi, he informed. The MLA said discussions were held with local leaders and a unanimous decision was taken to pursue the merger of these gram panchayats with the GVMC jurisdiction. Gram sabhas will be conducted as part of the process and the resolutions

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AP Govt takes special measures for Kharif cultivation despite El Nino



Amaravati: Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries Kinjara pu Atchannaidu stated that despite severe drought conditions in the State, the government has proactively initiated all necessary measures to ensure Kharif cultivation remains unhindered. He noted that while the government is working continuously to support farmers, former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's political criticisms ignoring ground realities are inappropriate. The Minister revealed that between the first week of June 2026 and August 25, the State recorded 192.8 mm of rainfall against

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The future of work will be built by reimagining how work should be done

In the early days of the automotive era, the first designs for cars were literally called “horseless carriages.” They featured slots to hold whips and were styled to look exactly like the buggies that preceded them. It is a classic pattern of human nature: when a revolutionary technology emerges, our immediate instinct is to force it into the shapes and structures we already understand. Today, we are repeating this very mistake with Artificial Intelligence (AI). Many executives look at workflows designed decades ago—built around human limitations, paper trails, and siloed software—and simply layer AI on top. They introduce an AI Assistant to draft emails faster, deploy a chatbot to handle basic customer queries, or use an automation layer to shave off a few minutes from a data entry task. They check a box, declare victory, and call it “digital transformation.” But optimisation is not transformation. True transformation does not mean doing your old work faster; it means changing the nature of the work itself.

Why do so many sophisticated enterprises default to superficial automation? The answer is less about technological capability and more about organizational psychology. In behavioural economics, this is driven by the status quo bias—our collective tendency to view any change from the established baseline as a loss. Improving a familiar process feels safe, predictable, and quantifiable. It generates immediate, minor efficiencies that look excellent on quarterly slide decks. Conversely, questioning whether that process should even exist requires stepping into the uncomfortable unknown. The consequences of this safety-first approach are now laid bare in macro-level data. According to BCG’s 2026 research, a striking 60% of organizations have yet to capture material value from AI at scale. The technology is performing as advertised, but it is being injected into broken or obsolete operating models. When you automate an inefficient process, you don’t eliminate the inefficiency—you simply accelerate it.

Companies that are breaking through this plateau and generating exponential value are doing something fundamentally different. They are moving past incremental layers and actively redesigning their entire operating model end-to-end around the native capabilities of AI. Unleashing the true power of AI agents: To design an AI-native process, we must first understand what modern AI Agents are capable of within a mature architecture. They are no longer mere productivity tools meant to assist a single employee with an isolated task. Instead, they act as dynamic system orchestrators capable of managing complex, multi-step workflows. Within a properly architected enterprise environment,

- AI Agents can:**
- Analyse massive volumes of information: Sifting through unstructured data, telemetry, and legacy archives in real time to extract actionable intelligence.
 - Coordinate activities across a process: Interoperating between fragmented software systems, legacy databases, and communication channels without requiring manual human handoffs.
 - **Apply business rules and decision criteria:** Executing sophisticated logic to assess compliance, evaluate risk, or allocate corporate resources based on organizational guidelines.

Andhra Pradesh to roll out Sanjeevani healthcare project statewide from January 1

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penses on education and healthcare, and initiatives like Sanjeevani are being introduced to help reduce this financial burden.He directed the Tata MD, an official partner in the Sanjeevani project, to focus on pioneering innovations in the healthcare sector.Officials informed the Chief Minister that a 90-day plan has been prepared to expand the Sanjeevani programme statewide. It was revealed that the 90-day plan includes measures such as a baseline study, the establishment of digital infrastructure, training, certification and integration with national and state portals. Plans to train medical staff across 28 districts were also outlined.“Medical services must be predictive, preventive, curative, and cost-effective. Beyond providing medical care, efforts should be made to bring about changes in dietary habits and mindsets. We must leverage Homoeopathy, Ayurveda, Yoga, and Pranayama alongside state-of-the-art medical science,” he said.The Chief Minister said ‘AI Doctors’ should also be brought into widespread use. In addition to securing and maintaining the confidentiality of data, a dashboard must be prepared. Attention should be focused on outsourced services in hospitals, including sanitation. A policy must be introduced to remove outsourcing service providers who fail to deliver services efficiently. Medical services should be designed to instil confidence, and a system must be established to send health updates directly to people’s mobile phones, he said.The Chief Minister reviewed the results achieved through the implementation of the ‘Sanjeevani’ programme in the Kuppam and Chittoor regions. Officials reported that in Chittoor, 56% of hypertension cases were brought under control, and the severity of 16% of diabetes cases was reduced. A significant increase in the utilisation of primary healthcare services was also reported.A survey conducted to gauge public opinion on ‘Sanjeevani’ services revealed that 91% of respondents gained a better understanding of their health following these services.Officials informed the Chief Minister that an AI-driven healthcare system is being developed to cover the entire process, from screening to treatment and follow-up.

Foster team to fine tune Amaravati icons

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tion resumed after the present government assumed office, the focus is now on resolving critical design and execution issues. The government has set August 2028 as the deadline for completing the first phase. The Foster team is conducting workshops in Amaravati and reviewing the five GAD towers, Assembly building and High Court complex. In the GAD towers, discussions are focusing on the interior configuration, including the orientation of the Chief Minister’s chamber and seating arrangements, as the structures advance towards their final form. Assembly building, whose design features a tower rising more than 250 metres above the structure. The government proposes to make the landmark a tourist attraction, allowing visitors to access the tower and obtain a panoramic view of Amaravati. The Foster team discussed structural safety, visitor movement, precautions and other design requirements associated with the unusually tall tower. Discussions on the High Court building are centred on technologies needed to support its increasing height and number of floors. On Tuesday, a team from Norman Fosters presented the latest interior concepts to the Chief Minister. Naidu offered several suggestions and sought refinements to ensure the designs match the functional and aesthetic requirements of the new capital complex. Minister P Narayana, senior officials from the municipal administration and urban development department and CRDA also took part in the review meeting. Meanwhile, work on the Quantum Lab, being developed by another firm, is nearing completion. L&T is executing the lab and two Quantum Towers on a 50-acre site. The two towers have been tendered, though the formal agreement is yet to be concluded. The globe-shaped Quantum Lab, located between the two towers, will house the primary quantum computer. Its specialised ‘room-within-a-room’ technology, largely of German origin, is designed to protect quantum chips operating at high temperatures.

Coalition govt committed to irrigation projects in Rayalaseema: Ministers

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to the four Rayalaseema districts. To resolve critical safety concerns, the government allocated Rs 201 crore for Srisailam repairs and Rs 60 crore for Gorakallu reservoir work. They also successfully replaced all 33 gates at the Tungabhadra project—saving 80 TMC of water—and expanded the Handri-Neeva flow to 3,800 cusecs, sanctioning Rs 1,300 crore for the Neeva branch and Rs 700 crore for the Madakasira branch. Focusing on western

Kurnool, the ministers announced Rs 17 crore to clear pending bills and maintenance for Guru Raghavendra Motors and targeted 2029 for completing the Rs 1,600 crore Vedavathi project. They added that inter-state disputes regarding the Gundrevula and Rajolibanda Diversion Scheme (RDS) projects are being actively resolved through amicable discussions, urging the opposition to review its past governance before issuing criticisms.

AP Govt takes special measures for Kharif cultivation despite El Nino

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normal average of 393.7 mm—a 51% deficit. Despite this shortfall, pulses cultivation grew by 23.6%, increasing from 2.16 lakh hectares last year to 2.66 lakh hectares this year. He detailed the current cultivation metrics, including red gram (2.30 lakh hectares), paddy (10.37 lakh hectares) and cotton (3.97 lakh hectares). Alert On El Niño Since February The Minister highlighted that the government had been conducting reviews and taking input from agricultural scientists since the Centre issued an El Niño alert in February 2026. District-wise drought mitigation and crisis management plans were drafted, and the state-wide program ‘Raithanna Meekosam – El Niño Effect Mitigation Plan – Kharif 2026’ was launched on August 7, 2026. Also Read Vice-President to felicitate Nuzvid farmers today Advertisement Slamming the previous YSRCP administration, Atchannaidu stated that under Jagan’s five-year tenure, not a single rupee in crop insurance compensation was

awarded for any Rabi season, as the government failed to clear its share of the premium for three out of five Kharif seasons and multiple Rabi seasons. He clarified that the coalition government is not forcing farmers to pay heavy premiums; under the voluntary crop insurance policy, farmers pay only 2% of the premium (e.g., Rs 76/acre for paddy, Rs 36/acre for red gram), while the Central and State governments split the remaining cost. Consequently, insurance applications jumped from 19.5 lakh in Kharif 2025 to 35.1 lakh in Kharif 2026, bringing coverage to 15.1 lakh hectares worth Rs 13,983 crore. The Minister noted that the current government has submitted a clear roadmap to the Centre to clear Rs 2,000 crore in pending crop insurance dues left by the previous regime, scheduling phased payments through 2028–29. He reaffirmed that the coalition government’s policy is not to burden farmers, but to provide them with complete security and reassurance.

Repati Ramanjaneyulu is APWJF Anantapur district president

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Journalists Association (APBJA) unanimously elected B Madhusudan Reddy (Mavy TV) as President and RK Surya (6TV) as General Secretary. Following a massive city rally paying tribute to Dr BR Ambedkar, newly elected APWJF President Ramanjaneyulu promised to intensify struggles for media rights and demanded the implementation of a journalist pension scheme in Andhra Pradesh.

Some more mandals to be merged with GVMC

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adopted will be submitted to the government. Also Read Pop culture Comic Con debuting in Vizag Advertisement Discover more News Premium News Access Video News Clips Srinivasa Rao said efforts would also be made to seek special funds and tax exemptions to ensure these villages do not lose the benefits of VB-G RAM-G following their merger with the urban local body. He recalled that letters seeking the merger of the four mandals with the GVMC had been submitted to Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister P Narayana and Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, a year ago, and said the government had agreed to the proposal in principle. The MLA expressed hope that the government would introduce direct elections for the post of Mayor in the forthcoming GVMC elections. Such a system, he opined that it would lead Visakhapatnam with strong leadership capable of giving the city international recognition. The MLA also said discussions were underway with the Nellimarla MLA on a proposal to bring

the Bhogapuram Airport region under the GVMC limits. Speaking on the issue of local body elections, Srinivasa Rao stated that the government was consulting legal experts on technical matters relating to census rules, delimitation and pending court cases. He expressed confidence that the elections would be conducted smoothly once the legal hurdles were resolved. Highlighting the coalition government’s commitment to the development of Visakhapatnam, Ganta Srinivasa Rao said the alliance was moving ahead with a clear vision for the city and expressed confidence that the alliance parties would win the GVMC Mayor’s post with a huge majority.

MSMEs on green path with RAMP



Vijayawada, August 26: With aim of encouraging MSMEs towards eco-friendly production methods and enhancing their competitiveness through energy efficiency, water conservation and efficient resource utilization, Andhra Pradesh government organized awareness and capacity building programme in Vijayawada under Central Government's Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) programme. As part of RAMP programme being implemented under Union Ministry of MSME, programme on greening of MSMEs in Andhra Pradesh was held at Hotel Sri Kuber Grand, Gandhinagar, Vijayawada. Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) and CII jointly organized programme. In inaugural session, NTR District Industries Centre General Manager M Madhu participated and suggested MSMEs should adopt green production methods in line with environmental protection along with economic development. Former Chairman of Vijayawada Master Printers Association E Phani Purna Chandra Rao,

Joint Secretary of AP Offset Printers Association Srinivas Valega, Secretary of Indian Institute of Foundrymen AP chapter Amarnath delivered special addresses. Technical awareness was given on energy efficiency, solar power, financial assistance available for MSMEs. MSMEs were suggested to participate in investment grade energy audits, water audits being conducted in selected industrial clusters and utilize opportunities to save costs besides reducing energy and water consumption. More than 60 MSMEs belonging to printing and metal casting industrial clusters in NTR district participated in programme and discussed energy saving, use of modern technology, financial assistance and eco-friendly business practices. On this occasion, it was said that productivity, competitiveness and sustainability of MSMEs will further improve by adopting green technologies and therefore industries should actively become partners in green MSME development programme.

Minister Kondapalli Srinivas participates in Intintiki Telugu Desam



Gajapathinagaram, August 26: State Minister for MSME, Rural Poverty Eradication and NRI Empowerment Relations Kondapalli Srinivas participated in Intintiki Telugu Desam programme at Narava village, Gantyada mandal in constituency. On Wednesday evening, he participated in Intintiki Telugu Desam programme at Narava village and explained development

and welfare schemes undertaken by alliance government in two years. He distributed pamphlets of development schemes undertaken by government to people. Speaking on occasion, Minister Kondapalli Srinivas said alliance government has credit of fulfilling promises given in elections. Alliance party leaders participated in programme.

Dr Shankar Sharma distributes sarees to poor Muslim women

Kurnool: Highlighting India's rich tradition of religious harmony, Dr Shankar Sharma distributed sarees to underprivileged Muslim women in Kurnool city on Tuesday on the occasion of Milad-un-Nabi. Explaining that the festival marks the birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad, Dr Sharma stressed that

people of all religions and cultures in India should celebrate festivals collectively in unity. He stated that he organized the distribution drive to support poor families during the festive season. Local leaders commended his noble effort to promote communal brotherhood and assist the needy ahead of the celebrations.

Blessings of Goddess Nookambika should be there- Minister Kondapalli Srinivas couple has darshan of Goddess



Anakapalli, August 26: State Minister for MSME, Rural Poverty Eradication and NRI Empowerment Relations Kondapalli Srinivas said he prayed that blessings of famous Goddess Nookambika be abundantly on Telugu people of both states and alliance government. Minister Kondapalli Srinivas along with his wife Lakshmi Sindhu had darshan of Goddess Nookambika on Wednesday and performed special pujas. They offered saree, blouse, turmeric, kumkum, bangles and tambulam to Goddess. At temple, Temple Chairman Peela Naga Srinu, Gavara Corporation AP Chairman Malla Surendra and former MLA TDP in-charge Peela Govind accorded Poornakumbha welcome to minister couple amidst mangala vadyams and chanting of mantras by Vedic pundits. Later, special pujas were performed at Goddess Moolavirat and special harathis were offered. After darshan, Vedic blessings were given, silk clothes and picture of Goddess were presented to minister couple. Speaking to media on

occasion, Minister Kondapalli Srinivas said his childhood friends Sudhir's father Sudhakar and their family members told him they vowed to fulfil vow to Goddess if he wins in elections. He said he is happy that he got fortune to have darshan of Goddess after two years. He said temple prakaram and Goddess form foster spiritual feeling in mind. He said he wishes blessings of Goddess Nookambika, who is highly trusted, family deity of devotees and kongu bangaram for those who believe, be on everyone. He said he is happy with welcome given by temple committee members, trust members and Vedic pundits. Devasthanam Temple Assistant Commissioner Yalla Sridhar, temple trustees Sure Satish, Dadi Ravikumar, Polimera Swati Anand, Mariseti Shankara Rao, Kandregula Rajarapu, Majji Janaki Srinivasa Rao, Kodukula Srikanth, Vaddadi Manga, Koneti Suryalakshmi Paidiraju, Yerravarapu Santoshi Kumari Nagesh and others participated in programme.

Mother Teresa is embodiment of service- Minister Kondapalli Srinivas



Vizianagaram, August 26: State Minister for MSME, Rural Poverty Eradication and NRI Empowerment Relations Kondapalli Srinivas said everyone should work for fulfilment of ideals of Mother Teresa, embodiment of service. On occasion of Mother Teresa birth anniversary, he garlanded her portrait at minister camp office and paid tributes. Speaking on occasion, Minister Kondapalli Srinivas said Mother Teresa is motherly figure who came from another country and rendered various services to many unfortunate

people in distress in metropolitan city like Kolkata. He said Mother Teresa is great hearted good human being and service-oriented woman who established Missionaries of Charity in Kolkata and rendered services to helpless, orphans and even leprosy patients. He said Mother Teresa received many prestigious awards like Padma Shri, Bharat Ratna and Nobel Peace Prize in India for her selfless services. He said her services are evident from saying that helping others should be learnt from Mother Teresa.



Bihar on alert as Nepal floods raise Gandak surge threat, all 36 barrage gates opened

Patna: Bihar was put on alert over the possibility of a sudden rise in the Gandak river’s water discharge following flash floods in several districts of neighbouring Nepal on Wednesday, prompting the state authorities to open all 36 gates of a barrage on the river to help control the situation, officials said.

Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary convened a meeting with the Chief Secretary Pratyaya Amrit and other top officials to review the situation. All concerned have been directed to remain on “high alert”, take all necessary measures in a timely manner, and maintain continuous vigil over the situation, officials said.

Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Kumar Choudhary, who also holds the Water Resources department (WRD) portfolio, said that around 86,000 cusecs of water was discharged from the Gandak Barrage at Valmikinagar around noon, with the trend showing a further rise. “The WRD has taken immediate precautionary measures. All 36 gates of the Gandak Barrage at Valmikinagar have been opened, and a technical team led by a Superintending Engineer has been deployed at the barrage. Warnings have also been issued to all districts in the Gandak river basin”, said the deputy CM.

Opening of 36 gates of the Gandak Barrage can facilitate the flow of the water and help control the flood situation, officials of the department said.

He said the water level of the Narayani river at the Devghat gauge site in Nepal stood at 4.77 metres, against a danger level of 9 metres and a warning level of 7.30 metres. If the river level rises further, the surge is expected to reach the Gandak Barrage in around 3.5 hours, they said. Choudhary said the state needs to remain on alert for the next five to six hours and throughout the night following floods in Nepal. He said the situation was more serious than before but remained under control for now.

Appealing to the people to remain alert but not panic, the deputy CM said the chief minister was personally monitoring the situation. There was currently no report of a rise in the water level of the Kosi river, he added.



A sudden, massive flood swept through two central Nepal districts bordering Tibet, killing four people, causing extensive devastation at settlements along the river and damaging at least a dozen hydropower projects early Wednesday. Departmental officials have been directed to ensure all preparations in view of a possible emergency, maintain continuous vigilance and monitoring, stock essential materials, and ensure regular inspection of embankments. A review meeting chaired by Chief Secretary Pratyaya Amrit was held on Wednesday with district magistrates and senior police officials of the bordering districts, the statement said.

District authorities have been directed to complete all rescue and relief preparations and closely monitor the situation, it said. Special vigilance has been ordered in West Champaran, East Champaran, Gopalganj, Saran, Muzaffarpur and Vaishali, besides other vulnerable districts such as Sitamarhi and Sheohar. “Officials have been asked to monitor water levels of Gandak and other rivers, embankments, low-lying areas, bridges and other vulnerable locations and alert local communities in time. A National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) team will be sent to Gopalganj, while another will be kept on standby in Muzaffarpur,” said the statement.

History Arrangements are also being made for deployment of an NDRF team in Bettiah. The Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) has assured additional QRT support, if required, it said. District administrations have been directed to keep evacuation plans, boats, shelters and community kitchens ready. The government said additional NDRF/SDRF teams, boats and other resources would be deployed as required.

FSSAI issues notices to JW Marriott, Andaz over food safety violations

New Delhi: Food regulator FSSAI on Wednesday said it had issued notices to five-star hotels JW Marriott and Andaz at Aerocity here for serious violations of food safety and hygiene laws, including the presence of cockroaches near freezers.

In a social media post, the regulator said it had issued a notice to JW Marriott hotel, which is a unit of Aria Hotels and Consultancy Services Pvt Ltd. The notice was issued “over serious food safety violations and non-compliance with FSSAI requirements.” In another post, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said it had issued a notice to Juniper Hotels Pvt Ltd (Andaz, Aerocity, Delhi) following inspections that “uncovered serious food safety violations”. The regulator collected samples from both hotels and said further action would be taken based on laboratory reports. During the inspections, FSSAI officials found serious deficiencies related to hygiene and sanitation. In the case of JW Marriott, officials observed inadequate pest control, the presence of cockroaches and fruit flies, and poor maintenance of food premises.

In the case of Andaz hotel, the FSSAI inspection revealed active cockroaches near freezers, houseflies, mosquitoes in the grinding room, spider webs, and the discovery of a ‘gutka’ packet inside the bottling plant area. Comments from both hotels could not be immediately obtained. During the inspection at JW Marriott, FSSAI officials found “serious hygiene and sanitation deficiencies, including unclean utensils and food-contact surfaces, visible particulate matter in drinking water, inadequate pest control, cockroaches and fruit flies, and poor maintenance of food premises.” The regulator found spoiled/fungal-affected food at the hotel. It also observed improper food storage and cross-contamination risks. “These included fungal growth on apples, rotten tomatoes, uncovered food, damaged storage containers, inadequate vegetarian/non-vegetarian segregation, improperly stored cut vegetables and food products not maintained as per prescribed storage conditions,” FSSAI said. Moreover, FSSAI pointed out that various kitchens and food preparation areas, including the Chinese, Indian, Italian and bakery kitchens, showed deficiencies such as pest infestation, non-operational exhaust systems, poor sanitation, inadequate allergen segregation, defective storage containers, improper food identification and inappropriate storage of food products. Deficiencies were also observed in the water bottling area, dry store, coffee shop and vegetable preparation area, including rusting of the drinking-water storage tank, deficiencies in imported-food labelling, poor sanitation and fruit-fly infestation.

“The overall inspection revealed deficiencies relating to licensing/KOB compliance, labelling, food storage, temperature control, sanitation, pest control, personal hygiene, cross-contamination prevention, allergen management, traceability, maintenance and potable water,” the regulator said. Elaborating on the violations, the regulator said certain food products/materials, including paneer, khoya, chana masala and chilli, were found without the requisite licence/appropriate endorsement available for verification. That apart, the hotel company was found carrying out retail and re-labeller activities without the requisite endorsement in its FSSAI licence, including retailing food products under the JW Marriott brand name. “Labelling deficiencies were observed in pre-packaged food products, including misprinted FSSAI licence numbers and non-declaration of the complete manufacturer’s address,” the regulator said. The FSSAI licence was also not displayed at a prominent place on the premises. During an inspection at Andaz hotel, FSSAI said “several serious food safety and hygiene deficiencies were observed, including improper segregation of vegetarian and non-vegetarian food, pest activity, poor sanitation, inadequate food



handler hygiene and improper food storage practices.” Officials found expired food products, including about 87 kg of expired sweets, an expired cake base and bread packets. Other deficiencies included inadequate temperature monitoring, improper allergen segregation, poor waste management, structural and maintenance issues, and inadequate supplier verification and receiving practices. The FSSAI’s inspection team collected regulatory and surveillance samples including cow ghee, veg mayonnaise, creamy coconut milk powder, honey twigs, yellow masoor dal, tomato sauce, orange marmalade and coconut cookies for analysis.

Elaborating further, FSSAI said the inspection revealed active cockroaches near freezers, houseflies, mosquitoes in the grinding room, spider webs, and the discovery of a ‘gutka’ packet inside the bottling plant area. FSSAI officials also observed duplicate date-marking applied over expired bread packaging, alongside severe unpleasant odours and chillers situated directly between two bathrooms, with exhaust venting into the chiller section. The regulator has asked the hotel company to take immediate corrective action with respect to the non-compliances observed and submit a compliance report at the earliest, along with supporting evidence. In the past few months, FSSAI has cracked down on food business operators as well as e-commerce platforms over misleading claims, labelling and advertisements.

Hyderabad police warn of hybrid cyber fraud targeting senior citizens

Hyderabad: City Police Commissioner V.C. Sajjanar has warned citizens about a new form of hybrid cyber fraud in which criminals combine traditional mobile phone theft with sophisticated cybercrime techniques to drain victims’ bank accounts. Investigations by the cybercrime wing revealed that organised gangs were particularly targeting senior citizens and people with limited knowledge of technology. Three suspects have so far been arrested and five mobile phones recovered from them. Sajjanar said gang members first identify elderly people using smartphones at bus stations, railway stations, crowded RTC buses and other public places. They observe victims entering their screen lock patterns, PINs or passwords before stealing their phones by diverting their attention. If the stolen phone is locked, the criminals use social engineering techniques. When victims call the phone, they pose as bus conductors, drivers or good Samaritans and claim that the device has been found.

Rakul Preet Singh gives up coffee, shares hilarious ‘transformation’

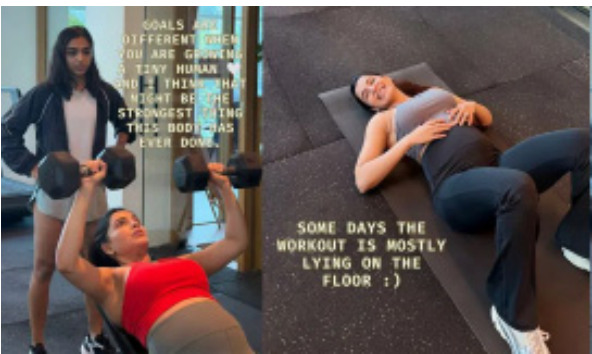
Mumbai: Actress Rakul Preet Singh gave a glimpse into her life after giving up caffeine. She shared a humorous take on her decision to quit coffee. Taking to Instagram, the ‘Pati Patni Aur Woh Do’ shared a video of herself lying on a bed. The clip carried the text, “Watch me transform after giving up caffeine.” She paired the post with a witty caption that read, “Apparently, quitting coffee was a decision my body was not consulted about.” With her post, Rakul appeared to highlight the struggle of staying away from caffeine, especially for those who are used to their regular cup of coffee. The video begins with Rakul looking energetic and laughing. However, after “quitting caffeine,” she shows her hilarious “transformation” by lying on a bed and appearing visibly irritated. Rakul Preet Singh often shares snippets of her personal and professional life on social media. From sharing stunning photoshoot pictures to giving a glimpse into her life with husband Jackky Bhagnani, Rakul often gives a peek into her life through her social media posts. Keeping up with this trajectory, Rakul recently gave a glimpse into her professional and personal bond with Jackky Bhagnani. She



revealed that their partnership is fuelled by constant laughter and endless conversations about food. The actress shared a series of pictures with Jackky in a collaborative social media post. Reflecting on their equation, she said their shared synergy makes building something exciting together as a couple a truly rewarding experience. “People ask us what it’s like working together. The answer? Half the time we’re discussing work, the other half we’re laughing and discussing what to eat. It’s fun because I feel our synergy is aligned. Building a life together is one thing. Building something you’re both excited about is a whole different experience,” Rakul wrote as the caption. Work-wise, Rakul will next be seen playing Surpanakha in ‘Ramayana’ by Nitesh Tiwari.

Samantha Ruth Prabhu shares glimpse of pregnancy fitness routine

Mumbai: Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu offered a glimpse into her fitness routine during pregnancy. She shared her pictures from the gym on social media. Alongside the photos, the ‘Oo Antava’ actress spoke about how her approach to training has changed and stressed the importance of listening to one’s body. Sharing a disclaimer, Samantha said that she has been strength training for years and has continued exercising during pregnancy after receiving clearance from her doctor. She also revealed that her trainer is certified in prenatal training and that her workouts have been modified according to her body, experience, and pregnancy. She further urged people not to consider her workouts as a guide for their own pregnancies. Sharing her workout pictures, Samantha wrote, “A little disclaimer: I’ve strength trained for years and have continued through pregnancy with my doctor’s clearance. My trainer is also certified in prenatal training, and everything you see here is modified for my body, my experience, and my pregnancy.” “Every pregnancy is different, so please don’t use my workouts as a guide for yours. Speak to your doctor and work with someone qualified before exercising during pregnancy.” Samantha also shared messages through her images.



One video showed the actress performing a chest exercise at the gym. The video carried the text, “Training looks a little different these days. Less about pushing harder. More about listening better.” In another image, the actress wrote, “When you stop at 70 percent of your max.” She added, “Some days I feel strong. Some days I modify.” In the next one, she was seen lying on the floor and wrote, “Some days the workout is mostly lying on the floor.” Adding to this, the ‘Kushi’ actress said, “I have spent years training my body to do more. Now I am learning to respect it when it asks me to do less.” The text on the last picture read, “Goals are different when you are growing a tiny human, and I think that might be the strongest thing this body has ever done.” Samantha Ruth Prabhu made her pregnancy public in June 2026, confirming that she and filmmaker Raj Nidimoru are preparing to welcome their first child.

Kriti Sanon’s Raksha Bandhan ad pulled down after outfit controversy

Mumbai: A day after Kriti Sanon clapped back at trolls criticizing her outfit in a recent Raksha Bandhan advertisement, the brand itself now has pulled down the campaign, stating that they have the highest regard and deep respect for Indian culture, traditions and festivals. Kriti on August 25 shared a note on her Instagram handle, where she pointed out that the essence of any festival lies in the emotions, and not in the clothes we wear. She was seen donning an off-white ensemble featuring a bralette-style blouse, a cape, and a draped skirt for an advertisement for a jewellery brand for Raksha Bandhan. The brand on Wednesday shared a statement on Instagram, where they said that they have the highest regard and deep respect for Indian



culture. Kriti wrote: “We have the highest regard and deep respect for Indian culture, traditions and festivals. As a brand, we have always believed in celebrating these joyous moments with the entire family and this time we wanted to extend the love and celebration to our pets.”

Richa Chadha: Got a special Onam dress made for Zuneeyra to be dressed for the occasion

Mumbai: Actress Richa Chadha attended a special ceremony at Kerala’s Gurupuram Sree Maha Vishnu Temple with her daughter Zuneeyra on the occasion of Onam. Richa went with a purpose to gift a life size mechanical elephant, Gurupuram Arjunan to the temple. Dressed in the traditional white and gold sari and her daughter dressed in a traditional Onam dress, the mother-daughter duo immersed themselves in the spirit of Onam. Richa said, “It was a very special feeling to be here in person and celebrate Onam in such a beautiful and culturally rich setting. To be there with my daughter made it even more special.” The ceremony was followed by a traditional Chenda Melam performance and a Thiruvathira dance performance, adding to the festive atmosphere. “To see her enjoy the festivities, colours and immerse her in the traditions felt truly special. We got a special Onam dress made for her to be dressed for the occasion. Our festivals, traditions are such an integral part of who we are,” the actress said. Richa said that she believes that embracing our culture also means understanding how we can carry these “traditions forward with greater compassion, with the aid of technology.” “There is something beautiful about witnessing a tradition being preserved, more kindly and thoughtfully of celebrating it. Onam is a festival that celebrates togetherness, abundance, gratitude and the spirit of community. Celebrations should always include compassion.” Richa said elephants are such magnificent and intelligent beings, these large mammals are highly social. “They deserve to live freely in their natural environment with their



kind. I am truly grateful that this temple, its trustees agreed to this magnificent present. I am sure it will become a local attraction! ““For me, this was not simply about presenting an elephant to a temple; it was about being part of a cultural celebration, experiencing the warmth of the people, eating Onam Sadhya with them here and contributing in a small way to something that can have a larger impact,” Richa said, adding “I hope more people see that tradition and compassion do not have to be at odds with each other. We can celebrate our festivals, honour our customs and still make choices that are kinder to animals. I feel grateful to have been able to witness this moment and to celebrate Onam in such a meaningful way.”

Katy Perry pays tribute to Dolly Parton, recalls her as a woman who defied stereotypes



Mumbai: Singer Katy Perry has paid a heartfelt tribute to country music legend Dolly Parton, remembering her as a woman who challenged stereotypes, inspired generations and carried a larger-than-life spirit with a heart to match. Perry took to Instagram, where she shared a string of memories featuring her with Parton, who passed away aged 80 after a brief battle with cancer. “Like the rest of the world, my heart sank seeing the news of dear Dolly’s passing. She meant so much to so many people for so long. For me, she was an example of a woman who defied the stereotypes for decades. She proved that big b**s, big brains, and a big voice can all exist in one tiny body! But the biggest thing about her by far was her heart,” Perry wrote. The “Roar” hitmaker added that she had the honour of meeting and singing with her several times. “Every time I

saw Dolly, she was a pure, sweet (but not saccharine) sassy, cup of joy. Her way of looking at life with a sense of humour has always been an inspiration to me... I remember having a dream of having her sing with me for my Super Bowl show, popping out of a larger-than-life rhinestone cowboy boot... and though she couldn’t do it at the time she sent my team a sweet note, through fax... it was 2015! lol.” Perry added: “If there’s someone you wanna look up to and model your life after, it’s Dolly. Dolly was glam, funny, and kind as fuck. Her star will forever shine bright and I bet you she’s already remodeling them pearly gates with rhinestones. We will always love you Dolly!” Dolly Parton passed away on Tuesday at the age of 80. Her nephew, Bryan Seaver, who was also her head of security, revealed the news in an Instagram video. She died after a brief battle with cancer.

Suruchi savours journey from unknown shooter to Asian Games contender

New Delhi: From being an unknown 13-year-old in Bhiwani, without even an Indian jersey, to earning the right to wear the national colours at the Asian Games, shooter Suruchi Inder Singh Phogat’s journey is a testament to how far she has come, and the young athlete cherishes the pride of representing India on the biggest stage. Suruchi’s first encounter with a pistol at the Guru Dronacharya Shooting Academy in Bhiwani wasn’t driven by ambition for world records. As a 13-year-old from Sasroli village in Haryana’s Jhajjar district, she traveled there by local train with her father and brothers, without any sponsorship or recognition in the sport. Seven years later, now 20, she has become a junior world record holder, won multiple ISSF World Cup gold medals, and is one of India’s top contenders for medals at the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya. Her journey has been characterised by gradual, silent transformation rather than sudden fame. “When I started shooting, nobody knew me. I was just a normal 13-year-old girl who didn’t even have an Indian jersey. Today, wearing that jersey is something I’m genuinely proud of. For me, it represents how far I have come,” Suruchi said, reflecting on the distance she has covered since those early days in Bhiwani. Shooting wasn’t the sport she was destined for either. She found her way to it almost by chance, and has never looked back since. “I’m actually thankful that I came into shooting. If I had chosen another sport, especially a team sport, maybe I wouldn’t have reached this far. Shooting gave me the chance to build something on my own, and I’m



happy with where that has taken me.” To the outside world, the sport can look deceptively simple, just a shooter standing still, taking aim. Suruchi insists that it couldn’t be further from the truth. “People look at shooting and think, ‘What is so difficult? You just have to stand and shoot.’ They don’t see what is happening inside you. Controlling your thoughts, your breathing and your emotions while every shot matters, that is the real challenge.” That internal struggle has also influenced how she handles days when things don’t go as planned. “A medal is not the only thing I take away from a competition. If I don’t win, I look for the mistake. Maybe my technique was wrong, maybe something was missing. I find it, learn from it and come back better. That is how I improve.” She attributes part of that steady progress to the structure established by the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) for its shooters. “NRAI has given me much more than just the opportunity to compete. The coaches, camps have changed the way I train, prepare and understand my game. I have become a much more disciplined athlete because of that support.”

Pasindu Sooriyabandara’s unbeaten 90 keeps Sri Lanka alive against India

Colombo: Pasindu Sooriyabandara blocked the Indian bowlers for a whole session to make a defiant unbeaten 90, carrying Sri Lanka to 199 for three in their second innings at tea on day four of the second and final Test here on Wednesday. Skipper Dhananjaya de Silva (4) is giving company to Sooriyabandara at the break, with the home side now trailing India by 14 runs. The highlight of the middle session was the 115-run alliance between Sooriyabandara and Kamindu Mendis (55, 92b). The pair fought against the Indian bowlers for 110 minutes, bridging the heavy 213-run innings deficit that had forced Sri Lanka to follow on. Sri Lanka’s effort in the second innings was a marked improvement over the first innings, in which they were bundled out for 290. That total was built around Sonal Dinusha’s 103, his second hundred of the series. However, the Sooriyabandara-Mendis partnership in the ongoing innings was anything but obdurate. Both batters played with freedom and were never hesitant to take the attack to the bowlers. Mendis creamed Manav Suthar for two sixes and did not allow the left-arm spinner to settle into a consistent rhythm. Later, Sooriyabandara too slog-swept Suthar for a six as the young tweaker struggled to make an impact for the first time in this series. Mendis reached his fifty with a flourish, pulling Prasad Krishna for a six off 87 balls, and soon Sooriyabandara too joined his teammate with a 78-ball fifty. However, Prasad broke the swelling stand with a short-pitched ball that cramped Mendis for room, and Shubman Gill completed a fine running catch to give marching orders to the Lankan batter.

But before that, Sri Lanka were wobbling at 83 for two at lunch. Resuming from 265 for eight, Dinusha, who was unbeaten on 85 overnight, compiled his second hundred of the series.



But his brave knock did not help Sri Lanka avert the follow-on, as they were bowled out for 290, a mere 13 runs shy of the follow-on mark. Dinusha raced to the 90s with a six, a slog sweep and a four, all hit to the on-side, off Saransh Jain. The right-hander reached the coveted three-figure mark with a thunderous pull off Prasad, a moment he celebrated with pride and gusto. But soon his overnight partner Lahiru Kumara departed, lofting Jain to Dhruv Jurel at cover. It was the 34-year-old’s maiden Test wicket. Jurel resumed his outfield duties as Rishabh Pant, who copped a blow on his shoulder on the second day and stayed away from the field on Tuesday, returned to don the wicketkeeper’s gloves. Dinusha, whose arrival as a Test batter might have warmed Lankan hearts, did not last long, perishing to Jain. The Madhya Pradesh spinner induced a false drive from Dinusha, which was pouched by KL Rahul at slip. However, India had a moment of worry as Siraj hurt himself while diving for a catch. The pacer had to go off to receive medical attention but returned to the field after some time. In the second session, he bowled with a shorter run-up, and Pant too often stayed up to the wicket.

Roger Federer hints at possible return after emotional US Open appearance



Hyderabad: Roger Federer’s emotional return to Arthur Ashe Stadium offered the capacity crowd in New York a glimpse of what’s to come at the most electric Grand Slam, the US Open 2026, with the main draw set to begin on August 30. Speaking after the Legends match, Federer opened up about his special connection with the US Open while hinting at a possible return to the court, giving fans another reason to tune in to the tournament. Speaking after the US Open 2026 Legends match, Roger Federer expressed his gratitude to the fans after his return to the court: “I hope this isn’t my last time on court. John McEnroe is still out there doing what he loves, and that inspires me to believe that maybe someday I’ll get another chance to return to this court and play in front of all my fans. It was an honour, it was special, it was

amazing. A big thank you to everyone in the stadium and to all the fans who have supported me over the years. It’s been incredible, and I’ve enjoyed every moment. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.” On his special night in New York, Federer said: “It’s obviously incredible to share this with my family. My wife and my parents are here too. But honestly, to have this moment here at the US Open in New York where I’ve had so much success has been incredible.” “It’s such a big week for me personally going into the International Tennis Hall of Fame on Saturday. And then I’ll come back here on Monday. Hopefully, you have not had enough of me and by Monday when we have a ring ceremony on centre court again, I’ll see you then. But thank you very much, and it’s just been incredible,” the legend said.

India name 23-member squad for AFC U20 Asian Cup 2027 qualifiers

Hyderabad: India Under-20 men’s team head coach Mahesh Gawali has named his 23-player squad for the AFC U20 Asian Cup China 2027 Qualifiers, which will be played in Tashkent from August 31 to September 6. From the previously announced 30-player squad ahead of the Singapore friendlies, eight players were released for either technical or injury-related considerations — Shuhaid Koya Thangal PS, Arshvir Singh, Ashik Adhikari, Dallalmuon Gangte, Levis Zangminlun, Agastya Bhat, Nirupam Gowda H and Yohaam Benjamin. Meanwhile, Daniyal Makakmayum has joined the squad. More than 100 players were assessed since the trials began in Bengaluru in June, before the final 23 were selected. Gawali’s side played four friendly matches earlier this month, defeating Singapore twice (3-0 and 1-0), drawing 0-0 with Yemen, and securing a 1-0 victory in the second match against the West Asians. The Blue Colts will arrive in Tashkent on Thursday afternoon. They will face Syria on August 31 at 16:30 IST, hosts Uzbekistan on September 3 at 19:30 IST, and conclude their Group B campaign against Bangladesh on September 6 at 16:30 IST. The group winners and the seven best



runners-up across all eight groups will qualify for the AFC Under-20 Asian Cup China 2027.

The Indian team:

Goalkeepers: Jaskaran Dub, Pranav Sundarraman, Suraj Singh Aheibam.
Defenders: Asher Rebello, Bungson Singh Takhellambam, Karish Soram, Malemngamba Singh Thokchom, Sumit Sharma, Brahmacharimayum, Yaipharemba Chingakhom.
Midfielders: Aniket Yadav, Danny Meitei Laishram, Md Arbash, Rishi Singh Ningthoukhongjam, Rishikanta Meitei Laishram, Samson Ahongshangbam, Shami Singamayum.
Forwards: Daniyal Makakmayum, Gunleiba Wangkheirakpam, Hateem Ali, Omang Dodum, Prashan Jajo, Rohen Singh Chaphamayum, Vishal Yadav.
Head coach: Mahesh Gawali
Assistant coach: MG Ramachandran
Goalkeeping coach: Parshuram Salwadi
Strength and conditioning coach: Anugrah Suresh

Sensex, Nifty end lower as Reliance, IT stocks drag markets



Mumbai: Market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty drifted lower on Wednesday, giving up intraday gains, dragged by Reliance Industries and IT stocks. The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 183.15 points, or 0.24 per cent, to settle at 77,472.94. During the day, it touched a high of 77,986.84 and a low of 77,472.94, gyrating 513.9 points. The 50-share NSE Nifty was down 126.80 points, or 0.52 per cent, to end at 24,207.75. Among the 30 Sensex firms, Infosys, Bharti Airtel, Larsen & Toubro, Power Grid, Tech Mahindra, NTPC, Mahindra & Mahindra and Reliance Industries were the major laggards. Kotak Mahindra Bank, UltraTech Cement, Axis Bank and Tata Steel were among the winners. “Indian equity markets ended marginally lower on Wednesday as early gains gave way to profit-taking, with weakness in IT, FMCG, auto and consumer durable stocks offsetting support from lower crude oil prices and a broadly constructive global backdrop,” Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, dropped 2.96 per cent to USD 85.96 per barrel. “The Indian equity market saw a volatile per-

formance in today’s trading session, where the Nifty remained below the 24,300 level along with the Sensex shedding its early gains. The fall in crude oil prices, owing to expectations of reduced tensions in the Strait of Hormuz region, helped, whereas underperforming sectors such as IT, FMCG, and consumer durables weighed down the market,” Vikram Kasat, Chief Business Officer – Advisory and Dealing at PL Capital, said. In Asian markets, South Korea’s Kospi, Japan’s Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai’s SSE Composite index and Hong Kong’s Hang Seng index ended higher. Markets in Europe were trading mostly higher. US markets ended in positive territory on Tuesday. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,593.53 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data. In the last session, the Sensex bounced back during the fag-end of trading and was up 286.98 points, or 0.37 per cent, to settle at 77,656.09. Similarly, the Nifty ended higher by 115.50 points, or 0.48 per cent, at 24,334.55 on fag-end buying.

India’s LNG imports rise 24 per cent to \$5.6 billion in April-July



New Delhi: India’s LNG imports have shot up by 24 per cent to \$5.6 billion during April-July of the current financial year, up from \$4.5 billion in the same period of the previous financial year with shipments being increasingly sourced from the US amid the West Asia crisis, according to data compiled by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. India has gone in for a sharp increase in purchases of LNG and LPG from the US, as the choking of the Strait of Hormuz has disrupted supplies from the Gulf countries. In July, India’s LNG imports increased by 9.1 per cent to \$1.2 billion from \$1.1 billion in July 2025. Import volumes during the month stood at 2,915 mmscm, up 1.5 per cent from 2,872 mmscm in July last year, official figures showed. India has diversified its sources for the import of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from six countries earlier to a total of 15 countries in order to safeguard its energy supplies against supply chain disruptions due to the West Asia crisis. The country has also broadened its crude oil sourcing network, with imports now coming from 41 countries

compared with 27 earlier. “This diversification has reduced dependence on any particular country, region or transit route and enhanced India’s ability to manage supply disruptions and market volatility,” a senior official said. Apart from the higher prices due to the West Asia crisis, shipping costs have also surged as cargoes have to be transported across longer distances, the official said. India imported about 0.62 million tonnes of LPG from the United States in August, in addition to 0.89 million tonnes in July, accounting for more than 73 per cent of the country’s LPG imports, according to data gathered by Kpler. The July volumes from the US volume were almost equal to the highest-ever monthly LPG import from the United Arab Emirates, India’s traditional supplier, of 0.891 million tonnes in October 2025. The LPG imports from the UAE fell to about 1,40,000 tonnes in August, while Qatar supplied around 60,000 tonnes, Kpler data showed. Saudi Arabia supplied no LPG to India in either July or August.

Nestle India eyes top-five global market position: CEO Philipp Navratil

New Delhi: India’s emergence among the top five global markets for Nestle SA is now “on the horizon”, the Swiss food and beverage giant’s CEO Philipp Navratil said on Wednesday. The India market is “very attractive” for Nestle and the company expects volume-led growth there with the support of investments, said Navratil, who is on a visit to India. Nestle sees “plenty of growth opportunities” in India, which is among its top ten markets and already the highest-performing for the group in terms of growth, he added. “India, in terms of growth, is one of the highest performers of the group and was the highest-performing market in the first half of 2026. It is among the top 10 markets and there continues to be further opportunity here to drive. Top five (in terms of topline contribution) is definitely on the horizon,” Navratil said in a select media roundtable. When asked about the timeframe for India entering the top five list, he said the ambition was very much a near-term goal rather than a distant one. “Top five is definitely... it is on the horizon. It is not something that will happen 20 years down the road. It is on the horizon. And the team is working towards that,” he said.

India is among the strongest growth drivers for Nestle across emerging markets, supported by its extensive reach and ability to cater effectively to consumer needs, Navratil said. “I believe it is due to a few things here, including being able to serve the consumers in a meaningful way by being deeply distributed. If you look at where the opportunities are – the amount of people, the number of consumers that will move into the middle class, and urbanisation – all those trends exist in India,” said Navratil.

Moreover, Nestle, the maker of popular brands such as Maggi, Kit Kat and Nescafe, is also looking to increase its exports from India and make it an export hub for its other global markets. “I think that we should do even more to see India as a production hub to export. We’re doing that already,” he said, adding Nestle India currently exports to 30-odd countries, which “can be more and better”. “So this is definitely something we should look more to be a hub going forward. And again, the scale of India is, you know, makes sure that we invest in those factories are at capacity very fast. So it’s a good place to invest for us,” he said. In the June quarter, Nestle, in its global earnings, had recognised the high double-digit growth in the June quarter, terming it “very, very strong”, and said it led the growth of the Asia, Oceania and Africa (AOA) zone. Navratil further said, “There is plenty of opportunity on both the value and premium ends and so I think it is one of the largest priorities that we have in the group.” Though Navratil



did not share any specific number over the investment in India, he said it will be higher than in other markets. “So there is nothing to announce, but you should expect investment in India to be consistent, and as India grows above the group average, the investment will also be above the group average in this country. And we see, we are investing for the long term, so this is, we are really excited about the long-term potential of India, and the investment that is necessary to capture that, we will not hesitate to put that in,” he said.

Nestle, which operates nine active manufacturing facilities, with a tenth plant currently under development in Odisha, had in 2022 announced Rs 5,000 crore investment for India.

Navratil, who became CEO of Swiss MNC Nestle SA on September 1, 2025, on Monday also met Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with his India head Manish Tiwary, where he discussed its continued commitment to India and its contribution to the country’s growth and development agenda, the company said. The company has identified five priorities to work on in the country, which include having the right portfolio, which makes the foundation of driving growth; driving efficiencies; driving a performance culture; and a focus on RIG (real internal growth)-led growth. “RIG-led growth comprises volume growth, which is serving more consumers every day, getting into more households and pricing which includes the opportunity to premiumise the portfolio while driving affordability and value to capture consumers across the spectrum,” Navratil explained. He, however, cautioned that Nestle would not compromise on product quality or speed for the sake of the target, citing the company’s approach over its 114-year presence in India. “We are a food company. For us, the quality of the product, we will always move slowly, keeping the consumer at the heart of what we do... And consumers come along, which is important. You need to take consumers along,” Navratil said.

Premium homes gain bigger share of India’s new housing supply

Mumbai: India’s new housing supply has shifted sharply towards premium homes in recent years, outpacing affordable housing, a report showed on Wednesday. In Q1 2022, homes priced below Rs 1.5 crore accounted for 85 per cent of new launches across the top seven cities. By Q1 2025, this had fallen to 57 per cent, and by Q1 2026, it stood at just 47 per cent. Over the same period, the Rs 1.5–Rs 4 crore segment grew from a 14 per cent share to 34 per cent and then 44 per cent, while homes priced above Rs 4 crore rose from just 1 per cent to 9 per cent of new launches, according to the report by CareEdge Ratings. Indian residential developers are better positioned to navigate ongoing geopolitical uncertainty, as healthy collections, fundraising-



led deleveraging, and greater financial discipline have strengthened their balance sheets, the report mentioned. The debt-to-collections ratio has declined sharply from 1.80 times in FY20 to 0.68 times in FY26, reflecting sustained deleveraging across leading market players. While debt levels remained broadly range-bound during this period, healthy collections from sizeable launches rose to over Rs 90,000 crore, with bookings exceeding Rs 1.5 lakh crore in FY26.

Jagan accuses Andhra gov- ernment of failing farmers, BCs and law enforcement

Amaravati: YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Wednesday criticised the NDA government in Andhra Pradesh over its alleged failure to prepare a contingency plan to tackle drought conditions, its stand on BC reservations in local body elections and the alleged involvement of police personnel in ganja peddling. Addressing a press conference at the YSRCP central office in Tadepalli, the former chief minister said the state had recorded an average rainfall deficit of 51 per cent over the past two months and alleged that farmers were worried about the Kharif crop, while Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu had remained silent and the government had not given any assurance on alternative measures. “Your (Naidu’s) NDA coalition government has failed to prepare a contingency plan to tackle drought conditions, is playing the same old game on BC reservations ahead of local body elections and has allowed ganja peddling by police personnel,” said Jagan. He alleged that Naidu had dismantled the Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs) and farmer welfare measures such as free crop insurance, e-cropping and continuous monitoring of market dynamics, leaving the agriculture sector in the lurch. Jagan alleged that no relief plan had been announced for farmers during the Kharif season and distribution of seeds for alternative crops had not begun. He also claimed that the CM was allowing water to be drawn by the neighbouring state from Srisailem while ignoring Pothireddypadu and stalling the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme. Jagan further alleged that Nagarjuna Sagar waters were also being taken away through lift irrigation projects by the neighbouring state while Naidu remained a “mute spectator”, which he said reflected the government’s anti-farmer stand. He did not mention which neighbouring state he was referring to. Citing a written reply in Parliament, Jagan said that there were 1.18 crore crop insurance applications during 2022-23, while the number had now fallen to 40 lakh. Further, on BC reservations, Jagan alleged that Naidu had encouraged litigation when the previous YSRCP government sought to provide reservations to BCs and was now playing the same game with local body elections approaching. He said the YSRCP government had acted ahead of time and provided BCs more representation in economic, political and social spheres than what was promised. BCs, he said, were major beneficiaries of welfare schemes, with Rs 1.8 lakh crore provided to them under various schemes. Jagan said BCs were also given a major share in the legislature, local bodies and corporation chair-



person posts. He alleged that Naidu, in contrast, had failed to provide adequate representation to BCs and did not send a single BC MP to the Rajya Sabha during his term, while the YSRCP sent four BCs among the 11 available seats. He also said the YSRCP had backed 50 per cent reservation for women. Jagan alleged that Naidu had been vindictive towards BC leaders and was arresting them in false cases. He also raised the issue of pending fee reimbursement dues, saying many BC students were unable to obtain their certificates because of the dues. On the Addanki incident, Jagan said it reflected the state of law and order. He alleged that police personnel in an inebriated condition hit an auto, injuring its occupants, while ganja, liquor and police uniforms were found in the car in which they were travelling. He alleged that the government attempted to cover up the incident, with the DSP, SP and FIR giving different versions. Jagan said the incident showed how deep-rooted the nexus between political, police and other players was and alleged that ganja peddling was taking place in an organised manner. The opposition leader said that the YSRCP government had put in place strict enforcement measures to check the drug menace in the state, but alleged that the Addanki incident showed how the drug mafia was functioning now. Jagan said the top police brass had given varied and incoherent versions of the incident, while the police personnel involved had merely been placed under vacancy reserve despite what he described as an unpardonable and most heinous offence. There was no immediate reaction from the ruling TDP.

State bags national award for PMFME implementation



Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh has received a national-level recognition for its implementation of the Prime Minister Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) scheme, with the Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP-AP) being recognised among the top-performing state-level agencies. Union minister for food processing industries Chirag Paswan presented the award to Andhra Pradesh representatives at the nationwide PMFME Conclave organised by the Union ministry of food processing industries at the India Habitat Centre in New Delhi on Tuesday. The ministry assessed the performance of rural poverty eradication societies across states on parameters including the services extended to women Self-Help Group (SHG) members, utilisation of funds and development of food-processing units under the seed-capital component of the PMFME scheme. SERP-AP was selected among the leading performers based on its overall performance, particularly its efforts to extend seed capital and loans to higher-order enterprises and help SHG women move into food-processing entrepreneurship. Dr Siva

Sankara Prasad, director, Livelihoods Division, SERP, additional director K Sarala and consultant Ramya received the award on behalf of Andhra Pradesh from the Union Minister. The recognition highlights the role of SERP in using the PMFME framework to help women from rural SHGs access seed capital and subsidised bank loans, enabling them to establish and expand micro food-processing enterprises rather than remaining confined to livelihood activities at the household level.

IPS officer Sanjay faces full-fledged probe

Amaravati: The state government on Tuesday appointed an Inquiring Authority to probe charges against suspended IPS officer N Sanjay over alleged misappropriation and misuse of public funds. Sanjay has been accused of misappropriation and misuse of public funds in the work, development and maintenance of the AGNI (Automated Governance & NoC Integration) web portal, besides other alleged irregularities, while serving as director general of the Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Response & Fire Services. He has been accused of misappropriating funds allocated for training police personnel to create awareness among members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes about the rights of victims and provisions of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, while serving as additional director general of police in the CID. “Government, after careful examination of the matter, have decided to conduct a regular inquiry into the charges framed against the said charged MoS (Sanjay) under Rule 8(2) of All India Services (Discipline & Appeal) Rules, 1969,” chief secretary G Sai Prasad said in a GO, issued earlier in the day. The government has



appointed Kumar Vishwajeet, Principal Secretary, Home Department, as the Inquiring Authority, the GO said. The Inquiring Authority shall conduct an inquiry into the charges framed against Sanjay, a 1996-batch IPS officer, and furnish its report to the government within the prescribed time limit, the chief secretary said. Although the government had directed Sanjay to submit a written statement of defence, he failed to do so, according to the GO. Sanjay was the CID chief when then TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu was arrested in 2023. He along with then additional advocate general Ponnaveolu Sudhakar Reddy held press conferences in various cities, including New Delhi, to ‘explain’ charges against Chandrababu Naidu in alleged skill development scam after his arrest.

Woman held with 5 kg ganja near Vidyodaya College

Tirupati: Acting on directions from District SP L Subba Rayudu, Tirupati West Police arrested a 46-year-old woman, Kanala Varalakshmi of Bommagunta, for illegally carrying 5 kg of ganja near Vidyodaya College on Narasimhateertham Road on Tuesday. Police seized the contraband, valued at Rs 60,000, along with a mobile phone, and booked a case under the NDPS Act, 1985. The raid was led by Inspector P Ramakrishna and SI Hemadri under DSP M Bhaktavatsalam’s supervision. SP Subba Rayudu warned that rowdy-sheets will be opened against repeat drug offenders and urged the youth to stay clear of narcotics.

