

Rs 2,693.90 crore released for September NTR Bharosa pensions

Pensions distribution to 61.92 lakh people on September 1
6,268 new spouse pensions
Minister Kondapalli Srinivas

Amaravati, August 30: State Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Rural Poverty Alleviation and Pravasi Empowerment Relations Konda palli Srinivas said in a statement on Sunday that State Government released Rs 2,693.90 crore for distribution of NTR Bharosa pensions to 61,92,396 pensioners in month of September across State. He said we will distribute these pensions across State from morning of September 1 and Government also released Rs 2.51 crore to provide pensions on September 1 to



6,268 newly sanctioned widow beneficiaries (Spouse Pensions). He said Government is providing spouse pensions with
See 2nd page

UPSC Civils Mains exams end successfully

Exams conducted smoothly without scope for any untoward incidents
Administration provided all basic facilities to candidates
Fool-proof arrangements with coordination of officials



Vijayawada, August 30, 2026 District Collector Dr G Lakshmi sha inspected exam centre Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) Civil Services Main examinations ended successfully in peaceful atmosphere without scope for any untoward incidents. Civils Mains exams were held from 21st to 30th of this month at Vijayawada SRR and CVR Government Junior College. Exams were completed peacefully as all necessary measures were taken for conduct of exams as per UPSC guidelines. Facilities like drinking water, continuous power supply, medical facilities, security and others were made available at exam centre so that candidates do not face any inconvenience. Face based identification process of candidates was also conducted as per rules. Along with strengthening security arrangements at exam centre, necessary bus services were made available under aegis of Public Transport Department so that candidates reach exam centre in time. Officials of Revenue, Police, Medical Health, Postal, Public Transport, Electricity



and other departments performed duties in coordination. On Sunday also on last day, District Collector Lakshmisha inspected exam centre. Later, Collector congratulated officials and staff who participated in exam duties by strictly following UPSC rules and officials and staff of all departments who cooperated.

Trial run conducted on release on f water from Veligonda project

Amaravati, August 30: The officials conducted a trial run on Sunday regarding the release of water from the Veligonda project. Water was released into the tunnel by lifting the project gates at Kollam Vagu. Officials inspected the water flow, the functioning of the gates, and the process of water conveyance through the tunnel. During this operation, a siren was sounded at the Gantavanipalli Cross Head Regulator to alert everyone. The Krishna waters flowing through the tunnel are set to reach the Cross Head Regulator, from where officials will



oversee the subsequent stages of water conveyance. On Monday, Chief Minister Chandra babu will officially release water from the Veligonda project and dedicate it to the public.

Nara Lokesh to lay stone for AIG hospital in Visakhapatnam tomorrow



Amaravati, August 30: Another international-standard hospital is set to come up in Andhra Pradesh. AP Minister for Education and IT, Nara Lokesh, will lay the foundation stone tomorrow (Monday) for the AIG Hospital in Visakhapatnam. The project aims to establish a world-class healthcare, academic, and research hub. AIG Hospitals plans to create employment for 9,000 people with an investment of ₹2,000 crore. The facility will feature a hospital campus spanning 9 acres and a nursing college covering 2.5 acres in Visakhapatnam, offering services across more than 50 medical specialties.

AP sets higher interim fee for private medical colleges

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh has raised the interim fees for students entering private unaided medical and dental colleges in 2026-27, with the increase ranging from 10 percent for undergraduate courses to 15 percent for postgraduate and super-specialty programmes. The fee revision, however, is not a final determination. The government has made the new rates explicitly provisional as the Andhra

Pradesh Higher Education Fee Regulatory and Monitoring Commission (APHEFR&MC) is not yet fully constituted and detailed rules governing its revised statutory functions are still awaited. The final fee fixed by the Commission will supersede the interim rates. For MBBS, the annual fee under the competent-authority quota has been increased from Rs 16,500 to Rs 18,150, while the manage-

ment-quota fee has risen from Rs 13.20 lakh to Rs 14.52 lakh. The ceiling for the NRI quota has gone up from Rs 39.60 lakh to Rs 43.56 lakh. For BDS, the corresponding fees have been fixed at Rs 15,730 for the competent-authority quota, Rs 4.84 lakh for the management quota and up to Rs 14.52 lakh for the NRI quota, compared with Rs 14,300, Rs 4.40 lakh and Rs

See 2nd page

13 AP natives remain untraced in Nepal-Tibet floods

Amaravati: Thirteen persons associated with Andhra Pradesh remain untraced following the devastating floods and landslides in Nepal and Tibet. The 13 include seven AP residents and six AP origin persons living overseas. Four of the six AP origin overseas persons are associated with Isha Foundation Group. The seven AP residents are from Kakinada/Bengaluru, Krishna district, Parvatipuram and London, while some have been reported in connection with Gyirong in China. The six AP-origin overseas persons include individuals linked to Gyirong and Isha Foundation, besides persons whose current location remains unavailable. One of those untraced is a New Zealand citizen with an AP association and was last associated with Dhunche/Syabrubesi area. Meanwhile, Bhaskar Sastry and his family from Adoni, Kurnool district, are safe and accounted for. Four family members-Bhaskar Sastry, Mani Sarada, Raghunada Sastry and Hanshika-were travelling in the region. Raghunada Sastry developed severe pulmonary oedema during the pilgrimage and required oxygen support. The family reached Saga on August 28 and subsequently moved to Nyalam County, around 50 km from Kodari border. They are ex-



pected to travel towards Kodari and Kathmandu, subject to weather, road and border conditions. Portable oxygen support or an oxygen-equipped vehicle has been sought for Kodari-Kathmandu journey. The family is expected to reach Kathmandu by August 30 or 31 and has a confirmed flight to Hyderabad via Mumbai on September 1.



Revisiting
Nela-Nela
Vennela in
Houston

The Houston Telugu Cultural Association (TCA) has been conducting ‘Nela-Nela Telugu Vennela,’ a long-running literary programme, as a continuing ‘Yajna of Letters.’ I was fortunate to be invited to participate in the later part of its very first year in 2009. Whenever I visit Houston, I make it a point to be part of this cherished gathering. The 172nd monthly Telugu Vennela held on August 22 became yet another memorable occasion for me: one filled with warmth, affection and a rare sense of honour. I was to speak on an absorbing subject: ‘Some interesting and lesser-known aspects of Valmiki Ramayana,’ before a highly literate gathering at the Sugar Land residence of Sai and Lalitha Rachakonda. A Houston-based close friend Sudesh Pillutla, with an exceptional understanding of the Sanskrit Valmiki Ramayana, as well as Andhra Valmiki Ramayana of Vasudasa Swamy, facilitated this platform for me. Members of the Telugu Vennela team, and prominent personalities from the Telugu literary world not only participated but also converted the occasion into a joint learning session.

Chilukuri Satyadev delighted the audience with his Ramayana verses, while Palaparathi Indrani’s powerful rendering of a Sri Sri-Style poem won the admiration of the gathering. I highlighted that the Valmiki Ramayana is not merely a story that has been heard through generations. Within this familiar narrative lie numerous fascinating details, subtle insights and valuable lessons for life. The epic opens itself to newer meanings. Valmiki Maharshi introduces, through the story itself, to Sri Rama’s personality, ordinary and exceptional forms of dharma, Raja Dharma, family responsibilities, friendship, leadership, administration and devotion to duty. The words and conduct of Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Bharata, Hanuman, Sugriva, Mandara, Shurpanakha, Ravana and Angada reveal many dimensions of human nature. Not every statement in the Ramayana needs to be confined to a single interpretation. A thought expressed in one context can acquire a deeper philosophical significance when viewed from another. Some episodes teach us dharma; some illuminate leadership; some hold up a mirror to human nature; and others remarkably remind us of the society in which we live today, including personality development. That is why the Ramayana should not be regarded merely as an epic belonging to the past. It can also be seen as a timeless text that helps us understand life. The story may be familiar, but there are always aspects within it that remain to be discovered. One of the greatest principles emerging from the life of Sri Rama is simple: before telling others what they should do, one must sincerely and fearlessly practise it oneself. Rama remains the supreme example of this human value. He never abandoned his duty.

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September NTR Bharosa pensions

Continu, from1st page

intention to provide social security to eligible spouse after death of husband. He said including funds released this month for pensions, Government has spent Rs 73,506 crore from formation of coalition Government till now. Minister Kondapalli Srinivas said coalition Government with aim of welfare of poor is providing NTR Bharosa pension funds to beneficiaries on 1st of every month and goal of coalition Government is to provide benefits of Government welfare schemes to every eligible beneficiary.

AP sets higher interim fee
for private medical colleges

Continu, from1st page

13.20 lakh respectively in 2025-26. The government has simultaneously approved a 15 percent interim increase in PG medical and dental fees. For medical PG courses, the annual clinical-degree fee has been fixed at Rs 5,71,320 for the competent-authority quota, Rs 11,42,640 for the management quota and Rs 66.125 lakh for the NRI/institutional quota. Para-clinical degree and diploma fees have been fixed at Rs 1,78,538, Rs 3,57,075 and Rs 19.8375 lakh respectively, while the pre-clinical degree fees stand at Rs 80,937, Rs 1,61,874 and Rs 10.58 lakh. For PG dental courses, the interim fee for clinical degrees is Rs 3,92,783 under the competent-authority quota, Rs 7,85,565 under the management quota and Rs 15.87 lakh under the NRI/institutional quota. Para-clinical degree fees have been fixed at Rs 3,53,504, Rs 5,74,759 and Rs 9,25,750, respectively. The government has also raised the fee for super-speciality courses by 15 percent, from Rs 17.25 lakh in 2025-26 to Rs 19.8375 lakh for 2026-27. The same fee applies to GSL Medical College, Katuri Medical College and Hospital, Narayana Medical College, NRI Medical College and Dr Pinnamaneni Siddardha Institute of Medical Sciences. The orders impose a significant safeguard on private institutions: colleges cannot collect, directly or indirectly under any description, more than the notified interim fee. The rates apply only to the 2026-27 academic year. Once the Commission determines the final fee, any excess collected must be refunded or adjusted if the final fee is lower; if the final fee is higher, the differential may be recovered in accordance with the Commission's determination and applicable fee-reimbursement arrangements. Colleges must also give students a written declaration at admission that the fee is interim and subject to revision and must furnish an undertaking to the affiliating university agreeing to implement the Commission's final determination.



BRS demands probe into
Bhadrachalam MLA’s
role in aide’s job scam

Kothagudem: In the wake of an alleged job scam involving Bhadrachalam MLA Dr. Tellam Venkat Rao’s personal assistant (PA), the BRS leaders have demanded a comprehensive inquiry into the possible role of the MLA in the scam. It might be recalled that the scam came to light after an auto-rickshaw driver Rayala Srinu lodged a complaint with Bhadrachalam police last Friday against the MLA’s personal assistant, Korla Kalyan Kumar alleging that the PA duped him of Rs 10 lakh on the pretext of offering a job to his son in Bhadrachalam Thermal Power Station (BTPS). Speaking to the media at Bhadrachalam on Sunday, the BRS leaders Ravulapalli Ram Prasad and Mane Ramakrishna said despite allegations that Kalyan collected nearly Rs 10 crore from several job seekers, it raised suspicions among the public about the MLA’s silence regarding the matter. They alleged that a powerful coterie operates behind the MLA, consisting entirely of individuals involved in illicit activities. The MLA’s camp office has turned into a hub for Congress leaders to settle disputes and ordinary citizens and aggrieved individuals lack access to voice their concerns to the MLA. The BRS leaders sought to know whether the MLA’s PA Kalyan had collected such a massive amount without the MLA’s knowledge. Noting that victims claim the PA used the MLA’s signed letterheads; they asserted that the MLA must take responsibility for the PA’s illegal activities.



BRS 1,000-day failure
campaign rattles
Congress government

Hyderabad: The Congress government has reacted to the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) announcement of a special campaign to highlight the failures of the government during its first 1,000 days by releasing details of its achievements. Interestingly, the government’s response late on Sunday night also brought to the fore a lack of coordination and unanimity within the State Cabinet, with two separate statements highlighting different sets of achievements being issued within a few hours of each other. On August 24, BRS working president KT Rama Rao announced that the party would launch a special campaign across Telangana from September 1 to highlight what it termed the Congress government’s failures in fulfilling its promises to the people. As part of the week-long campaign, the BRS said it would release a charge sheet against the Congress government. This will be followed by a series of programmes, including State-wide protests over the alleged failure to implement the six guarantees. The Congress government responded by listing its achievements. Initially, Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy released the “1,000 Days of Welfare and Development – Telangana Report Card”. In a statement, he claimed welfare and development had progressed simultaneously, with food security, farmer support, women’s empowerment and social justice receiving particular attention. Uttam Kumar sought to highlight the government’s achievements, including providing fine rice to 3.42 crore beneficiaries, waiving farm loans for around 25 lakh farmers and filling nearly 70,000 government jobs.

He said women’s welfare was another major focus, with free travel in RTC buses providing greater mobility, independence and savings for households. Under Gruha Jyothi, eligible households were being provided up to 200 units of free electricity, while LPG cylinders were being supplied at Rs 500. The Minister also said Rajiv Aarogyasri health coverage had been enhanced to Rs 10 lakh. Interestingly, within hours, the Chief Minister’s Office issued another statement titled “1,000 Days of People’s Governance”. It said Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy had successfully completed the 1,000-day milestone of the People’s Government on September 1. The CMO release listed achievements in economic growth, agriculture and other sectors. However, the timing and content of the two statements drew attention, with the Civil Supplies Minister and the Chief Minister’s Office issuing separate accounts of the government’s achievements within a gap of a few hours. The development has raised questions over coordination and unanimity within the State Cabinet at a time when the government is gearing up to counter the BRS’ 1,000-day failure campaign.

KBR Park flyovers to consume
20,000 metric tonnes of
steel under H-CITI project

Hyderabad: The steel flyovers that are to come up around KBR Park under the Hyderabad City Innovative and



Transformative Infrastructure (H-CITI) project are expected to have steel consumption in huge quantities. As part of the H-CITI project to ease the traffic around the busy circle around the national park, the authorities have come up the proposal of seven flyovers and two underpasses. The works on these components have already commenced with huge pits dug up and the police coming up with one-way traffic movement to facilitate the construction expected to be completed in two years. The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) would be ordering the steel in bulk quantities to build the flyovers around KBR Park and estimates have suggested the steel consumption for seven steel flyovers to be a whopping 20,000 metric tonnes. According to the GHMC officials, estimates were being worked out and enquiries with steel manufacturers who can supply such huge bulk were under consideration.



Colours, culture and tradition mark grand finale of Kerala’s Onam festivities

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala’s capital turned into a vibrant cultural stage on Sunday as traditional art forms, music and colour marked the culmination of the week-long Onam festivities. Flagged off by Vice President C P Radhakrishnan, the iconic closing-day procession turned the streets of Thiruvananthapuram into a moving canvas of the state’s cultural heritage, with hundreds of artists and performers from across the country taking part. Governor Rajendra Viswanath Arlekar and Chief Minister V D Satheesan presented mementoes to the vice president during the event. Speaker Thiruvanchur Radhakrishnan, Cabinet Ministers P C Vishnunadh, K Muraleedharan, C P John, Roji M John, K A Thulasi and Bindhu Krishna, and Mayor V V Rajesh were among the dignitaries who viewed the parade from the main pavilion set up at Lok Bhavan. Actor Asif Ali, elected representatives, senior officials, foreign tourists and media personnel were also among those who turned up to witness the closing procession. The celebrations, organised by the state Tourism Department from August 23, culminated in a spectacular display of Kerala’s classical, folk and ethnic traditions, watched by thousands of people, including tourists. The procession passed through Vellayambalam, Museum, Palayam and Statue, drawing crowds along the route. Kerala’s rich cultural traditions came alive through performances of Theyyam, Kathakali, Pulikali and other folk art forms, accompanied by the energetic beats of percussion instruments. Mohiniyattam, Oppana, Margamkali, Kolkali and Mayilattam added another dimension to the pageantry, reflecting the state’s rich traditions shaped by different communities and cultural influences.

The procession included cultural troupes from across the country, representing states such as Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh, as well as the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. A major attraction was the procession of more than 69 floats and installations by government departments, quasi-government institutions and cooperative-sector organisations. The tableaux portrayed Kerala’s social progress, traditions and cultural heritage while also highlighting contemporary and socially relevant themes. Thousands thronged the capital to witness the finale, which offered a glimpse of the artistic traditions and cultural identities that make Kerala’s Onam celebrations distinctive. Security arrangements were tightened across the city, with thousands of police personnel deployed at various points, while traffic restrictions were imposed along the procession route. As the final procession passed through the illuminated streets, the Tourism Department’s Onam celebrations came to an end, leaving behind a vivid celebration of the southern state’s culture, diversity and festive spirit.

India-US trade talks: Commerce Ministry to hold meeting with exporters

New Delhi: The Commerce Ministry will meet industry associations and representatives of export promotion councils on September 1 to discuss India-US trade performance, an official said. The meeting will be chaired by Darpan Jain, an Additional Secretary in the ministry. He is also the country’s chief negotiator for the India-US bilateral trade agreement (BTA). The deliberations are important as Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal will visit the US in late September to attend the G20 Trade Ministerial in Milwaukee and hold bilateral talks with USTR Jamieson Greer. The two-day ministerial will begin on September 30. The United States holds the 2026 G20 presidency. The official said the meeting is intended to discuss recent trade trends, the overall sector-wise performance of India-US trade, and recent developments in bilateral trade. Sectors expected to be represented at the meeting include pharmaceuticals, engineering, textiles, agriculture, chemicals, marine products, leather, automobiles, auto components, handicrafts and plastics. Industry chambers CII, FICCI, Assocham and FIEO are also likely to participate in the deliberations. India and the US are negotiating a bilateral trade agreement. In February, both sides announced the finalisation of the framework for the first phase of the pact, but changes in the US tariff landscape have led to further negotiations between the two countries on the agreement. Recently, Goyal stated that the first tranche of the bilateral trade agreement between India and the US would come into operation as soon as the United States was able to ensure that India received a comparative advantage over its competitors. The US imposed an additional 10 per cent tariff on a number of countries, including India, from July 24. Countries including Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia are major competitors of India in the US market. A tariff advantage vis-à-vis these nations would make Indian goods more price-competitive in the American market. India’s exports to the US grew marginally to USD 87.31 billion in 2025-



26 from USD 86.51 billion in the previous fiscal. Imports, on the other hand, rose 17.16 per cent to USD 53.45 billion in the last fiscal year from USD 45.62 billion in 2024-25. Total trade grew 6.53 per cent to USD 140.76 billion in 2025-26 from USD 132.2 billion in 2024-25. India had a trade surplus of USD 33.9 billion in the last fiscal year, down from USD 40.9 billion in 2024-25. During April-July 2026-27, India’s exports to the US rose 3 per cent to USD 34.5 billion, while imports grew 22.42 per cent to USD 22.12 billion. India’s exports to the US include electrical machinery and telecom instruments, including smartphones, generic medicines, diamonds, industrial boilers and cotton textiles. Imports include crude petroleum, liquefied natural gas, coal, metallurgical scrap, precious stones, electronics and aerospace equipment.

Hill slip halts Kalka–Shimla heritage rail, over 400 passengers evacuated

New Delhi: At least 391 passengers and 40 train crew were evacuated to Kalka after a hill slip scuppered operations at the Kalka-Shimla route, leaving part of a connecting bridge exposed, Northern Railway said on Sunday. The slippage, caused by incessant rain, undermined a section of the track between Koti and Ghumman stations Saturday night. “Following a hill slip yesterday at Bridge No. 57 between the Koti and Ghumman stations on the Shimla-Kalka UNESCO World Heritage section, Northern Railway officials executed a prompt and seamless rescue operation, ensuring zero inconvenience to travelers,” a Railways press note said. Four incoming trains were short-terminated in the wake of the accident. More than 400 passengers and train crew were picked up in five buses, and two Tempo Travellers from Solan, Koti, and Dharampur, Railways said. The press note said that while local pas-



sengers were disbursed to their destinations, around 120 passengers were accommodated on Train No 13052, which was specially rescheduled to 1.30 am. “Due to the quick action, efficient transshipment, and empathetic care provided by Northern Railway staff, the entire operation was conducted smoothly without a single passenger complaint or refund request registered at Kalka station,” the public transporter said.

Kerala Excise suspends seven officers over alleged illegal collections from bars

Kottayam (Kerala): The Excise Department on Sunday suspended seven officers, including a Deputy Commissioner, following a preliminary inquiry into allegations of unauthorised collection of money, liquor and other benefits from licensed bar establishments in Changana ssery here, officials said

The seven suspended officers are Deputy Excise Commissioner S Asoka Kumar; Preventive Officers M Manuel, Lalu Than kachan, Praveen Sivanand and Santhosh T; Preventive Officer (Grade) Shiju K; and Civil Excise Officer Visakh A S. The action followed a tip-off received by Excise Minister M Liju

on August 27 regarding alleged illegal liquor sales beyond permitted hours at bar hotels in the Changana ssery area and information about an alleged intermediary working for the Kottayam Deputy Excise Commissioner. A confidential verification was subsequently conducted under ‘Opera-

tion BIJAPUR’ by the Excise Commissioner Seeram Sambasiva Rao. As per the suspension order issued by Rao on Sunday, the preliminary inquiry found that Rs 55,000 was allegedly collected from four bar establishments — New York Square, Blue Star, Breezeland and Panchavadi — through an

intermediary in connection with the Deputy Excise Commissioner. Separately, Rs 26,000 was allegedly collected from New York Square Bar in four covers and handed over to Excise personnel. Liquor, beer and food items were also allegedly received from the establishment, the order said. The preliminary inquiry

also found that the Deputy Excise Commissioner allegedly instructed the manager of New York Square Bar to hand over Rs 15,000 to the alleged intermediary, Karinkkada Josy. The amount was subsequently handed over to Josy at Panchavadi Bar. The suspension order said that in another transaction,

PM Modi participates in a
Yoga Session in Tashkent



Tashkent: Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in a Yoga Session organised by the Yoga Federation of Uzbekistan in Tashkent on Sunday. He also interacted with the participants during the session. PM Modi arrived in Uzbekistan for a two-day visit on Saturday. He thanked President Mirziyoyev for the warm welcome at Tashkent airport as he began his two-day State Visit to the Central Asian nation. He visited the Yangi Uzbekistan Monument and said that it reflects the aspirations and progress of the Uzbek people. “Upon landing in Tashkent, I went to lay a wreath at the Yangi Uzbekistan Monument with President Mirziyoyev. The Yangi Uzbekistan Monument reflects the aspirations and progress of the Uzbek people. Glad to begin my visit by coming here,” he noted on X. PM Modi was accompanied by Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev as both leaders examined the artwork representing Uzbek culture and history at the Yangi Uzbekistan Park. He was greeted by a large gathering of the Indian community in Tashkent. Prime Minister Modi has said that the Indian diaspora is a living bridge between India and Uzbekistan.



Tibet flash floods: 49 In-
dians among 261 ‘unac-
counted’ foreign nationals

Gyirong: A total of 261 foreign nationals from 23 countries have been identified as unaccounted for after a mudslide struck Gyirong Port on the Tibet-Nepal border in Xizang on August 26, local authorities said on Sunday. Officials said that 49 Indians are among the 261 missing foreigners. The figure was announced at a press conference held by the information office of the regional government, following a joint search and cross-checking of information by foreign affairs, public security, culture and tourism, and emergency management authorities. Those unaccounted for include 104 people from Nepal, 49 from India, 33 from Latvia, 18 from the United States, 15 from Britain, six from Canada, six from Australia, four from South Africa, three from Malaysia, three from Germany, three from Russia, two from Ireland, two from Estonia, two from France, two from the Netherlands, two from New Zealand, and one each from Kazakhstan, Finland, Lithuania, Portugal, Ukraine, Spain and Hungary. Chinese authorities have notified the countries’ embassies and consulates in China, according to the press conference, reports Xinhua news agency. Following multiple rounds of searches, site inspections and checks of individuals at the port, no foreign tourists are currently stranded in Gyirong County, the authorities said.

Meanwhile, in Nepal, 675 bodies have been recovered from affected areas, with 2,498 people still missing, the country’s National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority confirmed. According to Nepal’s Department of Tourism under the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, a total of 753 tourists had lost contact as of 17:30 local time on Saturday, including 589 foreign nationals. Kathmandu District Administrative Office issued an urgent notice on Saturday, calling on various associations, institutions, enterprises and individuals in Kathmandu to donate relief supplies to assist the victims in Rasuwa, Nuwakot and Dhading districts. The floods, triggered by a sudden surge in the Bhote Koshi River, caused widespread loss of life and extensive damage to hydropower projects, roads, bridges and other infrastructure in the affected areas.

India, Uzbekistan agree to deepen
cooperation in trade, defence,
energy and digital connectivity



Tashkent: India and Uzbekistan on Sunday agreed to strengthen cooperation in trade and investment, digital connectivity, defence and energy as Prime Minister Narendra Modi held delegation-level talks with President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in Tashkent. Modi is on a two-day state visit to Uzbekistan from August 29 to 30 at the invitation of Mirziyoyev. This is his fourth visit to the Central Asian country. Modi received a ceremonial welcome as he arrived to hold delegation-level talks with Mirziyoyev, with the two leaders discussing ways to further deepen the India-Uzbekistan strategic partnership and advance their shared developmental visions of ‘Viksit Bharat’ and ‘Yangi Uzbekistan’. The talks covered a range of areas, including trade and investment, digital connectivity, defence and energy, according to the Indian side.

Modi had earlier said the India-Uzbekistan strategic partnership had witnessed significant advancement in recent years and expressed his desire to further deepen cooperation in key sectors. Modi on Sunday also witnessed a yoga session hosted by the Yoga Federation of Uzbekistan. “Yoga has immense appeal in Uzbekistan. It is bringing people and cultures together and strengthening people-to-people ties between India and Uzbekistan,” the Ministry of External Affairs said in a post on X. After attending the session, Modi said

Uzbekistan had been a “proud participant” in the first-ever World Yogasana Championship held in Ahmedabad earlier this year and some of the medal winners were present at the session.

Modi arrived in Tashkent on Saturday and received a warm welcome from Mirziyoyev at the airport. After his arrival, the prime minister visited Yangi Uzbekistan Park and laid a wreath at the Independence Monument along with the Uzbek president. He also interacted with members of the Indian community at a hotel in Tashkent, where he witnessed Kathak and Andijan Polka performances by the diaspora and a dance by Uzbek children to the Indian song “Ude Jab Jab Zulfe Teri”. Modi also watched a fusion performance of tabla with traditional Uzbek instruments Doira and Chang. The prime minister is scheduled to travel to Kyrgyzstan from Tashkent to participate in the 26th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit on August 31-September 1 at the invitation of Kyrgyz President Sadyr Zhaparov. The summit will mark the 25th anniversary of the SCO. Modi will address the summit and highlight India’s priorities of “Security, Connectivity and Opportunity”, besides holding bilateral meetings with SCO leaders on the sidelines. He will also attend the opening ceremony of the sixth World Nomad Games.

India sends fourth flight carrying 11
tonnes of relief supplies to flood-hit Nepal



Kathmandu: India has handed over relief materials for flood victims in Nepal brought by its fourth flight carrying relief supplies. “The fourth flight carrying 11 tonnes of relief supplies has arrived in Nepal, with the materials handed over to the concerned authorities as part of ongoing support following the devastating floods,” the Indian External Affairs Ministry said. The consignment includes a tunnel technical team equipped with search-and-rescue equipment, as well as a team of forensic experts for DNA analysis. The relief supplies include blankets, sleeping bags, tarpaulins, plastic sheets and hygiene kits. Earlier, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar wrote on social media platform X that the fourth Indian flight had touched down in Kathmandu. “It brings essential supplies and technical capabilities to support Nepal’s ongoing rescue and relief operations,” he wrote. Before the departure of the Indian Air Force (IAF) C-130 aircraft for Nepal, Minister Jaishankar wrote on X that the plane was carrying a tunnel technical contingent equipped with search-and-

rescue equipment, a team of forensic experts and forensic equipment for DNA analysis, and relief supplies including blankets, sleeping bags, tarpaulins, plastic sheets and hygiene kits. Additionally, 16 trucks carrying equipment for a 230-foot single-lane modular steel bridge have reached Nepal, Minister Jaishankar said. He also announced that equipment for the installation of seven more Bailey bridges would soon be supplied, while technical teams for their installation are expected to arrive shortly. According to the ministry, a total of 68.5 tonnes of relief materials comprising essential medicines, portable generator sets, food packets, water purification tablets and technical equipment have been airlifted to Kathmandu. “Our support to the relief and rescue efforts continues,” Minister Jaishankar said. Meanwhile, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA) said the massive flood on August 26 has so far claimed 734 lives, while 2,498 people remain out of contact, including 589 foreigners.

Avika Gor opens up about Khatron Ke Khiladi 15 elimination: ‘I had so much more to give’

Mumbai: Actress Avika Gor has opened up about her elimination from ‘Khatron Ke Khiladi 15,’ reflecting on the emotional impact of her journey on the stunt-based reality show. Looking back at her experience, Avika said the show has played an important role in shaping her perspective about herself and who she wanted to become. Taking to Instagram, the ‘Balika Vadhu’ actress penned a lengthy note that read, “There’s something I’ve realized about myself while watching Khatron Ke Khiladi after my elimination. I catch myself thinking, If I were there, I wouldn’t have given up. I would have pushed harder. I would have done better.” “Basically, sitting comfortably on my sofa, suddenly I’m an expert Khatron contestant. And then I remind myself: I’m watching from the comfort of my own life. I know the outcome. I know what happens next. I’m not actually in that moment, with the pressure, the fear, the adrenaline, and a stunt staring me in the face.” Avika added, “It’s very easy to become the hero of a situation from the outside. When something matters deeply to us, we replay it, imagine different choices, and create a version of the story that never happened. And sometimes, our imagination gives us a much better performance than reality ever got the chance to. Maybe that’s why being eliminated so early has been difficult for me to completely let go of. Somewhere inside me, there’s still that girl who believes, I had so much more to give. Maybe I did.” “But there’s a difference between knowing you had more to give and constantly living in the version where you got the chance to give it. Khatron Ke Khiladi has always been deeply personal to me. I was 21 when I first did the show, and it changed my perspective on who I was and who I wanted to become. I went in thinking I was there to face fears and perform stunts, but I came out understanding myself a little differently. Coming back this time meant so much because, perhaps, a part of me wanted to meet that younger version of myself again and maybe finish something that had always felt unfinished. But this time, Khatron is teaching me something very different.” “I’ve always believed in working hard, preparing, pushing, and creating the life I want. So accepting something completely outside my control has been uncomfortable and, honestly, heart-wrenching.



Sometimes you can give something everything you have and still not get the ending you imagined. Maybe closure isn’t about deciding whether you deserved to stay or whether you could have done better. Maybe it’s accepting that the story ended differently from the one you had written in your head.” The note further read, “The first time, Khatron changed my perspective on who I was and what I wanted to become. This time, it is teaching me how to live with what I cannot control. To stop rewriting the ending. To acknowledge that I may have had more to give without allowing that thought to take away from everything I did give.” “I’m still learning to make peace with that. Maybe that’s my Khatron this time. And I’m also filled with so much gratitude for the love, the opportunities, the people and experiences that have brought me here, and for everything that is still to come. I hope, with time, this void becomes something I can heal from, rather than a place where I remain stuck. Maybe I don’t need to erase it. Maybe I just need to carry it with gratitude, laugh at myself a little when my brain starts giving me imaginary second chances, and keep moving forward.” For the unversed, Avika Gor’s journey on ‘Khatron Ke Khiladi 15’ came to an end in the second week of the show. She was eliminated after facing social media influencer Orhan Awatramani, popularly known as Orry, in the elimination stunt. While Orry completed the task in 10 minutes, Avika took more than 13 minutes to finish it.

‘Operation Safed Sagar’ is a zeitgeist project, knew it will travel deep: Siddharth

Mumbai: The success of “Operation Safed Sagar” is an example of a zeitgeist project, believes actor Siddharth, who asays that the response to the Netflix series has changed not only the scale but also the nature of conversations coming his way. I’m just very happy that the flight landed and it landed safely. That’s what ‘Operation Safed Sagar’ is to me today, Siddharth told PTI in an interview. The actor has been receiving praise for his portrayal of Squadron Leader Ajay Ahuja in the six-episode military drama, which tells the story of the Indian Air Force’s role in the 1999 Kargil War. Since its debut on the OTT platform on August 7, the show has featured on Netflix’s Global Top 10 Non-English TV List for consecutive weeks. Siddharth said the day he signed the project, he knew it would travel and travel deep.” Operation Safed Sagar” is a zeitgeist project... I can tell you the difference between projects that are zeitgeist like this... It’s just that your phone rings very differently. Your messages are received very differently. The width and distance from where those messages come from and the times of day they come from all hits very differently, he said. “Operation Safed Sagar” follows Indian Air Force’s Golden Arrows Squadron and their high-altitude air campaign during Kargil war, including the extraordinary challenge of conducting air operations at mountainous elevations while being prohibited from crossing the Line of Control. The story focuses on a group of seasoned and young fighter pilots who undertake high-risk combat missions while navigating the emotional and personal costs of war. Ahuja was killed after his MiG-21 gets hit while on a mission to locate a downed pilot during the Kargil conflict. He was posthumously awarded the Vir Chakra for his courage and sacrifice. What we’re getting from day one... the metrics and the optics that are being talked about is authenticity, intention, how it’s different from everything else that’s been related to warfare in the past in fictionalised television or cinema, and how it does tribute in the perfect way to Squadron Leader Ajay Ahuja, Siddharth said. The actor, known for his performances in Bommarillu, Chithha, and Rang De Basanti, said the show has also been appreciated for depicting the conflict without resorting to caricature or



lingoism. People have praised how it gets the enemy right without making them caricatures or without empty hate; how it does patriotism without jingoism; and how it does technical wizardry without apology that ‘No, we only had this much money to spend on the VFX’, he said. Siddharth said one of the most overwhelming aspects of the response has been hearing from senior members of the armed forces. I’ve been receiving messages from three-star generals and air marshals, and that is very new for me. So that is just because of the pedigree, reputation and sacrifice of Squadron Leader Ajay Ahuja, he said. One of the show’s most personal and poignant sequences features Siddharth’s Ajay Ahuja sharing a candid moment with the younger pilots, just hours before the ill-fated flight of his life. The scene captures the veteran pilot’s attempt to ease the nerves of the anxious young men by telling them, Mera bhi pehla war hai yaar (It is my first war as well). He then plays the game of Two Truths and a Lie with the pilots, ultimately revealing that joining the air force was not his first option. For Siddharth, the scene captures something essential about the Indian Air Force and the camaraderie between its personnel. I found it fascinating that they paused to go into the human being as opposed to shout out his reasons for being nervous, anxious or angry with what’s going to happen next. I love that scene also because of that line — ‘Mera bhi pehla war hai’, he said. If this was not about the Indian Air Force, then I don’t think that scene would have been the same. The volume at which they’re speaking, the kind of camaraderie with which the room is filled. And the lack of age-based or seniority-based status quo that would usually fill a war room the night before the war, he said. Siddharth said he has seen senior and junior officers of the Indian Air Force interact so naturally that an outsider could easily be left wondering who outranks whom.

Diljit Dosanjh shares glimpses of Paris leg of Aura World Tour 2026

Mumbai: Punjabi singer-actor Diljit Dosanjh, who is currently on the UK and European leg of his highly anticipated Aura World Tour 2026, shared glimpses from his Paris leg. Taking to Instagram, he gave a peek into his time in the French capital. Diljit shared a couple of his pictures on social media with the caption, “Paris was Pure Romance Tomorrow, Vienna at,” hinting at his next stop on the European journey. Known for his distinctive Punjabi style, Diljit added his own desi touch to the Paris backdrop. In the images, the ‘Udta Punjab’ actor could be seen striking various poses against Eiffel tower. He also shared glimpses from his Paris concert, capturing the electrifying atmosphere inside the venue. The pictures show fans cheering enthusiastically for Diljit as he performs on stage, while one heartwarming moment features the singer kissing the hands of his fans. A few days ago, Diljit Dosanjh gave a glimpse of his time in Prague, where he explored the Czech capital between concerts during his ongoing Aura World Tour. Through a series



of social media posts, he offered glimpses of the city’s architecture, food, waterways and local culture. In one of the videos, Diljit was seen enjoying a boat ride through Prague’s waterways.

Manoj Bajpayee on immigrant humour: ‘We should learn to laugh at ourselves’

Mumbai: Actor Manoj Bajpayee has reacted to the ongoing issue about humour on immigrants in comedian Samay Raina’s show ‘India’s Got Latent’. The actor recently spoke with IANS during the promotions of his upcoming film ‘Last Man in Tower’. When told about the incident on the comedian’s show where the comedian engaged in a fun banter with Sharon Verma with the two mocking each other’s roots. Reacting to the same, Manoj told IANS, “If it is all in jest, I actually don’t mind it. We should learn to laugh at ourselves and laugh together, laugh at each other and still not be hurt and offended. So, this is what we should learn. We should have humor about ourselves but at the same time we should have respect, not only for ourselves but also for the person that you are sitting with and where that person comes from. It’s very very important. If two people are very easy with each other, they always laugh at each other”. The actor then went on to narrate an incident from his initial days in the national capital



when he was spoken to harshly by a bus driver. He further mentioned, “When I was in Delhi, I was 18, and I was trying to get into a bus from the front door because this was my first time. So, I didn’t know the rules of the city. So, the driver looked at me, and shouted, ‘Aye Bihari board from the back gate’. So, he didn’t know that I was from Bihar but actually I’m from Bihar. So, for him, every person who was doing that kind of a foolish mistake was from Bihar. I didn’t mind it because first, he was right that I was from Bihar. Second, I was not wrong because I was new to the city and I was completely unfamiliar.

Rabada all but ruled out of Australia Test series with hamstring tear

Johannesburg: South Africa’s premier fast bowler Kagiso Rabada has been ruled out of the side’s home Test series against Australia after suffering a grade-three tear to his right hamstring. Rabada, 31, is expected to be sidelined for up to two months after picking up the injury, which disrupted his winter conditioning programme. Former South Africa fast bowler Allan Donald, who’s the bowling coach of Lions, Rabada’s domestic team, said the medical assessment has totally ruled him out of the high-profile series, after initially hoping to have him available for their opening four-day domestic encounter against Boland starting on September 10. “He’s going to be out for all the Aussie Tests as well,” Donald was quoted as saying by News24 on Sunday. South Africa are scheduled to host Australia for a three-match Test series starting in Durban on October 9, followed by subsequent matches in Gqeberha and Cape Town, beginning from October 18 and 27 respectively. The Tests will be preceded by a three-match ODI series starting at Kingsmead in Durban on September 24. But Rabada’s absence leaves a massive void in the South African bowling attack. The right-arm pacer has picked 340 wickets in 73 Test matches and was instrumental in South Africa’s victory over Australia in the 2025 World Test Championship final



at Lord’s, where he returned with match figures of 9-110. Rabada holds an outstanding Test record against the Australians, having taken 58 wickets in 11 games at an average of 21.39. The Proteas are also monitoring the recovery of fast bowler Nandre Burger, who is currently recovering from a stress fracture in his back. Despite the growing injury list, the Proteas bowling depth can come to their rescue. Seamer Gerald Coetzee recently picked up match figures of 4-60 for South Africa A against Bangladesh A, while Kwena Maphaka and Corbin Bosch are very much on the radar for selection into the Test team, who are currently at second spot in the ongoing World Test Championship (WTC) standings behind table-toppers Australia.

Auqib Nabi likely to represent Surrey in County Championship

New Delhi: Jammu & Kashmir fast bowler Auqib Nabi is likely to turn out for English county side Surrey for a brief stint in the ongoing County Championship Division One season. Nabi, who finished as the leading wicket-taker in the last Ranji Trophy season with 60 wickets at an average of 12.56 to lead J&K to their maiden



championship triumph, is expected to be available for Surrey’s upcoming fixture against Yorkshire, starting on September 2 at The Oval. It is followed by games against Sussex and Glamorgan in Hove and The Oval on September 8 and 15 respectively. “Yes, Auqib has got his visa for going to England, after all the paperwork was done. It is understood that he’s expected to depart for England from New Delhi today. If all goes well, he may be available from the game starting on September 2. “The main purpose of this stint is also for the Indian team management and selectors to check if Nabi can swing the ball well there in England, as the climate in New Zealand for the Test series will need for him to do that in conducive conditions with the red Kookaburra ball in hand,” a source familiar with the development told IANS on Sunday. The Indian team management and national selectors are keen on providing Nabi exposure to seamer-friendly conditions and the red Kookaburra ball, keeping in mind the upcoming Test tour of New Zealand. Nabi was part of India’s recent 1-0 Test series win over Sri Lanka, but did not feature in any of the two matches. He is now set to join several Indian players cur-

rently plying their trade in the English domestic season. Left-arm spinner Manav Suthar, who picked 16 wickets in Sri Lanka, is rejoining Warwickshire, while left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav will return to turn out for Yorkshire. Right now, Surrey has India leg-spinner Rahul Chahar and uncapped batting all-rounder Mahipal Lomror in their squad. Once his county championship stint is over, Nabi is expected to link up with the India ‘A’ squad for two red-ball matches against Australia in Puducherry, starting from September 22. It remains to be seen if he will join J&K for the Irani Cup clash against Rest of India in Srinagar from October 1 to 5, considering the second India ‘A’ game in Puducherry starts on September 29. Meanwhile, IANS understands that there could be a possibility of India seamers Mohammed Shami and Mukesh Kumar turning out in later stages of the county championship. Both Shami and Mukesh are currently turning out for East Zone in the ongoing Duleep Trophy semi-final against defending champions Central Zone at the BCCI Centre of Excellence (CoE) Ground 1 in Bengaluru. “The full details are yet to be known, but there’s a possibility they might play there,” added another source.

Emiliano Martinez joins Chelsea from Aston Villa on three-year deal

New Delhi: Chelsea have signed Aston Villa goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez on a three-year deal a day before the transfer deadline closes. Martinez joins the Blues for three years after having spent six years with Aston Villa, during which he won the UEFA Europa League. He is a 2022 FIFA World Cup winner and also received the Golden Glove for a stellar tournament. “I’m delighted to be at this football club,” Martinez said in a statement from Chelsea. “Coming to Chelsea, for me and my family, was an easy decision to make and I’m just over the moon – I can’t wait to get started. “I want to be successful here. I’m someone who wants to win at everything I do and I want to bring that here to this football club because it’s a football club that wins titles, so I think it’s a good match. I’m all passion and I play with my heart. I will give 100 per cent every game, every training session to make the club, my teammates and the supporters proud,” he added. Martinez started his youth career in Independiente before completing a move to Arsenal in 2010. He spent several seasons on loan to gain first-team experience and later became an Arsenal regular in 2019/20, when he won



the FA Cup. The Argentine then made a move to Aston Villa, for whom he made 213 appearances and also went on to make his international debut in 2021. He has since been Argentina’s top-choice goalkeeper and was the cornerstone in their 2022 win, including some spectacular saves in the final against France. Martinez also played a crucial role as Argentina made it to the final of the 2026 World Cup, where they eventually lost to European powerhouse Spain in the showdown. Martinez was awarded the title of the world’s best-performing goalkeeper at the 2023 and 2024 Ballon d’Or ceremonies.

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi takes first-class captaincy role in Duleep Trophy semifinal

Bengaluru: Teenage sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi got his first captaincy role in senior first-class cricket when he took over as the stand-in captain of the East Zone side for their Duleep Trophy semifinal against Central Zone on Sunday. Sooryavanshi, the incumbent vice-captain of the East side, donned the captain’s hat on Day 1 of the semifinal when regular skipper Ishan Kishan walked off the field. Kishan picked up a blow to his right thumb while keeping wickets during Central Zone’s batting innings. The East Zone skipper was replaced by Kumar Kushagara behind the stumps, while Sooryavanshi took over as the stand-in captain of the zonal side temporarily. Sooryavanshi has been in focus in the Duleep Trophy. The teenage sensation scored only eight runs in the quarterfinal against North East Zone but had an enjoyable outing with the ball. The teenage sensation discussed his switch of hats during the match and shared how he felt when bowling and taking two wickets in the second innings of the game, which his team won by an innings and 210 runs on Tuesday. “If you ask any batter, they always enjoy bowling. A batter always enjoys bowling and a bowler always enjoys batting equally,” Sooryavanshi said in a video posted by BCCI Domestic. Sooryavanshi, who was ap-



pointed vice-captain of the zonal side and deputy to Ishan Kishan, opened up about the skipper’s decision to bowl him and described himself as a “wicket-taker”. “Opponent team’s wickets weren’t falling, so I was asked to bowl two or three overs. Ishan Bhaiya felt like he was taking a risk, but he didn’t know that I am a wicket-taker,” he added. Coming back to the East Zone vs Central Zone semifinal, East invited the Rajat Patidar-led Central Zone to bat first after winning the toss.

US Open 2026 Day 1: Djokovic, Medvedev, Pegula and Venus Williams in action

New York: Twenty four-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic will resume his quest for the elusive 25th Major as he gears up for his 20th appearance at the US Open. Djokovic, a four-time winner in New York, will face Argentina’s Mariano Navone in the first round as he remains among the headline starters on Day 1 in Flushing Meadows. There will be another former winner in Daniil Medvedev, who will open his campaign in New York on Day 1 as the 2021 champion meets France’s Hugo Gaston in his opener. Veteran Venus Williams will also mark her 26th main-draw campaign underway on an action-packed opening day as she meets compatriot Sofia Kenin in her opener. Elsewhere, another American, Jessica Pegula, will begin her quest for her



maiden Grand Slam title after having fallen short on the final hurdle in 2024 in New York to Aryna Sabalenka.

Tim Cook’s 15-year Apple legacy: 4 trillion usd valuation, new products and AI challenge

New Delhi: When Tim Cook took over as chief executive of Apple in August 2011, following Steve Jobs’ second departure from the company amid his deteriorating health, expectations were sky-high and doubts were equally strong. Cook was widely viewed as an operations and supply-chain expert rather than a traditional product guy like Jobs. The key question at the time was whether he could sustain Apple’s extraordinary run of innovation and growth. Fifteen years later, the numbers offer a compelling answer. Under Cook, Apple’s market capitalisation has surged from roughly \$350 billion to around \$4 trillion, while its stock has jumped nearly 25-fold. Apple shares, which traded at about \$13 when Cook assumed the top job, have risen 2,359.2% to \$319.70 at the latest close. Apple’s annual revenue has also grown dramatically, rising from about \$108 billion in 2011 to more than \$400 billion. The expansion has been supported by resilient iPhone demand, a rapidly growing services business and the company’s continued global expansion. One of Cook’s biggest achievements has been transforming Apple into a business that extends well beyond hardware. Services including the App Store, Apple Music and Apple Pay have become an increasingly important growth engine. The services segment now generates more than \$100 billion annually and carries broader margins than Apple’s hardware business. Cook also oversaw a major shift in Apple’s chip strategy. The company moved away from its dependence on Intel and began designing its own processors for Mac computers under the Apple Silicon platform. The transition gave Apple greater control over performance, product development and its broader hardware-software ecosystem. His tenure also produced new product categories. Apple introduced the Apple Watch in 2015, with a focus on health, fitness and everyday connectivity. A year later, the company launched AirPods, helping turn wireless earbuds into a mainstream consumer category and creating another significant revenue stream for Apple. Cook’s record,



however, has not been without setbacks. Apple Maps, launched in 2012, faced widespread criticism over inaccurate and incomplete data in its early days. More recently, the Vision Pro mixed-reality headset, introduced in 2023, has struggled to achieve broad adoption, with its high price emerging as a major barrier for consumers.

Apple also eventually abandoned its ambitious electric and autonomous vehicle programme, known as Project Titan. After years of development, high costs and an uncertain commercial path led the company to pull the plug on the project. Perhaps the biggest question surrounding Apple’s next chapter is artificial intelligence. While Microsoft, Google and OpenAI have moved aggressively to integrate AI into consumer and enterprise products, Apple has taken a more measured approach, emphasising privacy, software integration and on-device computing. That strategy could become one of the defining tests for Cook’s successor, John Ternus. Apple has made progress in bringing AI capabilities into its ecosystem, but the company faces growing pressure to match the pace of rivals in a technology race that is reshaping the global tech industry. Cook’s Apple journey has therefore been a mix of extraordinary financial growth, successful new businesses and products, alongside ventures that failed to meet expectations. Yet the transformation in Apple’s scale remains difficult to overlook.

7 of top-10 firms lose Rs 1.13 lakh crore in market value

The combined market capitalisation of seven of India’s 10 most-valued companies declined by around Rs 1.13 lakh crore last week, tracking a weak trend in the broader equity market. Bharti Airtel and Reliance Industries were the biggest laggards during the period. The benchmark Sensex fell 276.32 points, or 0.35 per cent, last week, while the Nifty declined 76.35 points, or 0.31 per cent. Commenting on the Sensex technical outlook, experts said that a sustained breakout above 78,000 could strengthen the recovery and pave the way towards

78,500–78,800. "On the downside, 77,000 remains the crucial psychological support, followed by the 76,700–76,500 region. Holding above 77,000 will be important to preserve the broader recovery structure, while a decisive break below this level could invite renewed selling pressure," an analyst stated. Bharti Airtel suffered the steepest erosion among the top 10 companies, with its market valuation declining by Rs 40,500.85 crore to Rs 11,74,462.30 crore. Reliance Industries followed closely, with its market capitalisation falling Rs 40,056.32 crore

ONGC explores drillship acquisition/JV for deepwater capacity under Samudra Manthan

New Delhi: State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is exploring the acquisition of deepwater drillships or formation of a joint venture to secure dedicated drilling capacity as it steps up efforts to accelerate offshore exploration to find oil and gas reserves under its Mission Samudra Manthan programme. ONGC has issued an Expression of Interest (EOI) to engage a specialist global offshore rig-broking consultant to identify potential drillship owners or counterparties, assess assets and valuations, and support the state explorer in negotiating a possible ownership or joint venture arrangement. The initiative is aimed at creating dedicated, priority-access deepwater drillship capacity, according to the EOI issued by ONGC. "ONGC is undertaking a structured capacity-creation programme to secure dedicated, priority-access deepwater drillship capacity in support of Mission Samudra Manthan. In view of the same, ONGC is exploring possibilities of ownership or JV model for Drillship acquisition," the EOI said. The Union Cabinet had last month approved Samudra Manthan, the National Offshore Exploration Scheme, with an outlay of Rs 84,084 crore through 2030-31. The central-sector scheme is aimed at accelerating exploration of India’s offshore oil and gas resources, particularly in deepwater and ultra-deepwater areas, as the government seeks to boost domestic production and reduce import dependence. Under the scheme, the government will provide financial support of up to 50 per cent of the cost of deepwater exploration wells, subject to a cap of Rs 675 crore per well. The programme includes drilling of 60 deepwater exploration wells, large-scale seismic surveys, development of common offshore production and evacuation infrastructure, and creation of an Oil and Gas Manufacturing and Services Zone.

To undertake such deepwater drilling, companies such as ONGC require specialised drillships. India currently does not have the manufacturing capability to build deepwater drillships, leaving explorers dependent on foreign-owned rigs typically secured through time-charter



arrangements. The proposed consultant will help ONGC identify suitable global drillship owners and contractors, undertake commercial benchmarking and technical due diligence, and assist in negotiating an ownership or JV deal. The assignment has been structured in two phases. The first, expected to run for three months, will involve identifying, screening and shortlisting potential counterparties and establishing an indicative commercial basis for ONGC to decide whether and with whom to proceed. The second phase, which would run for up to six months from commencement, would cover ownership or JV negotiation support, documentation, financing coordination and transaction closure, including bringing the rig into India.

The consultant’s mandate would include benchmarking drillship day rates and sale-and-purchase or JV valuations against recent global transactions, coordinating technical due diligence and leading negotiations for a non-binding indicative term sheet covering equity split, governance, charter economics and an indicative sail-in timeline, according to the tender document. For the potential transaction, ONGC is also looking at structuring a GIFT City special purpose vehicle (SPV) and assessing an equity-debt funding mix, including an external commercial borrowing route, according to the EOI. The EOI seeks market intelligence on drillship owners and contractors with deepwater assets or newbuild capacity, including their fleet specifications, financial standing and appetite for joint ventures. ONGC has also asked potential advisers to provide details of global drillship and semi-submersible transactions handled over the past seven years.



to Rs 17,38,119.27 crore. HDFC Bank also witnessed a significant decline in valuation, losing Rs 11,558.35 crore to end the week at Rs 11,09,600.70 crore. Bajaj Finance’s market capitalisation fell by Rs 10,086.05 crore to Rs 6,70,535.57 crore. The market value of Larsen & Toubro declined Rs 6,473.45 crore to Rs 5,55,987.49 crore, while Life Insurance Corporation of India saw its valuation fall by Rs 3,162.50 crore to Rs 5,32,817.81 cro

re. Hindustan Unilever’s market capitalisation slipped Rs 1,550.73 crore to Rs 4,72,361.83 crore. In contrast, three companies among the top 10 bucked the weak market trend and added to their market value. Tata Consultancy Services emerged as the biggest gainer, with its valuation rising Rs 16,643.20 crore to Rs 8,48,079.71 crore. ICICI Bank’s market capitalisation increased by Rs 4,475.28 crore to Rs 10,22,805.73 crore, while State Bank of India’s valuation edged up Rs 599.99 crore to Rs 9,65,568.75 crore. Despite the weekly decline, Reliance Industries retained its position as India’s most-valued company by market capitalisation. Bharti Airtel ranked second, followed by HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, TCS, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro, LIC and Hindustan Unilever.

India, Chile step up CEPA talks, aim to conclude pact this year: Govt

India and Chile have stepped up efforts to deepen bilateral economic ties, with both countries pushing ahead with negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) aimed at expanding trade and investment opportunities, the Ministry of Commerce & Industry said on Sunday. Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal met Chile’s Vice-Minister of International Economic Rela-



tions Paula Estevez Weinstein in Santiago on August 26 to advance discussions on the proposed trade pact. During the meeting, India reiterated its commitment to an open, sustained and balanced approach to the negotiations, with the objective of creating meaningful and commercially viable opportunities for businesses and people in both countries. India and Chile’s shared position as members of the Global South and their common strategic outlook were also highlighted as a strong foundation for closer economic cooperation. Both sides stressed the need to build on the growing momentum in India-Chile

relations and ensure that the CEPA delivers concrete outcomes for businesses in the two countries. The agreement is expected to provide a framework for greater market access while strengthening cooperation across trade and investment. Agrawal highlighted significant potential for expanding economic engagement in sectors such as healthcare, pharmaceuticals, energy, minerals, agriculture, machinery and engineering. A successful conclusion of the negotiations, he said, could provide further momentum to the expanding bilateral trade and economic partnership.

Don't forget 'Telugu roots' however high you grow abroad

Pravasi Andhras should become partners in motherland development
Minister Kondapalli at Asia Pacific Telugu Federation (APTF) conference



Amaravati, August 30: State Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Rural Poverty Alleviation and Pravasi Empowerment Relations Kondapalli Srinivas called upon Pravasi Telugus not to forget their roots, Telugu language and cultures however high they grow at world level after settling abroad. He participated as chief guest on behalf of State Government in inaugural of 'Asia Pacific

Telugu Federation (APTF) Conference - 2026' organized at Penang in Malaysia on Sunday. Speaking in programme, Minister lauded that formation of APTF to bring Telugu associations in many countries like Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, Indonesia on one platform is historic event. He said our children should remain united as Telugu community while growing as Global Citizens. Minister re-



quested Pravasi Andhras across world to become partners in achievement of Swarna Andhra-2047 goal prestigiously taken up by Government of Andhra Pradesh under leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu. He said time has come to convert emotional bond with motherland into "Development Partnership" henceforth. Minister addressed in Asia Pacific Telugu Federation conference that every Telugu house in Pravas should become a small Telugu school and mentorship, startup networks should be made available at global level for youth. He assured that Telugu industrialists with world class experience should invest in AP and provide job opportunities to youth here and APNRTS will work as strong bridge to solve problems of Pravasi Andhras



abroad and to connect their skills with development of State. He also said Uttarandhra style Kolata Bhajana performed by young Malaysian Telugu artists impressed him very much. He said he felt very happy that our Pravasi Telugu community in Malaysia has preserved our cultural heritage safely in hearts though generations changed and migrated abroad decades ago. Minister praised that it is very inspiring that our Telugu youth are learning Kuchipudi, folk arts through Malaysian Telugu Academy and performing this traditional Kolata dance with utmost enthusiasm. APTF interim President Dr S Venkata Pratap, Organizing Committee Chairman Sri Satya Sudhakaran, interim General Secretary Sri Shiva Surya Narayana, Tollywood actor, writer Tanikella Bharani and representatives of various countries and eminent persons participated in this programme.

Praja Samasya Parishkara Vedika on 31st of this month

District Collector Dr G Lakshmisha

Vijayawada, August 30: District Collector Dr G Lakshmisha said district administration is taking special measures to provide speedy, transparent solution to problems of district people. As part of it, he revealed that 'Praja Samasya Parishkara Vedika' will be organized at Sri Pingali Venkayya Meeting Hall in Collectorate. Collector said Praja Samasya Parishkara Vedika will be organized on Monday, August 31 from 10 am to 1.00 pm. He said officials belonging to various departments at district level will participate in this programme and directly receive petitions from people. He said this platform will be useful for people to bring their problems to notice of officials and to take

necessary steps to resolve them. Collector suggested that people should clearly mention name, complete address, mobile number along with comprehensive details of problem while submitting petitions related to their problems. He said supporting documents and other relevant documents related to problem should be attached along with petition. He suggested those who have already complained on same problem in past should bring their old petition receipt / complaint receipt with them. He said by this, there will be opportunity to examine details of old complaint and to take further steps quickly. District Collector said Government has made SMS



services available so that people can easily know status of their petitions. He said measures are being taken to make information related to complaint redressal process available from time to time. Collector said people who cannot personally attend Collectorate and submit petition can also use 1100 toll-free call centre services being provided by

Government to bring their problems to notice of officials. He said similarly there is opportunity to register their complaints online also through meekosam.ap.gov.in website. District Collector said there is opportunity to receive petitions from people in Division, Mandal offices, Municipal offices also to provide services more closer to people. He suggested people can contact concerned offices near their area and register problems. District Collector Dr G Lakshmisha appealed people to make best use of this opportunity being provided by Government for redressal of public problems. He said by submitting petitions with complete details of problems and supporting documents, it will be possible to examine them quickly and resolve as per rules. Collector directed district level officials that every petition received from public should be examined by concerned officials and necessary steps should be taken to resolve problem. He said providing transparent and accountable services to people is main goal of district administration.

NEET PG-2026 exam ends peacefully

Exam conducted successfully amidst fool proof arrangements
District Collector Dr G Lakshmisha inspected exam centre

Vijayawada, August 30: NEET PG-2026 exam ended peacefully and successfully in Vijayawada on Sunday. District administration took advance measures and made fool-proof arrangements so that candidates attending exam do not face any difficulties. With availability of security, electricity, drinking water and other necessary facilities at exam centres, candidates attended exam in peaceful atmosphere. NEET PG-2026 exam was conducted from 9 am to 12.30 pm at P S C M R College of Engineering and Technology, Sri Vijayadurga IT Info Solutions (Enikapadu) centres. Out of total 843 candidates at two exam centres, 818 can-

didates attended exam. Out of 530 candidates at Sri Vijayadurga IT Info Solutions exam centre, 512 attended. At P S C M R College of Engineering and Technology centre, out of 313 candidates, 306 attended exam. District Collector Dr G Lakshmisha inspected P S C M R College of Engineering and Technology exam centre. Along with examining manner of conduct of exam, he personally examined facilities provided to candidates and security arrangements. He enquired officials whether all arrangements are in proper manner so that candidates write exam peacefully at exam centre. After examining entry of



candidates into exam centre, exam conduct process, security measures, Collector instructed concerned officials to



strictly follow rules without scope for any untoward incidents.

Two minors drown in a pond in Mulugu

Mulugu: Two minor students, who happened to be siblings, drowned in a pond at Ganeshlalpalli in Mulugu municipality in the district. The deceased Maloth Vinay (15) and his brother Rajesh (14) studying Intermediate and SSC respectively came to Ganeshlalpalli along with their mother Swathi to celebrate Rakhi festival on Friday. On Sunday evening, the two went near Mondikunta pond. When the younger one, Rajesh, accidentally fell into the pond and was drowning his brother, Vinay, attempted to rescue him. In the process, Vinay also fell into the water. Both drowned and lost their lives. A boy who witnessed the incident alerted the villagers, who rushed to the spot and started searching for the kids. By the time they spotted the boys they both died. The incident caused a pall of gloom to descend on their native village Kamalapur of Mangapet mandal.