



the pioneer

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Published From: HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI DEHRADUN VIJAYAWADA

QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is concentrating on blackmailing, land settlements and looting for his relatives and not on the assurances given to the people or on solving people's problems. The CM should reveal whether the Congress government has filled the land with lights after eliminating darkness during its 11-month rule. Has happiness filled the state or is the CM living with delusions? If the CM is confident about this then he should come along with me to go to the people

- Alleti Maheshwar Reddy, BJP Leader

P2



India and China made 'some progress' in disengagement:

EAM

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ON SET WITH

AVANTIKA DASSANI, MAKING OF MITHYA: THE DARKER CHAPTER



9

Nora Fatehi brings her unique charm to

MATKA



P11

DON'T MISS...

Experts, victims question Musi ...

Environmental experts gathered in a round-table conference conducted by Justice Movement of India on Urban Flooding in Hyderabad and questioned the Musi rejuvenation project of the government on Sunday. The members consisting of environmentalists, social activists and flood-affected victims have opined that clearing the slums is not the solution; instead the government must ...

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Man impersonates Minister's ...

In a shocking incident reported from Suryapet, a man posing as the personal assistant to a minister has been accused of harassing a female government employee. The harassment came to light recently when the victim, a supervisor from Kodada in Suryapet district, detailed her distressing experience. The man repeatedly contacted her, asking intrusive questions about her office. When she inquired about his ...

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FMCG firms worry over high inflation ...

Leading FMCG companies reported a decline in margins in the September quarter on account of higher input costs and food inflation, which ultimately slowed down the pace of urban consumption. Rising prices of commodity inputs such as palm oil, coffee and cocoa were also accentuated and some FMCG firms have hinted at a price hike. HUL, Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL), Marico, ITC, and Tata Consumer Products ...

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Non-performance of batters is...

The disastrous performance of star batters is certainly a cause of concern for India, admitted Rohit Sharma after a stunning reversal against New Zealand but the skipper promised that the team will fight to deliver something 'very very special' in Australia. New Zealand went strength to strength in the series while hosts India could not bring their floundering campaign back on track and ended up suffering a rare and humiliating 0-3 whitewash. Rohit (91) ...

-SPORTS

Farmers facing paddy procurement pangs



Procurement centres not buying paddy at many places

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The TG Government has opened paddy procurement centres but at many places, these centres are not purchasing paddy since a month. Helpless farmers are selling their paddy to private buyers for just Rs 1800 to Rs 1950 instead of the government price of Rs 2320 a quintal. Realising the helplessness of farmers, brokers have entered the

scene and are purchasing paddy and deceiving farmers in a big way. BRS leaders said that Andhra Pradesh millers are coming to Telangana and are purchasing Telangana paddy. BJP and BRS leaders said that farmers have been staying at procurement centres since the last 15 to 20 days hoping that the government may buy their paddy. They said that the farmers of Jagtial, Mahabubabad, Suryapet and Rajanna Sircilla

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CM needs farmers' votes but not their paddy: Harish



The Revanth Reddy government is not procuring paddy since a month, BRS MLA T. Harish Rao said. He said that monkeys and bandicoots are destroying the paddy kept at procurement centres and farmers are waiting at procurement centres guarding their paddy, he said.

Continued on Page 5

Govt not purchasing paddy since a month, says Sanjay

The Union Minister of State for Home, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, said that it is deeply concerning that even a month after the beginning of the paddy harvest season rice procurement has not commenced in TG. There is a significant gap between the government's announcements and its actions in this case, he added. "Although the government declared the establishment of 7,572 paddy

procurement centres and had claimed that 4,598 of these centres have already opened, our information indicates that procurement has not started at any centre. Farmers have been left waiting for days with heaps of paddy. As these centres are full many farmers are forced to leave their crops in piles by the roadside inconveniencing both farmers and the public," Sanjay said

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Govt will buy entire paddy harvested by farmers, say Ministers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress government will procure every single paddy grain harvested by farmers, Panchayati Raj, Rural Development, Rural Water Supply, Women and Child Welfare Minister Seethakka said.

Addressing the gathering after inaugurating the Agriculture Cooperative Society's 1,000-tonne godown at Palsubally Road in Mulugu district headquarters on Sunday, Seethakka said that the government has made arrangements to procure the entire paddy harvested by farmers. She said that rice millers and PACS centres should coordi-

nate and buy paddy. Declaring that the Congress Government would procure every grain of paddy produced by the farmers in the state, Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy said on Sunday that arrangements have been made for procuring paddy all over Telangana.

Uttam said the state had achieved a record paddy production of 150 lakh tonnes and that the government has arranged extensive procurement facilities.

In addition to the Centre's MSP, the Congress Government will provide a bonus of Rs 500 per quintal for fine paddy, he said.



Farmers protest delay in paddy procurement

PNS ■ RAJANNA SIRICILLA

Farmers took to the streets here protesting against the delay in procuring paddy in the district. Farmers staged a protest in Padira village of Yellareddy mandal in the district.

Expressing their anguish, they said that despite working hard for six months to harvest their produce, the government has not purchased it even after 25 days. The farmers staged a protest on the Sircilla-Kamareddy

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'Govt invited tenders sans sanctions'

KTR slams sarkar on SLIP



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao asked the Congress Government how it had invited tenders for works costing Rs 1,074 crore of the Seetharama Lift Irrigation Project without getting the necessary permissions.

Posting regarding this on his X account on Sunday KTR said, "They complained that expectations were raised and kept saying that there was corruption. They are vengeful

regarding the Kaleshwaram Project and deceived farmers. They are vengeful regarding the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Project and waived the green flag for migration. They spit poison on Telangana projects and stopped the state's development. They say Praja Palana 10 times every day. How were tenders invited for Seetharama Project worth Rs 1,074 crore without getting approvals? How did you violate rules

Continued on Page 5

Revanth asks officials to appoint dedicated BC commission

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has decided to take care of reservations for BCs in local bodies to avoid legal complications.

In the context of the Supreme Court and High Court judgements, the Chief Minister held discussions at his residence with Ministers Uttam Kumar Reddy, Sridhar Babu, Damodar Raja Narasimha and TPCC President Mahesh Goud and senior officials.

The social, economic, educational, employment and caste survey will start in the state on November 6. In this context, the CM thinks that court judgements should be followed to avoid future problems and legal complications connected to BC reservations.

The CM asked officials to immediately set up a dedicated BC commission based on everyone's opinion. The Chief Minister directed the officials to issue the relevant orders on Monday.

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Is the Congress govt afraid of jailing us: Jagadish

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Senior BRS MLA G. Jagadish Reddy asked the Congress government to reveal whether it is afraid of putting BRS leaders in jail. He asked Congress leaders why the Congress government is leaking info secretly and why the government is delaying their arrests and putting them in jail.

Jagadish demanded that the government should place the report before the people when the



Commission on Power submits its report to the government.

Speaking to the media at Telangana Bhavan here on Sunday, he said that

he didn't know when Power Commission Chairman Justice Madan B. Lokur had worked. How can he submit a report without inquiring with anyone, Jagdeesh said. He said the government had formally stated that the Power Commission had completed its inquiry. However, the Commission did not take the explanation of BRS leaders. Some media houses are spitting venom on them, he said and added that

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Mahesh asks Surekha to appoint social media coordinators in temple committees

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC President B. Mahesh Kumar Goud addressed a letter to Endowments Minister Konda Surekha asking her to appoint social media coordinators in temple committees.

He also asked the Minister to give an opportunity to social media coordi-

nators in trust boards. The development of temples and programmes conducted in temples will reach people with the appointment of social media coordinators, he said in his letter. He requested the Minister to appoint social media coordinators in temples immediately.



Ahead of the polling day, millions of Americans seal their choices in early voting

PNS ■ NEW YORK

The 42 Broadway in New York is an important address in this election season in the US. This is the office of the Board of Elections. Michael Ryan, executive director, and his deputy Vincent Ignizio are upbeat about the figures that the early voting has drawn for the city. On the first day, about 140,000 votes were cast in the early voting.

"We don't want to pat ourselves on the back but we are upbeat about this. New York has already created a record in early voting and it is still on," says Ryan.

Across the United States, tens of millions of voters have already cast their ballots. According to the data from the University of Florida's Election Lab tracker, more than 68 million Americans have already voted.

Across the nation, voters are taking advan-



Across the United States, tens of millions of voters have already cast their ballots. According to the data from the University of Florida's Election Lab tracker, more than 68 million Americans have already voted

issues such as inclement weather, long queues, or unforeseen scheduling conflicts on election day. Ryan feels that several factors played a role in ensuring the positive trend in early voting, at least for New York City (NYC).

"In 2020 less than 100 polling stations were set up for early voting. This year the number is almost 50 per cent more than that," says Ryan.

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'Govt paying 6,000 cr interest on loans taken during BRS rule'

BRS 'sold' ORR for 35 yrs to give Rythu Bandhu: Jupally

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Excise Minister Jupally Krishan Rao said the Congress Government is doing debts to clear the BRS admin's debts interests contracted during the last 10 years.

Speaking to the media at Achampet, Jupally said the Congress government is paying Rs 6,000 crore for the interests to the loans taken by the BRS government. He said the BRS government sold ORR for 35 years to give



Rythu Bandhu. However, the Congress government spent Rs 18,000 crore for the implementation of the loan waiver scheme without scrapping the BRS admin's schemes. He said that the BRS government had made the state debt-riddled. However, Revanth has been implementing schemes announced before elections, he said.

It is surprising that opposition parties are criticising the Congress government forgetting the fact that it came to power just 10 months ago, he pointed out.

Monday Mirchi

FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY GRIP OFFICIALS AMID POLITICAL CROSSFIRE

With whispers in the corridors of power getting louder, bureaucrats in Telangana are on edge. There is pervasive unease among officials at all levels as they see the Congress government in the state involving bureaucrats in political skirmishes. Be it the Kaleshwaram project, payments related to Formula E race, or power purchase agreements; the manner in which officials are being dragged for settling political scores in relation to scams under probe has cast a shadow on decision-making in administrative ranks. For instance, the Formula E race, which once put the city in the spotlight on the world stage, has now become a flashpoint for debate over perceived irregularities, with some questioning the potential damage to the city's image as a competent host for the high-profile international championships. Beyond the public spectacle, the fall-out has eroded the confidence of bureaucrats who believe in going with the flow when the situation demands to close a multi-lateral deal that involves a line-up of many competing nations. Hence, supreme confidence has now made way for paranoid caution. The mutterings of officials caught in the cross-fire suggest that most officials are increasingly wary about green-lighting any project or its components, fearing that any decision taken in deference to political diktat not backed by paperwork could boomerang on them in unexpected ways and at any moment. The concern now is: with morale low, will decision-making in the corridors of power come to a standstill? Already there is talk of the powers that be not getting a grip on administration, which informed quarters have blamed on communication breakdown. On top of that, if bureaucrats are sucked into political witch-hunt, how are they expected to deliver?

WHY YADADRI COLLECTOR IS GRINNING

The recent shuffle of district collectors in Telangana has created a buzz since the transfers happened amid the process of preparation of electoral rolls which will continue until January. During this period, the government is required to obtain special permission from the Election Commission of India to reshuffle Collectors. Therefore, Hanumanth Rao feels twice blessed to be appointed Yadadri Collector; for, apart from the factor relating to additional layer of administrative process, he is known to have secured the position on which he had set his sight firmly for quite some time, according to insiders. On hindsight, Rao's move is more of accommodation than transfer.

WHY CM'S WARNING ON GRAFT FELL FLAT IN THE CASE OF AMOY KUMAR

Although Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy never misses an opportunity to air his abhorrence of graft, by his inexplicable silence in the snowballing Enforcement Directorate case against Amoy Kumar, he has raised the hackles of those who are emboldened by the allegations of corruption involving the official in the dock. It was only behind closed doors that Revanth Reddy expressed his stance, noting that this situation should serve as a stern example to IAS officers nationwide. By not commenting publicly and specifically on Amoy, he has sent a clear message: if bureaucrats dip their toes into corrupt practices, consequences will follow. By letting the ED handle the matter without bothering about political undertones, he has underlined the need for accountability within the bureaucracy. This implies that even those in the upper echelons of administration are not beyond reproach. With such a high-profile case

unfolding, all eyes are on how this will shape public perception about the CM's anathema for corruption.

WHISPERS OVER AP CM'S SECRETARY TRAVEL TO THE US WITH LOKESH

When we talk of inherited traits, it is OK to be bandied about as "Like father, like son". In pure play politics, when the son has not yet risen; can an official designated to advise the head of the government extend his role to back the Chief Minister's son as well? In Andhra Pradesh, Additional Secretary to CM Karthikeya Mishra's junket to the US alongside Minister Nara Lokesh has whetted the curiosity of those piqued by the existing power structure. The murmurs getting louder are: why on earth did Mishra tag along with Lokesh? After all, there is neither protocol nor precedent that can justify this unusual pairing. Mishra's job, by the book, is to advise the CM directly. If so, what is he doing flying off with a Minister? The juicier grapevine is that folks in the Secretariat are wondering whether Mishra has been 'advised' unofficially to hand-hold the CM's son. Having seen a pattern in the history of 'sonrise' cases in Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana, among other states, official circles are wondering whether it is a strategic move or sheer coincidence that raised eyebrows. Whatever it is, the Secretariat gossip mill is on overdrive.

OFFICIAL OUTDOES MINISTER IN PR

In Andhra Pradesh, the corridors of power are buzzing with hushed talk about the widening gulf between Minister for Housing and I & PR K Parthasarathy and I&PR Director Himanshu Shukla. The reason is plain as the nose on the face Parthasarathy, who is apparently frustrated over some of his key recommendations not seeing the light of day. The presumption is that Shukla, given his proximity to the Chief Minister's Office, scuttled them. Secretary to CM Pradyumna P S is adding an extra layer of twist to the tale. Insiders are nudging one another with raised eyebrows, awaiting all dimensions of the power play to unfold. Will the Minister shift gears in resentment, if not fury? Regardless of the Minister's moves, is Shukla's connection to the brass strong enough to keep things steady? The tension is palpable in expectant circles. Everyone is keeping an eye on the next act in this unfolding drama.

LOYALTY REWARDED: PUNETHAMAINA RETURN TO ANDHRA POLITICS

The recent appointment of Anil Punetha as the Andhra Pradesh Vigilance and Enforcement Commissioner may have set tongues wagging. But what has not gone unnoticed is Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu's penchant for seeking out loyal officials who may have fallen out of favour in the long-drawn process of regime change. Known for his unswerving loyalty to Chandrababu Naidu, the career of 'Punetha' (a word which in Telugu means 'love, pure, sacred and devout') has been anything but ordinary. In fact, many remember the dramatic moment in 2019 when he was removed from the Chief Secretary position by the Election Commission. His retirement followed in May the same year. Fast forward five years, Chandrababu Naidu has given Anil a punethamaina role with the spotlight back on him. The appointment is another example of how Naidu's tight-knit team is founded on loyalty of the highest order. It has raised the hopes of other similarly placed hard-core CBN loyalists awaiting intezaar ka phal.

--Yours truly

CM and his family are happy but not the poor: Maheshwar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Happiness has come to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and his family but not for poor commoners, BJP leader Alleti Maheshwar Reddy said.

"Light has come not to the people but to the coterie surrounding Chief Minister Revanth Reddy," he said. Speaking to the media at Warangal on Sunday, Maheshwar said, "The CM is focussed on blackmailing, land settlements and loot for his relatives and not on the assurances he had given to the people and on solving people's problems."

He asked the CM to reveal



whether the Congress government had filled the state with light after eliminating darkness during its 11-month rule. Has happiness filled the state or is the CM having illusions? If the CM is confident then he should come along with me and we can go to the people, Maheshwar said throwing a

challenge at the CM.

Maheshwar said that Prime Minister Modi's post on X that the Congress government had destroyed Telangana with its fake assurances had created a flutter in the Congress.

He said that the CM posted a reply to Modi as per the directions of the Congress high command but it was nothing but an attempt to hide the ground-level facts in Telangana.

Maheshwar pointed out that AICC President Mallikarjuna Kharge had said that governments should give assurances to the people based on their budgets. Otherwise, the states will go bankrupt. This statement looks

like an attempt to avoid implementing the assurances given to the people, he said.

The Revanth government is trying to avoid implementing assurances as Kharge said. However, the BJP will not remain silent if Revanth tries to avoid implementing his assurances, Maheshwar warned.

He said that the Congress knew about the financial condition of Telangana and the BRS admin's debts but still, it gave impossible assurances to come to power. The BJP will not remain silent if the Congress government tells cock and bull stories to avoid implementing its assurances, he warned.

Modi accepted TG's development, deleted his post: Anil

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Rajya Sabha Member Anil Kumar Yadav stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi deleting his comments on Telangana from his official post indicates that he has accepted the development achieved in Telangana.

Prime Minister Modi had posted that the promises made by Congress during the state elections are not being implemented. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy posted explaining the development and social welfare programmes implemented in Telangana in the last 10 months.

KCR's political expiry date nearing; Harish & KTR planning padayatras to grab BRS chief's chair: Arvind

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that BRS supremo K. Chandrasekar Rao's political expiry date is nearing, the BJP's Nizamabad MP, Dharmapuri Arvind, said that BRS Working President KT Rama Rao and senior MLA T. Harish Rao are planning padayatras to grab the BRS chief's post.

He said that a battle is going on between Harish Rao, KTR and Kavitha for the BRS chief's chair.

Addressing the media at Nizamabad on Sunday, Arvind appealed to the people to welcome KTR with slippers and brooms if he comes to villages with his padayatra.

Padayatras are useless after engaging in corruption dur-

ing the last 10 years, Arvind said and added that BRS leaders took commissions from companies citing the Kaleshwaram Project.

Criticising KTR for saying that people are looking forward to his padayatra, Arvind asked KTR to first reveal who asked him to launch the padayatra. He said that people will never forget the atrocities of BRS leaders.

He said that KCR gave an empty treasury to the Congress government. However, the Congress gave fake assurances to the people fully knowing that the treasury was empty.

He said that the Congress is also following the BRS's footsteps and is making mistakes wilfully to hide its errors.

He said that the Congress government is adopting delaying tactics on local body elections as the government is facing public anger.

Arvind said that the AIMM is a cancer on the nation and its chief Asaduddin Owaisi is the face of that cancer.

Terming the Wakf Act as an atrocious Act, he said the Centre is trying to amend the Act. He said that Congress is the party that introduced the Wakf Act and that Asaduddin Owaisi's threats are meant not only for the BRS but also for the Congress.

He said that Asaduddin's remarks on the Musi Project issue are like shooting the Revanth Government by keeping the gun on BRS's shoulder.

AP millers purchasing paddy cheaply in Telangana: Rakesh

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Although the TG Government had opened 4,598 paddy procurement centres, the government has not purchased even a single quintal of paddy so far, BRS leader A. Rakesh Reddy said.

The paddy is getting soaked in the rains at paddy procurement centres resulting in farmers selling paddy to brokers for just Rs 1,800. Farmers are losing Rs 1,000 per quintal, he said.

Speaking to the media on Sunday at the Telangana Bhavan, Rakesh said that Civil Supplies Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy is remembering millers only now. However, Andhra Pradesh millers are purchasing paddy from Telangana farmers.

Alleging that Congress MLAs opened procurement centres and remained as 'Reel Leaders', Rakesh asked the Congress MLAs to explain why they are not visiting the

same procurement centres now.

He said that Congress MLAs are confined to settlements and that farmers are selling cotton for Rs 5000 and brokers are deceiving them. The CCI has not opened a single procurement centre so far and nobody knows what the Union Ministers from Telangana are doing, Rakesh added. He said that the CM deceived farmers and destroyed the real estate sector.

SC STATUS FOR CONVERTS

Govt extends tenure of Commission till October 2025

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has extended by a year the tenure of a commission established to examine whether Scheduled Castes (SC) status can be granted to individuals who have converted to religions other than Sikhism and Buddhism.

This decision, formalised through a notification dated November 1, comes as the Commission, initially set to

conclude its work on October 10 sought additional time to finalise its report.

The Commission of Inquiry was constituted on October 6, 2022, under the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952.

The inquiry also covers related concerns regarding social justice, rights, and the possible extension of reserved status to converts from religions not traditionally included in SC classifications, such as Christianity and Islam.

Justice of India K G Balakrishnan, the Commission has been engaging with stakeholders, including sociologists, historians, and representatives from affected communities, to better understand the nuances of caste identity in the context of religious conversion, officials said.

According to the latest notification, the Commission is now required to submit its report by October 10, 2025.

Through collective spirit, we'll keep working towards TB-free India: PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the decline in TB incidence is an outcome of India's dedicated and innovative efforts, and asserted that "we will keep working towards a TB-free India" through a collective spirit.

His remarks came in response to a post by Health Minister J P Nadda in which he stated that the World Health Organization (WHO) has recognised India's "remarkable" progress, with a

17.7 per cent decline in TB incidence from 2015 to 2023 -- a rate more than double the global decline of 8.3 per cent.

In his post on X, Modi said, "Commendable progress! The decline in TB incidence is an outcome of India's dedicated and innovative efforts."

"Through a collective spirit, we will keep working towards a TB-free India," the prime minister said.

In his remarks on Saturday, Nadda said, "Under the visionary leadership of PM Shri Narendra Modi ji, our govern-

ment has expanded and strengthened the National TB Elimination Programme by taking key initiatives such as the Nikshay Poshan Yojana to provide essential nutritional support to TB patients, and introduction of the BPALM regimen, a novel treatment for Multi-Drug Resistant Tuberculosis."

"I also acknowledge the tireless efforts of the Health Ministry's dedicated healthcare workers, whose unwavering commitment and hard work play a crucial role in this fight against tuberculosis," Nadda said.



KCR has retired, KTR & Harish fighting for BRS supremo's chair: Kiran

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS chief K. Chandrasekar Rao has retired and cousins KT Rama Rao and T. Harish Rao are fighting for KCR's chair, the Congress's Bhongir MP, Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy, said.

"The fight has begun between KTR and Harish for the BRS chief's post. But the Congress government is moving forward to build golden Telangana. The BRS was not launched for Telangana but for collections and commissions. Harish became a Minister due to the Congress-BRS alliance. KCR became CM due to the Congress and after that Harish became a leader," Kiran said.

Speaking to the media at Gandhi Bhavan on Sunday, Kiran termed KTR as 'Tillu' and Harish as 'Sollu' and said

that both KTR and Harish are unable to sleep since the last 10 months as they had lived life kingsize during the last 10 years.

The people sent BRS home as KCR was staying in his farmhouse and not coming to the secretariat, he said.

He said that KTR went to the US for his son's sake. However, he returned after coming to know that Harish had speeded up his moves.

Lashing out at KTR for criticising the CM, Kiran said that KTR is a parachute leader who has no stature to criticise the CM.

Responding to the criticism of BJP leader Alleti Maheshwar Reddy, he said that Maheshwar has no room in the BJP office although the party had given him the BJP leader's post.

Social outfit launches campaign to save, rejuvenate Yamuna

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A year-long campaign to clean and rejuvenate the Yamuna river in Delhi-NCR and the Braj region was launched by a social organisation in the national capital on Sunday. The campaign -- "Bhikshatan Mahayajna" -- was launched on the occasion of Bhai Dooj by Ravi Shankar Tiwari, the convener of Yamuna Sansad.

Tiwari travels through Delhi-NCR and the Braj region to engage with local communities, civil society members and environmental organisations for rejuvenating the river, a statement from the organisation said. "This year-long initiative aims to raise awareness about the river's critical condition, particularly in Delhi-NCR and the Braj region," it said.

The campaign was inaugurated near the Chhath ghat at ITO and was attended by



community representatives and schoolchildren, among others, it added. The participants pledged to promote awareness about the importance of rejuvenating the river.

Tiwari highlighted the historical significance of the Yamuna for Delhi and pointed out that the relationship between the city and the river had deteriorated.

The river is facing threats from pollution and encroachment, the statement said. Tiwari emphasised the need for public involvement in the campaign and plans to visit households in Delhi-NCR and the Braj region to gather support and contributions for the initiative.

Uniform Civil Code won't be allowed in Jharkhand: Soren

PNS ■ RANCHI

Shortly after Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday announced that the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) would be implemented in Jharkhand, Chief Minister Hemant Soren hit back saying neither the UCC nor the National Register of Citizens (NRC) would be allowed in the

state. Soren emphasised that Jharkhand would adhere only to the Chotanagpur Tenancy (CNT) and Santhal Pargana Tenancy (SPT) Acts to protect tribal culture, land, and rights.

"Neither the UCC nor the NRC will be implemented here. Jharkhand will rely solely on the Chotanagpur Tenancy and Santhal Pargana Tenancy Acts.

These people (the BJP) are spewing venom and do not care about tribals, natives, Dalits, or backward communities," Soren said at a rally in Garhwa. Soren's reaction followed Shah's remarks while releasing the BJP's manifesto, in which he said, "Our government will introduce the UCC in Jharkhand, but tribals will be kept out of its ambit."

Actor-politician Vijay's party takes on DMK, BJP

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Actor-politician Vijay-led Tamizhaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK) on Sunday brainstormed its way forward in electoral politics and targeted the DMK and BJP-led governments at the state and centre over a host of issues. The fledgling party, that held its first mega public meeting on October 27, nudged the state government to hold caste survey and declared that its ideology is based on secularism and social justice.

Vijay chaired TVK's meeting of district office bearers and the executive committee here and the party deliberated 'strengthening' its organisational structure, dis-



cussed reaching out to the people and passed as many as 26 resolutions, which reflected its stand on various issues.

The 50-year old actor had announced forming the party in February this year and recently, the Election Commission had duly registered the outfit. Alleging law

and order deterioration, sale of illicit arrack and increase in drug abuse among young people, TVK said rather than addressing such issues and protecting people's welfare, the DMK regime is for the welfare of some persons in power and the "executive committee is condemning the DMK government."

Furthermore, it slammed the DMK for "deceiving democracy and the people" by way of its false electoral promises to capture power in 2021. It flayed the DMK regime for increase in milk prices, property tax and hike in electricity tariff. The TVK demanded introduction of monthly power billing.

The TVK opposed the Waqf Amendment Bill and 'One Nation One election' proposal and said the Union government and its representatives (like Governor) do not have any right over any issue related to the Tamil Nadu.

Without naming Governor R N Ravi, the party criticised him on his past comments related to Tamil Nadu.



66th Annual Art Festival of SICA-2024

Live vocal recital By Rudrapatnam Brothers:
 Venue
 Ravindra Bharathi, Near State Assembly, Lakdikapul Road, Saifabad, Lakdikapul, Hyderabad
 November 4. 6:30 pm

Self defense and Fitness Training

Get fit with Martial Arts Training from Home! Join Master Gaurav Sharma for online and personal training sessions designed to enhance your fitness and martial arts skills. Whether you're a beginner or looking to sharpen your techniques, we've got you covered! For more info, contact: 8247361351

Venue
 Meerpet Andhra Bank Opp, Hyderabad
 November 4, 10.30 pm

Victor Experience Centre

Inauguration of India's first Victor Experience Centre in Hyderabad. MP AP Jithender Reddy to be guest of honour. Film actress Regina Cassandra to be the chief guest and Badminton stars Ashwini Ponappa and HS Pranoy to be guests.

Venue
 Sportslood Azone Sports and Leisure, 87, Near Sanskriti School, Marthandapur, Hafjezpet, Kondapur, Hyderabad
 Nov 5, 11.30 am onwards.

Photography Basics

Workshop on photography basics is an upcoming event in Hyderabad.

Venue
 Kalyan Cricket Academy, Kukatpally, Plot No.22, Near Vishal Towers, Madhavaram Heights Beside Ramalayam Road, Nagarjuna High School, Kukatpally, Hyderabad
 November 4. 4:30 pm

City Pioneer



10% rise in city air pollution during Diwali festival

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Air pollution in Hyderabad rose by 10% during Diwali celebrations compared to last year, according to the Telangana State Pollution Control Board. Areas like Kapra, Bollaram, Patancheru, Somajiguda and Sanathnagar were especially affected. In the past 72 hours, the city's air quality has worsened significantly, mainly due to heavy firecracker use. The Air Quality Index (AQI) reached 171, well

above the safe limit of 60. Some neighborhoods recorded even higher levels. Somajiguda had an AQI of 105, while New Malakpet's AQI rose to 335. Hazardous PM2.5 particulate levels were recorded, peaking at 475 at the US Consulate observatory, with similarly high readings in other areas. The Telangana State Pollution Control Board warns that air quality is likely to remain poor, posing ongoing health risks to vulnerable groups.



Green light to convert TMS Gachibowli into a hostel

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Institute of Medical Sciences (TMS) at Gachibowli, which provided critical healthcare support during the Covid-19 pandemic, will no longer be serving the public. The government has issued orders to repurpose the building as a hostel for students of the Telangana Sports University, officially transferring the facility to the Sports department.

An official confirmed to The Pioneer that the transition is underway: "Yes, it will be used as a hostel for the sports university students." This development raises questions regarding the relocation of TMS services and its staff. Currently, the facility serves 20-30 general outpatients daily, with a one duty doctor available in morning, afternoon and evening shifts. According to sources, departments, beds and equipment are being moved to other government hospitals across the

city. During recent Assembly elections, the upper floors of TMS were also utilised by the Police department. Initially after COVID-19, 217 nurses of TMS Gachibowli faced uncertainties. Many have been sent on deputation to other government hospitals, while 74 nurses have taken exams for government permanent staff positions and moved out. Remaining nurses, including those receiving Rs 25,000 as staff nurses and Rs 29,000 as head nurses, report a three-month delay in salary payments. As Gachibowli TMS shuts down, sources emphasise that the four new TMS facilities under construction should secure regular positions for nurses and doctors rather than rely on contract hires to ensure stable healthcare services. TMS Gachibowli was launched on July 8, 2020, by the Telangana government as a dedicated Covid-19 facility to help manage the pandemic's healthcare demands.



ACTIVISTS SEEK COMPREHENSIVE POLICY TO PROTECT LAKES

Experts, victims question Musi rejuvenation project

DEEPIKA PASHAM
 deepikapasham2015@gmail.com
 ■ HYDERABAD

Environmental experts gathered in a round-table conference conducted by Justice Movement of India on Urban Flooding in Hyderabad and questioned the Musi rejuvenation project of the government on Sunday.

The members consisting of environmentalists, social activists and flood-affected victims have opined that clearing the slums is not the solution; instead the government must examine the water; review how many aquatic animals were alive in Musi. What has been the outcome of the demolitions and distributing notices, ask experts.

The campaign aimed to integrate insights from flood victims, experts and citizens into flood prevention strategies.

Dr Babu Rao, former chief scientist and environmental expert said, "The current situation of releasing sewage into water bodies is against Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and no official has recognised this aspect before demolishing the houses or issuing notices to people living around lakes. The first step is to review the status of the lakes around Musi river and then discuss the rejuvenation. Musi should be cleaned and leave a few aquatic animals such as tortoise and variety of fishes."

The aim is to involve governmental agencies, experts and local communities in developing effective prevention measures. "We have experienced the devastation firsthand and seek long-term solutions rather than temporary relief. It is vital that our concerns translate into action," said Sunder Kummula. "This event is a crucial step towards

fostering a dialogue that bridges gaps between policy and practice. We need policies that not only prevent but also prepare us better for future challenges," added Akarsh Sriramoju.

Their demands include formulating a comprehensive policy that involves all stakeholders in preventing flooding by protecting lakes while ensuring the well-being of the people of Hyderabad. This policy should include effective lake restoration measures, strategies for adapting to future flood risks and provisions for safeguarding those affected by floods or displacement through fair compensation. Conducting a complete survey of all water bodies, including lakes, ponds and nalas, to identify the total number of encroachments and constructions according to scientific and standard guidelines, were highlighted.

Bomb threat cases registered goes up to 12: RGLA Police

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

An Indigo flight from Goa to Kolkata made an emergency landing at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGLA) due to a bomb threat. The authorities and security forces of RGLA conducted thorough checks.

Rajiv Gandhi International Airport Police said that the total number of bomb threat cases registered has now reached 12. An inspector on the field has

informed The Pioneer, "We received the information about the bomb alert and a case has been registered. Due to the bomb alerts, recently five per cent flights are being scrutinised every day by the airport authorities." "Any further concerns we are being alerted and we then register a case and follow the investigation. Until Sunday early morning, 12 bomb alert cases have been registered," added the Police.



Expired food articles and synthetic colours found in restaurants

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Task Force team of Telangana's Commissioner of Food Safety inspected restaurants in Attapur and found multiple violations.

The Task Force team inspected The Majlis Culture Cuisine at Attapur and found expired food items, including fruit syrup, kewra water and fruit crush in the storeroom and kitchen. These items were immediately discarded. Synthetic food colours used in non-vegetarian Chinese dishes were also removed. The premises were open to the outside environment without insect-proof screens and doors were not properly sealed to prevent pest entry. Food handlers did not have medical fitness certificates and refrigerator-stored food was uncovered and improperly labeled. Temperature records for the refrigerator were missing.

Meanwhile, the team also inspected California Burrito at Attapur and found a live cockroach infestation in the kitchen and storeroom. Medical fitness certificates and a water analysis report for RO water were missing. Spoiled cauliflower was discovered. Though refrigerator-stored items were labeled and covered, temperature records were absent. Storage racks lacked proper spacing from walls for cleaning. The FSSAI licence was displayed and food handlers wore hair caps and aprons.

The Task Force team stated that a notice will be issued and further action will be taken accordingly.

Migrant worker brought back from Qatar gets govt help

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Badanapalli Sayanna, a resident of Nagampet in Nizamabad district has been in a coma for over 10 months due to health issues while working in Qatar.

As his condition remained stable, the company management with support from family members brought him back to Hyderabad on November 1, hoping his health might improve. He was initially admitted to a private hospital in Hyderabad and later transferred to Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS) on Sunday evening.

Sayanna's wife, Prema and sons Vikas and Vineeth appealed to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and Congress leader Muthyala Sunil Reddy in charge of the Balkonda Assembly constituency for support, as they could not afford private hospital costs. They requested admission to NIMS for free treatment. Responding to a video appeal and an earlier request an officer Venkata Rao from the NRI wing of the state's General Administration Department (GAD) and Section Officer E Chittibabu took the initiative to secure admission for Sayanna at NIMS.

Manda Bheem Reddy, convenor of the Congress NRI cell, highlighted that migrant workers in Gulf countries were excluded from the AarogyaSri health scheme under previous government.

Hyd standup comedian Utsav Dixit arrested in a car accident

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Banjara Hills Police arrested and seized Hyderabad standup comedian Utsav Dixit's driving Licence in a Porsche car accident at KBR Park. A case was registered by patrolling police that on November 1 a red Porsche car had collided against the boundary wall of KBR Park and hit a tree causing severe damages to the wall, grills and pavement.

Patrolling police reached the spot and observed that the vehicle without number plate had

hit the footpath, boundary wall and its grill. It was found that there was a broken number plate inside the car. The accused who has escaped was traced and arrested after verifying the available evidence and sent him for medical examination for alcohol and drug test and other procedure as per the legal provisions. The Banjara Hills Police also confirmed that based on the preliminary investigation, the collision had occurred due to reckless driving resulting in losing control over the vehicle.



A bull carnival in progress, celebrated annually by the Yadav community of Hyderabad as a part of Diwali on Sunday night

Girl admitted to hospital following fire accident dies

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A teenaged girl, who was hospitalised following a fire accident here three days ago in which her grandparents died, succumbed during treatment on Saturday. The girl breathed her last Saturday morning at a state-run hospital, police said.

Majlis Bachao Tahreek (MBT) spokesperson and former city corporator Amjed Ullah Khan alleged that his requests regarding the girl's treatment to the CM office and other officials met with no response even though Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy

had said he had directed officials to ensure best treatment to the teenager. In a post on X on Friday, the CMO said that Reddy has expressed condolences over the accident. "Yesterday, he directed officials to ensure best treatment and support for Shruti Gupta, the teenager battling for life. We will take total care of her. CM Revanth Reddy garu assured," it said. Khan said he had shifted the teenager to a private super-specialty hospital as she was not being attended to properly in a government hospital. He said he paid a bill of Rs 2.10

lakh to the private hospital and bought medicines worth nearly Rs 1 lakh. "... as her body was not responding and unable to pay more, her family shifted her to Gandhi Hospital yesterday evening and early morning today ie 2nd Nov she died and her body shifted to mortuary for post-mortem," Khan said. The fire accident occurred late Monday night when her family was preparing food items for Diwali. Sparks from a gas stove fell on a firecrackers box which burst, with the smoke spreading across the two-room house.

Cyberabad Traffic Police arrest 513 drunk drivers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Cyberabad Traffic Police has apprehended 513 drunk drivers, among whom 64 offenders were found with blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) ranging between 200 mg/100 ml and 550 mg/100 ml. The Cyberabad Traffic Police (CTP) has said that they conducted a focused campaign against drunk driving over the weekend from November 1 to 3 leading to the arrest of 513 offenders. Among those caught, 425 were two-wheeler drivers, 24 three-wheeler drivers, 60 four-wheeler drivers, and four heavy vehicle drivers. All the apprehended individuals will be presented



before the court. They are charged under Section 105 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (culpable homicide not amounting to murder), which carries a maximum sentence of up to 10 years in jail along with a fine.

500 doctors participate in THANACON-2024

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Delivering their expertise during the panel discussions and scientific sessions, 500 doctors from across the country participated in the Telangana Hospitals and Nursing Homes Association (THANA) State convention, THANACON-2024, at Novotel HICC on Sunday.

The conference was hosted by the Greater Hyderabad and Rangareddy district Medchal, Vikarabad branch. The one-day State convention was inaugurated by Telangana State Public Health Director Dr N Ravinder Nayak.

The conference featured solutions for issues faced by nursing homes and hospitals,

as well as panel discussions on topics like Consumer Forum cases, challenges faced by smaller hospitals and implementing the Aarogya Sri scheme. The convention emphasised improving healthcare service quality through accreditation from the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH).

Dr Ravinder stated that with the Clinical Establishment Act in place, both doctors and patients should benefit and patients should feel comfortable in hospitals, building trust and courage. He also highlighted the importance of government and private hospitals in providing healthcare. Telangana is now a medical

tourism hub, attracting patients from all over India, reflecting the State's healthcare efficiency. THANA State president Dr VS Rao and general secretary Dr Prasad mentioned that representatives from various companies related to hospital management and equipment participated. Organising Committee secretary Dr Naunihal, co-chairman Dr L Suresh Goud, along with national elect president of Indian Medical Association Dr Dilip Bhanushali, IMA Telangana State president Dr Kali Prasad, Rangareddy, Medchal Malkajigiri district DMHOS Venkateswara Rao, Dr Raghanaadha Swamy participated in the conference.



THANA State president Dr VS Rao seen along with Telangana State public health director Dr N Ravinder Nayak lighting the lamp at THANACON-2024 at HICC Novotel on Sunday

Two youths drowned in lake in NZB dist

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

In a tragic incident, two youths drowned in a lake at Manchippa village under Mopal mandal in the district.

According to details, a group of youths from Hyderabad visited the local dargah in Manchippa. After their visit, two youths decided to have fun by swimming in a local lake. They went missing in the lake. Local people noticed them and immediately informed their family members.

The local people searched the lake and found the body of a youth named Syed Moosa. Subsequently, a rescue team arrived at the scene and continued the search, locating another youth named Sayyed Vasik. Sub-Inspector Yadgiri Goud conducted the inquest on the bodies and sent them to the government hospital for post-mortem examination. The parents of the youths are overwhelmed with grief as their children, who came for a divine visit, have now departed from this world.

'Warangal will be developed as the State's second capital'

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy has said that all measures are being taken to develop Warangal as the second capital city. On Sunday, Minister Sriniva Reddy, along with City Mayor Gundusudharani, MLC Baswaraju Sarraja, MLAs N Rajender Reddy, KR Nagaraju, and the Collectors of Warangal and Hanamakonda districts Satya Sharada and P Pravinya, inspected the beautification works at Bhadrakali Bund, flood prevention works at Bhadrakali Lake and Bondivagu. He instructed officials to expedite these works and complete them as soon as possible.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister made it clear that Warangal would be developed as the State's second capital. The government has been preparing an action plan to boost the infrastructure in the city.

The government has allocated Rs 158 crore for flood prevention measures at Bhadrakali Lake and Bondivagu. The minister reviewed the map of development works related to flood prevention in Bondivagu Nala, Bhadrakali Nala, and the Bhadrakali catchment area, and provided necessary guidance to the officials concerned for the effective execution of these projects.



Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy inspecting Bhadrakali bund in Warangal on Sunday

Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy said that the Congress government is keen on boosting infrastructure in the city

After visiting the Bhadrakali temple, the Minister told the media that the temple, built over 600 years ago, has a unique history, and devotees come from Karimnagar, Khammam,

Nizamabad, and Medak districts. He assured people that all efforts would be made to develop this temple comprehensively. He mentioned that under the leadership of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, projects are progressing towards providing all kinds of infrastructure facilities in Warangal, making it the second capital after Hyderabad. As part of the comprehensive development of Warangal, the temple and surrounding Mada Streets will be developed according to Agama Shastra. He noted that the lake associated with the temple needs development as the

silt reduced the water retention capacity, and directed officials to prepare plans for desilting the lake immediately.

He stated that as soon as permissions are received from the Central government, airport services will be made available for the residents of Warangal. Plans are underway for the establishment of Outer Ring Roads and Inner Ring Roads, along with the development of essential infrastructure facilities, under-drainage, electrification, and more, to meet the needs of the city for the next 30 years. He also mentioned that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy would soon inaugurate and lay the foundation for various infrastructure development projects.

The Minister warned that strict action would be taken against those who have encroached upon Bhadrakali Lake and illegal constructions would be removed after conducting a survey.

Officials present at the event included in-charge Additional Collector Vijayalakshmi, Irrigation Superintendent Engineer Venkateshwarlu, KUDA PO Ajith Reddy, JWMC Superintending Engineer Praveen Chandra, and engineers Bheem Rao, Santosh Babu, and Seetarama from the Irrigation and Revenue departments, among others.



Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy speaking at a meeting in Suryapet district on Sunday

'Integrated schools will transform education system'

Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy

PNS ■ SURYAPET

Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy emphasised that integrated residential schools would transform Telangana's education system, providing students a competitive advantage at the national level.

He was speaking at the foundation stone-laying ceremony for the Young India Integrated Residential School in Gaddipalli, Huzurnagar constituency, Suryapet district on Sunday, along Roads and Buildings Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy.

Uttam Kumar Reddy described the initiative as a progressive step towards offering high-quality, English-medium education with state-of-the-art facilities for students from diverse social castes, Scheduled Castes, Backward Classes, minorities, and general sections. He reiterated the Congress-led state government's pledge to establish integrated schools in each district. These schools, accommodating students from Grades 4 to 12, will feature residential facilities for teachers, ensuring comprehensive support for students.

The Gaddipalli school, with a budget of Rs 200 crore, is the first of its kind and will serve as a model for future institutions across the state. Further, Minister Uttam outlined student welfare measures, detailing recent increases in allowances that had remained unchanged under the previous BRS administration. For students in welfare hostels, meal allowances have been raised from Rs 950 to Rs 1,330 per month for Grades 3 to 7, and from Rs 1,100 to Rs 1,540 for Grades 8 to 10. Students from intermediate to postgraduate levels will now receive Rs 2,100 monthly, an increase from Rs 1,500, and cosmetic allowances for Grades 8 to 10 have been raised from Rs 55 to Rs 175.

Highlighting the government's commitment to welfare education, Uttam Kumar Reddy revealed that the Congress administration has allocated Rs 5,000 crore for residential schools this year, a significant increase from the previous government's Rs 70 crore allocation. He stated that this substantial funding underscores the government's dedication to empowering underprivileged communities through public welfare.

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Uttam Kumar Reddy also spoke about the arrangements made for paddy procurement across Telangana. He noted that the state achieved a record paddy production of 150 lakh metric tonnes and that the state government has taken extensive procurement measures. To further support farmers, in addition to the Centre's MSP, the Congress government will provide a Rs 500 bonus per quintal for fine paddy. He announced that, beginning Sankranti in January 2025, the Congress government will distribute free fine rice to white ration card holders statewide. This scheme will benefit 30.5 lakh ration card holders, providing each eligible household with six kilograms of fine rice per person monthly.

Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy applauded Uttam Kumar Reddy for selecting Gaddipalli as the site for the integrated school and announced the construction of a two-lane road to improve connectivity to the school. He added that the Congress government is upgrading all schools with enhanced infrastructure and facilities, ensuring better educational environments for students.

CPM raises concerns over decline in HDI ranking

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

The Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) has expressed alarm over rising poverty levels and the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few elite in India, citing a consistent decline in the country's Human Development Index (HDI) rankings.

Speaking at the eighth convention of the Khammam Two-Town Committee, CPI-M district secretary Nunna Nageswar Rao on Sunday urged party activists to resist what he termed the imperialist designs of the United States. He criticised the US for ignoring UN directives to lift sanctions on Cuba, claiming that the Modi government is aligning its policies with US interests, particularly regarding China.

The speaker highlighted that while India's economic growth rate may be impressive, the country's HDI ranking continues to deteriorate. He pointed out that India's hunger index ranking fell from 55th to 105th out of 127 nations since Modi took office, indicating a significant regression in addressing hunger.

He accused Modi of enabling wealth concentration and enacting laws that target minority communities, alleging that this has fuelled communal tensions between



Khammam district CPI-M secretary Nunna Nageswar Rao speaking at a meeting in Khammam on Sunday

successfully implemented.

The speaker warned that if Congress neglects its commitments, it risks facing a similar fate to the BRS, which he believes lost power due to its repressive policies. He emphasised the need for Communist parties to play a significant role in advocating for the implementation of these guarantees.

He advised the Communist parties to refrain from using money in elections, highlighting a shift in voter behavior toward supporting perceived winning parties. The speaker reaffirmed that the CPM operates as a democratically run organization.

He questioned the viability of parties that previously promoted slogans like "Vision 2020" and "Why Not 175", noting that the people of Sri Lanka elected the Communist Party due to dissatisfaction with policies akin to those of the Modi administration.

The ultimate goal of the Communist movement, he stated, is to establish an egalitarian society by ending exploitation.

The event was attended by CPI-M state secretary Kollu Satyanarayana, district executive members Y Srikant, Y Vikram, Kalyanam Venkateswar Rao, BVK Trust Manager Y. Srinivasa Rao, and others.



Police rounding up group of people engaging in cockfights and betting at Supak village in Macherial district on Sunday

Cockfight, betting racket in Macherial district busted

PNS ■ MANCHERIAL

In the Supak village under the Kotapalli mandal in the Macherial district, police conducted surprise raids based on reliable information about ongoing cockfights near the Pranahita River border areas. The police arrested 11 individuals and seized three fighting cocks, along with nine mobile phones and cash amounting to Rs 16,810.

In the vicinity of the Pranahita River in Supak, bets ranging from Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 are being placed on the fights, with the rates determined based on the roosters deployed for a fight. Despite previous

vious counselling sessions for those caught betting, there has been no significant change in their behaviour.

Participants are also coming from neighbouring areas in Maharashtra, such as Regunta and Tekada, to engage in these illegal cockfights. Large numbers of competitors are reportedly taking part in the fights held on Saturdays and Sundays between Supak and Janagama villages.

Sub-Inspector Rajender emphasised that legal action will be taken against anyone involved in organising or participating in cockfights, regardless of their status. He urged the public to stay away from such activities.

Real estate sees downturn in RR district

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Once a vibrant hub in the Rangareddy district's real estate market, areas like Shadnagar are now grappling with a significant downturn in land and housing sales. The proximity to Rajiv Gandhi International Airport at Shamshabad had previously drawn considerable investment, but since last December, the sector has experienced a persistent slump, leaving both buyers and sellers in a challenging position. Despite land prices holding steady, the volume of transactions has sharply declined, raising concerns about future profitability for investors.

Following the Assembly elections in December, the real estate market in Rangareddy district began to slow, with Shadnagar particularly affected. Data from the Farooq Nagar and Shadnagar sub-registration offices reveal a drastic drop in property transac-



From January to November, only 15,000 documents were registered in Farooq Nagar, a decrease from 25,000 during the same period last year. Meanwhile, Shadnagar's registrations have halved, plummeting from 15,000 to just 7,000

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Although demand has decreased, land and plot prices in Shadnagar, Farooq Nagar,

Shamshabad, Amangal, Chevella, and surrounding areas remain elevated, leading buyers to hold off in hopes of better conditions. In key locations like Nagulapalli Road,

prices have skyrocketed from Rs 2,300 to Rs 5,300 per square yard, while commercial plots on Parigi Road now command up to Rs 16,000 per square yard. Additionally, ongoing land disputes listed on the Dharani portal complicate transactions, as such properties often fall into a prohibited category.

Many stakeholders believe that the proposed Regional Rural Ring Road (RRR) project could revitalise Rangareddy's real estate market. If implemented, the RRR could stimulate business growth in Shadnagar, Kothur, Kondurg, Nandigama, Chaudhariguda, Farooq Nagar, and Keshampet. With land prices exceeding Rs 50 lakh per acre and house plots ranging from Rs 25,000 to Rs 30,000 per square yard within the city, there is cautious optimism that the RRR will herald a new phase of real estate development in the region.

POLICE LOOK THE OTHER WAY AS...

Man impersonates Minister's PA, harasses female officer

PNS ■ SURYAPET

In a shocking incident reported from Suryapet, a man posing as the personal assistant to a minister has been accused of harassing a female government employee. The harassment came to light recently when the victim, a supervisor from Kodada in Suryapet district, detailed her distressing experience.

The man repeatedly contacted her, asking intrusive questions about her office. When she inquired about his identity, he responded rudely, making inappropriate comments about her appearance and offering money for her compliance. He also boasted about having just been released from jail, claiming that she would be



powerless to act against him. The harassment is not isolated; the woman noted that he has similarly targeted other supervisors, creating an atmosphere of fear among female employees. She described the situation as "extremely atrocious," emphasising the urgent need for stringent measures against such behavior.

In his voice messages, the man made further lewd remarks and issued threats, asserting that his political connections would protect him from repercussions. "I've saved your number and will keep contacting you," he stated, adding that he had spent three years in Chirlapalli Jail and was untouchable due to his supposed political connections.

Despite the female officer filing a formal complaint with the police, no action has yet been taken against the perpetrator. This lack of response has led to growing frustration among employees, who feel their safety is being ignored. "We are thumping our noses at the police," an employee said on condition of anonymity.

ACROSS THE STATES



Odisha govt orders probe into unnatural deaths of elephants

Expressing concern over the unnatural deaths of about 60 wild elephants, Odisha's Forest Minister Ganesh Ram Singkhuntia ordered a detailed inquiry into it. Singkhuntia wrote to Additional Chief Secretary (Forest) Satyabrata Sahu in this regard, a statement said on Sunday. He ordered a division-wise thorough investigation into the deaths and directed that stringent action should be taken against those officials found responsible. He also sought a report on this within a month. Describing the matter as very alarming, the minister said additional care is necessary to curb such deaths, according to the statement. He said the state government has been taking various steps to prevent the unnatural death of elephants. "However, there is a need for more care and sincerity on the part of forest officials to ensure a safe environment with statutory protective measures for the safety of the elephants," he said. "Priority must be given on the matter and errant officers must not be let scot-free," he added.



Naxalism will be wiped out from country by March 2026: Shah

PNS ■ RANCHI

Attacking the Hemant Soren-led JMM coalition for "fuelling Naxalism," Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday asserted that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Union government will eliminate the menace from the face of the country by March 2026.

Shah expressed confidence that the NDA would form the government in Jharkhand, claiming it would win at least 52 out of 81 assembly seats

based on the calculations from the recently held Lok Sabha elections.

"It is time to oust the anti-Dalit, anti-tribal, anti-poor, and anti-youth Hemant government from Jharkhand, which is fuelling Naxalism for petty political gains," he said while addressing a rally in Simaria, Chatra district.

"We uprooted the menace from Jharkhand during the last five years, and now the Prime Minister Modi-led Centre will wipe out Naxalism from India by March 2026."

India and China made 'some progress' in disengagement: EAM

PNS ■ BRISBANE

India and China have made "some progress" in disengagement, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Sunday, describing the development as a "welcome" step.

His comment comes days after Indian and Chinese troops completed disengagement at two friction points at Demchok and Depsang Plains in eastern Ladakh. The Indian Army commenced verification patrolling at Depsang, while patrolling at Demchok had begun on Friday.

"In terms of India and China, we have made some progress. You know, our relations were very, very disturbed for reasons all of you know. We have made some progress in what we call disengagement," Jaishankar said while responding to a question during an interaction with the Indian diaspora here.



There are very large numbers of Chinese troops deployed along the Line of Actual Control who were not there before 2020 and we, in turn, have counter-deployed. There are other aspects of the relationship which also got affected during this period

"There are very large numbers of Chinese troops deployed along the Line of Actual Control who were not there before 2020 and we, in turn, have counter-deployed. There are other aspects of the relationship which also got affected during this period. So clearly, we have to see after the disengagement, what is the direction we go. But we do think the disengagement is a welcome step. It opens up the possibility that you know, other steps could

happen," said the minister. He said that the expectation after Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Chinese President Xi Jinping in Russia last month was that "both the national security advisor and myself, we would meet our counterpart. So that's really where things are".

On October 21, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said in Delhi that an agreement had been finalised between India and China following negotiations over the past several

weeks and that it would lead to a resolution of the issues that arose in 2020. The agreement was firming up on patrolling and disengagement of troops along the LAC in eastern Ladakh, a breakthrough to end the over four-year standoff.

The ties between the two Asian giants nosedived following a fierce clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades.

No provision for 'digital arrest' worldwide

Report cybercrimes at earliest: Experts

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Posing as CBI and RBI officials, suspected cybercriminals recently put a retired banker and his wife under "digital arrest" for five days in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut district and convinced the elderly couple to transfer more than Rs 1 crore to them.

A senior doctor from Lucknow's SGGIMS lost Rs 2.81 crore under a similar ruse in August while reports of such crimes have also emerged from Noida and Varanasi, among other places in the state.

Cybercrimes, particularly digital arrests and financial frauds under the pretext of investment or employment, have surged since the COVID-19 pandemic. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also warned citizens about these threats



during a recent "Mann ki Baat" address.

Subject experts explain that digital arrest refers to a deceptive tactic used by cybercriminals, who falsely claim to have the authority to arrest an individual through digital means, often over the phone or via online communication. Scammers pose as law

enforcement or regulatory officials and use threats or intimidation to coerce victims into transferring money or providing personal information, claiming that they are involved in illegal activities. This method exploits fear and confusion, taking advantage of the victim's panic to facilitate financial fraud.



Terror associate arrested in Pulwama; arms, ammo seized

Security forces have arrested a terrorist associate linked with the proscribed terror outfit Hizbul Mujahideen in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district and seized arms and ammunition from him, police said on Sunday. They identified the man as Sajad Ahmed Dar, a resident of Pulwama's Tahab area. A spokesperson said a joint team of police, the Army and the CRPF arrested Dar from Dangerpora, Pulwama, on November 2 in connection with a case registered under the Explosives Act and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. "Sajad Ahmed disclosed the location inside his shop where he had kept arms and ammunition. Accordingly, the joint team of the forces raided the said spot where they recovered and seized the hidden arms and ammunition, including a pistol, a magazine with 12 rounds and two live grenades," he added. Earlier this week, a terrorist associate of Hizbul Mujahideen -- Danish Bashir Ahangar -- was arrested in the instant case.



Over 2 lakh devotees take holy dip in Yamuna

Over two lakh devotees took a dip in the holy water of Yamuna river at several ghats of Mathura and Vrindavan on the occasion of 'Yam Dwitiya' on Sunday, officials said. "A large number of siblings belonging to different age groups celebrated the festival by taking holy dip," Senior Superintendent of Police Shailesh Kumar Pandey said. He added that over two lakh devotees took a dip in Yamuna on the occasion which is celebrated on the day of Bhai Dooj. Narrating the legend of the festival, priest Kanta Chaturvedi said, "Lord Yamraj, pleased by his sister Yamuna's hospitality, granted her a boon." "According to the boon, siblings of any age group taking a dip in the holy Yamuna river at Mathura's Vishram Ghat together on the day of 'Yam Dwitiya' will be spared from the wrath of the messengers of Lord Yam," the priest said. While majority of the devotees took a dip at Vishram Ghat, those unaware of the legend took dip in Bangali Ghat, Swami Ghat, and on the other bank of Yamuna. After taking dip, they paid obeisance at the Dharmraj temple situated on the bank of Yamuna near Vishram Ghat, Dhanesh Chaturvedi, a resident of Mathura said.

Protecting Constitution is primary battle, says Rahul

PNS ■ WAYANAD (KERALA)

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday emphasised that the primary struggle in the country today is to protect and preserve the Constitution.

He said the Constitution of the country was not written with hatred, but with humility and love. "The main fight in the country today, that is taking place, is the fight for the Constitution of our country. The protection that we get, the greatness of our country, all emerged from the Constitution," the Lok Sabha MP said while addressing a



corner meeting in Mananthavady here as part of the campaign for his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

Priyanka is the Congress candidate for the Wayanad Lok Sabha by-election.

"The Constitution was not written with anger or with hatred. It was written by the people who fought the British, the people who had suffered, who spent years and years and years in jail. And they wrote the Constitution with humility, with love and with affection," he said.

The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha pointed out that this is a fight between love and

hatred. "A fight between confidence and insecurity. And if you truly want to win this fight, then you must help by removing anger from your heart, by removing hatred from your heart, and replacing them with love, humility and compassion," he told the gathering. Rahul Gandhi highlighted the qualities of her sister and shared nostalgic memories of their childhood.

He also said it was the first time he is seeking votes for his sister, who has campaigned for him, and their parents earlier.

"She is the person who went and hugged the girl who was implicated in my father's (Rajiv Gandhi) assassination. She said to me after she came back after meeting Nalini, she went emotional and then she said to me that I'm feeling bad for her," Rahul Gandhi recalled.

"That is the training that she has received. And to me, this is the type of politics that needs to be done in India. Not the politics of hatred, but politics of love and affection."

Govt not purchasing paddy since..

Continued from page 1

while addressing a press conference here on Sunday.

He said that to make matters worse rains soaked up the paddy in many districts damaging a significant portion of the harvest.

"In Karimnagar LS constituency which I represent and which includes Choppadandi, Sircilla Manakondur and Huzurabad Assembly constituencies thousands of acres of paddy have been affected by water. The paddy brought to procurement centres is soaked. Scenes of farmers trying to dry their paddy can be seen everywhere," he said.

Sanjay said that while farmers face the immense challenge of protecting their crops, selling them has become an extra burden. The month-long delay in procuring paddy appears to

be a conspiracy as it forces farmers to sell to millers at throwaway prices. Reports indicate that farmers are forced to sell their paddy to millers at very low prices, he said.

Sanjay demanded that the government should take immediate action to commence paddy procurement. The government must implement its election promise by procuring every grain of paddy, regardless of chaff, shrinkage, or moisture content, he demanded.

"As the Congress election manifesto pledged a bonus of Rs 500 per quintal for all types of paddy, limiting it to only fine rice is unjust. We request the government to fulfil its election promise by extending the bonus to all varieties of paddy," he said.

Sanjay said that he had come to know that a limit has

been imposed on bonus payment for fine rice, with a restriction on procurement per acre, even though some farmers are producing up to 30 quintals per acre. Officials have reportedly received verbal orders to introduce various measurements to determine fine rice quality. Farmers have approached us with concerns over these restrictions, he said.

Sanjay requested the government to order unrestricted procurement of every grain of paddy as promised and extend the bonus to all types of paddy including coarse rice.

He said that to protest the delay in paddy procurement, the BJP has decided to launch a series of protests in Karimnagar LS constituency. On Monday, BJP cadres will submit representations to Tehsildars at all mandal offices in the constituency, Sanjay added.

Is the Congress...

Continued from page 1

those media houses are repeating Congress allegations. Jagadish said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy had announced in the Assembly that he will appoint an inquiry commission to go into power purchases. The government should place the commission's report in the Assembly if it had completed its inquiry, Jagadish said and added that the Congress government must not play cheap tricks in front of KCR. Jagadish asked the Congress government to reveal why it will jail them as they had not done anything wrong.

Revanth asks...

Continued from page 1

The government has re-examined the issues recently raised by the High Court regarding caste enumeration and reservation in local bodies. The government decided to set up a dedicated commission as per consensus. The Chief Minister told officials that the government does not have any biases and that they should act transparently regarding reservations in local bodies.

Govt invited...

Continued from page 1

regarding project distributor works and then speak ethics? In one meeting the order is to invite tenders quickly and in another meeting, the same one says differently. What commission should be set up on who you are investigating the Kaleshwaram Project after completion of the project and bringing life to crores of acres? Delhi's friend, hand of corruption #CongressFailed Telangana."

Procurement centres not...

Continued from page 1

are staging dharnas on the roads now. However, the state government has been saying that it will purchase every grain of paddy

CM needs farmers' votes...

Continued from page 1

Speaking to the media after visiting Baddipadaga village in the Nangunuru mandal of Siddipet district on Sunday, Harish said that the CM sought the support of farmers during elections. However, farmers are not getting minimum support price for paddy now, he said.

The farmers of Jagtial, Mahbubabad, Suryapet and Rajanna Sircilla districts are staging dharna on roads. He said the CM has not reviewed paddy procurement so far.

"Revanth went to villages during elections. However, he is not visiting farmers now. Revanth should understand the problems of farmers at procurement centres. The CM and Ministers are not even enquiring whether paddy procurement is taking place or not. There is no way to purchase the paddy as the admin

has failed to open procurement centres. Farmers are selling their paddy for just Rs 1,800 a quintal. Cotton farmers are selling their produce for Rs 5,000 instead of Rs 7,521," he said. Alleging that the CM, Ministers and collectors did not visit procurement centres, Harish said the government has not yet given money to soybean farmers in Adilabad district and so farmers are selling their soybeans to brokers. The CM is not in a position to provide gunny bags and tarpaulin covers, he said and added that the CM and Ministers must visit purchasing centres after leaving Hyderabad.

Demanding that the government should pay Rs 500 as a bonus, Harish warned that the BRS will stage dharnas all over the state if the government fails to purchase paddy and give Rs 500 as a bonus to farmers, he said.

Ahead of the polling day...

Continued from page 1

An early voting station has been set up at the John Jay College in the Manhattan area of NYC. The station is packed with voters coming in and casting their ballots days ahead of the main election day on November 5.

Suzan, the coordinator of the station, feels the early voting process is witnessing a very

positive response. "We have been busy here and we are trying to ensure everyone coming here receives all assistance required. The people are clearly excited about early voting," says Suzan.

This growth in early voting reflects a fundamental shift in American voting behaviour, suggesting a continued trend toward more flexible voting options in future elections.

Farmers protest delay in...

Continued from page 1

main road, displaying their harvested paddy. The BRS and the BJP supported the farmers. The protest led to traffic jams for about two hours. District Collector Sandeep Kumar Jha and Additional Collector Khimya Nayak reached

the protest site after being informed by MRO Boyini Ramachan dram. They spoke to the farmers and after negotiations, the farmers decided to end their protest. The Collector ordered to begin the paddy procurement process immediately at the procurement centre and alerted the local rice mill.

government is purchasing cotton for a mere Rs 5,000 per quintal.

The farmers' troubles have doubled at the procurement centres with unexpected rains soaking their paddy. Many farmers have kept their paddy on the road as there is no space at procurement centres.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Bangladesh protests

Protests erupt in Bangladesh as international voices express concern over escalating human rights crisis

Tens of thousands of minority Hindus in Bangladesh took to the streets on Friday, demanding immediate protection from ongoing violence and harassment following the recent political upheaval. The protests, primarily held in the southeastern city of Chattogram, saw around 30,000 Hindus gather, raising slogans for justice and security. The demonstrations were heavily guarded by police and military personnel, as Hindu community leaders urged the interim Government to intervene amid rising attacks on their community. The protests follow a series of reported attacks against the Hindu minority, which has been particularly vulnerable since the overthrow of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's secular government in August. After Hasina's departure, Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus was appointed to lead an Interim Government, which has faced criticism for its alleged inability to maintain order and protect minority groups. The influential Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council claims that over 2,000 attacks on Hindus have occurred since August, a period marked by escalating violence from hard-line Islamist groups. Hindus represent approximately 8 per cent of Bangladesh's population of nearly 170 million, while the Muslim majority makes up around 91 per cent. Despite being a significant minority, Hindu communities say they are inadequately protected and often targeted amid political and social instability. The unrest has also affected other groups; reports indicate that supporters of Hasina's Awami League party and its ally, the Jatiya Party, have faced violence as well. The recent spike in violence has sparked international concern. United Nations human rights officials, along with global advocacy groups, have voiced alarm over the human rights situation in Bangladesh under the Interim Government. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed concern over the attacks, while US President Joe Biden's administration announced that it is monitoring the situation closely. Adding his voice to the chorus, former US President and current presidential candidate Donald Trump condemned the "barbaric violence" targeting Hindus, Christians, and other minorities, describing Bangladesh as "in a total state of chaos." The Hindu activists who have been rallying since August are pressing the Government with a list of eight key demands which include the establishment of a minority protection law, the creation of a dedicated ministry for minority affairs, and a specialised tribunal to address and prosecute incidents of violence against minorities. Friday's protest in Chattogram was partly fuelled by recent sedition charges filed against 19 Hindu community leaders. As Bangladesh continues to grapple with political and religious tensions, minority communities remain on edge. With increasing international attention and escalating domestic demands for protection and justice, the Interim Government must restore peace and address the rights and safety of its minority groups, else there is a clear danger of it plunging into anarchy and eventually into a civil war.



global advocacy groups, have voiced alarm over the human rights situation in Bangladesh under the Interim Government. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed concern over the attacks, while US President Joe Biden's administration announced that it is monitoring the situation closely. Adding his voice to the chorus, former US President and current presidential candidate Donald Trump condemned the "barbaric violence" targeting Hindus, Christians, and other minorities, describing Bangladesh as "in a total state of chaos." The Hindu activists who have been rallying since August are pressing the Government with a list of eight key demands which include the establishment of a minority protection law, the creation of a dedicated ministry for minority affairs, and a specialised tribunal to address and prosecute incidents of violence against minorities. Friday's protest in Chattogram was partly fuelled by recent sedition charges filed against 19 Hindu community leaders. As Bangladesh continues to grapple with political and religious tensions, minority communities remain on edge. With increasing international attention and escalating domestic demands for protection and justice, the Interim Government must restore peace and address the rights and safety of its minority groups, else there is a clear danger of it plunging into anarchy and eventually into a civil war.

America decides: Will Kamala make history



KALYANI SHANKAR

While polls show Harris narrowly leading, Trump's momentum and attacks on Harris, alongside economic concerns, keep the outcome unpredictable

The upcoming election for the White House is of immense significance, as it will determine the next tenant of the White House and shape the future of the United States. Whether America will get its first woman president or a second Donald Trump term is a debate going on among not only the politicians but also the public. A week before the November 5 presidential polls, election fever hit the country hard. However, there is a possibility that knowing the final result may take a few more days. Narrow victories in a handful of swing states will likely determine who gets the top job. Polls and prediction markets are signalling a Republican sweep in the election.

As the Republican candidate, Donald Trump, and the Democrat nominee, Vice President Kamala Harris, wrap up their campaigns, the potential impact of this election on the future of the United States cannot be overstated.

It is no surprise that the campaign has been not only highly negative but also personal, with Trump attacking his rival, hitting her below the belt and calling her "dumb." While the reports claim that the fight is very tight, with Trump leading now and Kamala making up her lead, the suspense will continue for a few more days, even after the election date. The Electoral College is the system that decides presidential elections: A candidate must secure at least 270 votes - allocated by state based on the outcome of their respective vote - to win the White House. Although certification sabotage has not yet resulted in such an extensive delay, many attempts have been made before. County election boards generally have no legal authority to investigate any allegations of fraud or irregularities.

Tight races in crucial battleground states in 2020 and an increase in mail-in voting amid the COVID pandemic saw prolonged vote counts. That helped fuel unfounded claims of election malfeasance pushed by Trump and his allies. State election law provides other checks and safeguards through which suspected



irregularities can be adjudicated. These mechanisms are designed to resolve disputes. Extended delays in county-level certification could run against deadlines for certifying statewide results. According to the Associated Press, the winner will likely not be projected for days. However, states and the whole election results are typically "called" long before final votes are counted. In 2020, President Joe Biden won. The result was called for four days after November 3, when Pennsylvania's result was confirmed. The state gave Biden 20 electoral college votes, taking over the 270 required to win. In 2016, Hillary Clinton conceded to Trump the morning after the election. With the presidential contest in the final countdown and Harris and Trump maligning the opponent, the vice president has called Trump dangerous. Harris insists she's doing both - establishing a contrast with Trump and laying out her agenda on the economy, immigration and more. She says "It's either Donald Trump in there, stewing over his enemies list, or me working for you, checking off my to-do list." Trump is relentless in attack-



IT IS NO SURPRISE THAT THE CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN NOT ONLY HIGHLY NEGATIVE BUT ALSO PERSONAL, WITH TRUMP ATTACKING HIS RIVAL, HITTING HER BELOW THE BELT AND CALLING HER "DUMB"

ing Harris, sometimes in crude terms. His core strategy has been to tie Harris to voters' frustrations with the Biden administration.

According to the latest reports, Harris leads Trump by four points, 51 per cent-47 per cent, in an ABC/Ipsos of likely voters released Sunday. This is up slightly from her 50 per cent-48 per cent edge in early October. Meanwhile, a CBS/YouGov survey out Sunday shows Harris up 50 per cent-49 per cent, a shift from the vice president's 51 per cent-48 per cent lead in mid-October. According to FiveThirtyEight's election forecast, Trump is favoured to win 54 times out of 100, compared to 46 for Harris.

As for the campaign spending, Harris routed Trump in fundraising for their official campaigns in September by pulling in \$222 million compared to the Republican's \$63 million. Those numbers are down from the same period in 2020 when Biden raised \$281 million and Trump raised \$81 million.

Harris was able to spend a lot on TV ads. According to the Wesleyan Media Project, the Harris campaign has also dramatically outspent Trump in

digital advertising and dominated cable and radio advertising, which tracks campaign advertising spending.

The economy and inflation remain prominent concerns, with 90 per cent and 85 per cent of registered voters calling them highly important in their votes, respectively. Harris' campaign insists she's doing both - establishing a contrast with Trump and laying out her agenda on the economy, immigration and more. As she said in Georgia earlier this week: "It's either Donald Trump in there, stewing over his enemies list, or me working for you, checking off my to-do list." The economy and inflation remain prominent concerns, with 90 per cent and 85 per cent of registered voters calling these highly important in their vote. The problem for Kamala Harris is that she is a woman of Asian descent. Despite being a highly developed country, people are shying away from electing a woman. Hillary Clinton tried hard, but she could not win the presidency. Let us see if Kamala is successful.

(The writer is a popular columnist, currently in the US; views are personal)

PICTALK



About 1001 food items offered at the Akshardham Temple during the 'Annakut' festival, in Jaipur

PTI

Art and literature: An imperative than a choice for students

Embracing art and literature is an investment in their mental wellbeing tomorrow—an invaluable asset for their future life

Many decades ago, when I opted to take literature in college, at a time when many of my peers chose science, people raised their brows. It was believed to be the choice of the mediocre, a subject that didn't need much of an intellect or dedication. It was where students who didn't secure a seat in prime areas finally settled. Art and literature weren't considered durable then. Neither is it given much weightage now by parents.



Challenges of higher education, what might bring them respite from their anxieties are artistic endeavours. It is often in the lines of a sketch or the verses of a poem that children find a voice beyond words—a silent yet powerful release of their inner thoughts and emotions. In a world that measures success by exams and marks, these activities provide a refuge, where the mind is free to wander, explore, and create without boundaries. Studies have consistently shown that students who engage in painting, writing, music, dance or theatre experience lower stress levels than those who do not. These activities act as a counterbalance to the rigid schedules and deadlines that studies impose, allowing children to unwind and channel their

energies into something entirely their own. One of the often overlooked merits of art and literature is the development of emotional intelligence. When children immerse themselves in stories, they begin to understand complex emotions, both their own and those of others. A novel might teach empathy, while a piece of music might mirror feelings they struggle to articulate. These moments foster self-awareness, which is critical in today's fast-paced world where young people are grappling with social pressures and academic demands. These creative pursuits don't just make children more empathetic; they also teach them to become aware of their inner world—a skill that will serve them well beyond the walls of a classroom. In those moments when they feel overwhelmed, they can turn to the comfort of a favourite book, the joy of drawing, or the calm of journaling. It becomes a personal ritual, a way to recharge and refresh, like finding shelter from the storm within the pages of a story or the hues of a canvas. Extracurricular

activities such as dance, music, fine art and creative writing are not mere pastimes; they are crucibles where life skills are forged. Problem-solving, adaptability, and innovation—all essential skills in adulthood—find their roots in these pursuits. Children learn patience through practice, resilience through failure, and confidence through expression, creating a sturdy foundation that will support them through life's inevitable challenges. Parents and educators must recognise the role these activities play in a child's mental and emotional development. Fostering a balanced approach between academics and extracurricular interests can create resilient individuals who are not only high achievers but also happy, healthy humans. As life's pressures mount, these creative expressions transform into anchors, grounding us in times of stress and rekindling the joy we may have set aside in the haste of growing up.

(The author is a columnist and children's writing coach based in Dubai; Views are personal)



ASHA IYER KUMAR

TRUMP'S BANGLADESH CONCERN

Madam - Former President Donald Trump vowed to protect Hindu Americans from the radical left's anti-religion agenda, pledged to strengthen US-India relations, and condemned violence against minorities in Bangladesh. Donald Trump extended greetings and pledged to safeguard the interests of Hindu (may be forgotten that Sikh, Jain and Buddhists also followed Deepawali) Americans, vowing to shield them from what he described as the "anti-religion agenda of the radical left."

This is for the first time that Trump has addressed the crisis in Bangladesh, where reports indicate that hundreds of Hindus were killed during protests in July and August. He contrasted his approach to that of President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, whom he accused of ignoring the plight of Hindus both globally and in America.

Actually, this is not the love of Trump towards Hindus and minorities. This is just a political stunt with a view to lure the Indian population (a significant number in the United States now and very much capable of swinging the outcome of this tightly balanced election of 2024) in the US to vote for him in the Presidential election and nothing else. He is not that generous towards Indians as he is attempting to show. By nature, Trump is a bit of a dictator and is against the people migrating to the United States from various other countries. He terms migrated people as "Garbage". Whatsoever, we should not want to forget that it was the US (read CIA) who purported the coup along with ISI to destabilise the region. US has always been and will be doing these things in future. Hence, don't take his love for Hindus seriously.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

ERIGAI'S NATURAL GAME

Madam - Ever had so many Indian chess players shine on international circuit simultaneously like the present bunch of

Adieu Bibek Debroy!



Bibek Debroy, a name that needs no introduction for him; for the people of our country, to relate and recognise him as a public personality. From handling the India's PM Economic Advisory Council (EAC) to contributing in India's erstwhile Planning Commission i.e. Niti Aayog policy making, Debroy had left an indelible mark of contribution on India's intellectual and policy making landscape. His passing away at the age of

69 is a huge loss of our nation. He was truly a man of wide ranging interests, be that in Economics or Sanskrit, English or Puranas; his variety of interests into scholarly, put him at the epitome of the versatility in multi-discipline. His books, columns, and other translation works of Indian Vedas and Puranas into English had been an intellectual gift to all the Indian nationals from time to time. His sad demise is a huge loss of India's economic, cultural and scholar landscape. He put his knowledge and experience at the best use for his country holistic development. His visionary contribution to public policy, administration, literature and economics will keep on serving as a guide and bearing as torch for the next generation.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

extremely talented youngsters. The exploits of R Praggnanandhaa are too well-known to need reiteration. Gukesh Dommaraju is on the brink of making history as he prepares himself to square off with Ding Liren in the World Chess Championship final in little less than a month. Meanwhile, Arjun Erigaisi has achieved the stupendous feat of reaching 2800 Elo points in the FIDE live rating, becoming only the second Indian after Viswanathan Anand and the sixteenth player in the world to do so. Only French Grand Master Alireza Firouzja—at 18—reached there earlier than the Indian GM. Erigaisi has joined the elite club of Magnus Carlsen, Garry Kasparov, Vladimir Kramnik and Ding Liren among others. Known as a risky player, Erigaisi relishes the "accusation" as he feels top level chess needs some serious risk taking. Without his natural style of attacking game, the 21-year-old would not have broken into the top five of world chess at such a young age. The razor sharp player's new approach of not bothering

about records and ratings but concentrating on the game at hand appears to have paid him rich dividends. High energy and incredible motivation have driven him thus far, and the top rated Indian is all set to conquer new heights in chess.

Ganpathi Bhat | Akola

US SANCTIONS ON INDIAN COMPANIES

Madam - The current US sanctions against Indian firms raise major worries about Indian vital posture. Should India reconsider its trading links with countries participating in the Russian defence supply lines? How can governments better educate firms on how to adhere to global sanctions in order to avoid future repercussions? On top of that, what steps would be executed to protect Indian enterprises caught up in geopolitical tensions? Addressing these issues is critical for protecting national interests amidst developing global conflicts.

Anshu Bharti | Begusarai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

FINDING STILLNESS AMIDST A FLOOD OF THOUGHTS

A journey toward tranquillity begins by learning to simply "be" in the present moment



RAVI VALLURI

Sometime back I had written a piece on "Mind Management" and received certain queries about the generation of multiple thoughts and the acceptance by people that the mind was not at ease. It was frightening and troubling that several people of various age groups were plagued by all kinds of negative thoughts. People were troubled by thoughts arising during the whole day and particularly at night time. Thoughts arising at bedtime reside with us and seep deep into our consciousness and the following morning we are again troubled by those very thoughts and are not like fresh dew on petals. The Ashtravaka Gita says that "all action resides in the mind" and this is further corroborated by modern science. Modern science amplifies that there is no difference in the activity of the mind; whether you slap someone or merely think of slapping someone. It is the brain's limbic system, which is where motor control gets expressed. Just thinking of slapping someone activates all muscles that would be employed to undertake that specific action. On average, we are bombarded by 60 thousand thoughts a day. And we seem to have no control over them.

These thoughts arise on account of our memory bank (past impressions and Karma), the company we keep, past and current experiences and also the food that we partake in. According to the Ashtavakra Gita, enlightenment occurs only when we live in our hearts. The heart is synonymous with a point of inflexion where there is no past or future. There is only one present. Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar says that "the present moment is inevitable". And this state is true enlightenment. How does one reach that state of



"present moment"? Before dwelling on some techniques, let us witness a few stories. Two Buddhist monks were riding cycles and were on their way to meet a Zen Master. Monk one described the number of trees, clouds, wafts of cold breeze striking his cheek, mountains, beautiful blue sky, fruits plucked on the way, and village folk he encountered among others before meeting the Zen Master.

The second monk in all trepidation, meekly replied that he only cycled to meet the Zen Master. Immediately, the Master proclaimed the second monk to be the next Zen Master. Why? Because he was only cycling! He was in the present moment. Yet another Buddhist story. Two Buddhist monks were travelling through a dense forest. On their way, they came across a naked woman. The older one removed his apparel clothed the bare woman carried her across the river and left her on the other side of the bank.

The younger monk was greatly troubled by this act of his senior. He kept chiding the senior monk, literally accusing him of what he perceived as an act of sacrilege. The older one just smiled and remarked that he carried the lady across the river and left her there, while the other monk was still carrying the lady in his mind. Practising pranayama, Sudarshan Kriya, yoga, undertaking vigorous exercise, pursuing hobbies, contemplating, praying, observing nature and just being a spectator or a witness will also help a seeker and those with troubled minds to live in the present moment. Confucious says, "Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated."

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

Food subsidy reforms: Can Govt tackle mounting costs



UTTAM GUPTA

Timely disbursement of funds to FCI would go a long way to streamline the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, which provides free food grains to the people



The Ministry of Finance (MoF) has released Rs 97,000 crore towards food subsidy expenses in the first half of the current financial year (FY) to the Food Corporation of India (FCI). This is over two-thirds of the required fund support of Rs 147,000 crore to FCI during the current FY. The MoF is expected to release the balance amount by December 31, 2024. Under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), the Centre asks the FCI and other state agencies to procure food from the farmers at MSP (minimum support price) and distribute it to around 820 million people for free. Under the Scheme, each beneficiary gets 5 kg of food per month. The entire cost i.e. MSP paid to farmers plus handling and distribution cost (HDC) is reimbursed to the FCI/other state agencies as a subsidy. The money comes from the Union Budget's allocation for 'food subsidy'.

The FCI conducts the bulk of the food procurement, handling and distribution operations on behalf of the Centre. At Rs 147,000 crore, it gets around 72 per cent of the total food subsidy Rs 205,250 crore being the budget estimate (BE) for 2024-25. The government is duty-bound to make timely payments to FCI to enable the latter to conduct its operations 'smoothly' and 'effectively'.

What is so special about the current FY? In the past, thanks to inadequate budgetary allocations (often prompted by the compulsion to keep the fiscal deficit - excess of total expenditure over total receipts - under check), the government's payments to FCI had fallen short, forcing the latter to take recourse to working capital from banks to sustain operations. To bridge cash-flow mismatch, the extant arrangements provided for the FCI to avail a short-term loan with a tenure of 90 days up to Rs 75,000 crore at any given point in time. This led to an increase in subsidy as interest cost on loans taken from designated banks (the interest rate ranges between 6.98 per cent to 7.36 per cent per annum) had to be reimbursed to the FCI. The gap between budget allocation and actual requirements used to be so huge that cash-



IN THE PAST, THANKS TO INADEQUATE BUDGETARY ALLOCATIONS, THE GOVERNMENT'S PAYMENTS TO FCI HAD FALLEN SHORT, FORCING THE LATTER TO TAKE RECOURSE TO WORKING CAPITAL FROM BANKS TO SUSTAIN OPERATIONS

credit limits sanctioned by the banks proved to be inadequate. This prompted the FCI to even borrow funds from the National Small Savings Fund (NSSF). The NSSF is a public account (established on April 1, 1999) where all deposits received under National Saving Schemes are credited. All withdrawals by depositors are made out of the accumulations in this Fund. Normally, the government is not expected to use the NSSF to meet its revenue expenditure and expenses on food subsidy fall in this category. Yet, it encouraged the FCI to encroach on the Fund to plug the shortfall in its receipts. When the FCI started taking loans from NSSF in FY 2016-17, the Centre had committed to release the subsidy arrears to enable FCI to pay back the loans in subsequent years. But, that was not to be as subsidy arrears kept mounting, and FCI continued borrowing increasingly from NSSF. At the end of 2018-19, FCI's cumulative borrowing from NSSF was Rs 200,000 crore. This continued into 2019-20 on a much larger scale. In that year's budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had kept the BE for food subsidy at Rs 184,000 crore and drastically reduced it to Rs 109,000 crore in the revised estimate (RE) just because she wanted to keep the FD close to the target. Against this, the requirement being Rs 219,000 crore, the shortfall of Rs 110,000 crore was made up by FCI borrowing from NSSF. In the budget for 2020-21, she kept BE at Rs 116,000 crore against the requirement of Rs 137,000 crore. TV Somanathan, the then expenditure secretary, saw nothing wrong in the above practice arguing that borrowings by FCI were against the assets it held in the form of food stocks. The argument was flawed since loans

were taken against subsidy receivable from the Centre. In the case of wheat, for instance, on every kilo sold under the National Food Security (NFSA), the subsidy was Rs 23 (MSP plus HDC of Rs 25 minus Rs 2 being the price paid by the beneficiary). The loan was given against this amount promised by the Centre. This liability couldn't be adjusted against the food stock, which, on giving to the NFSA beneficiary would fetch only Rs 2. The Secretary further argued that keeping these borrowings off the Centre's balance sheet would prevent crowding out, and help the private sector borrow from the market at a lower interest cost. This needed to be weighed against erosion in the credibility of fiscal consolidation, which is inevitable when a strict liability of the Centre is kept off its balance sheet. A wrong can't be justified simply because the honest course of reflecting the liability in the Union budget would lead to problems for private firms. The government recognised the flaw in the above approach even as Sitharaman made a course correction while presenting the budget for FY 2021-22. In the RE for FY 2020-21, she provided for a massive allocation of Rs 529,000 crore. That amount included Rs 462,000 crore towards payment of subsidy to the FCI against a claim of Rs 216,000 crore by the latter. The excess amount was used by the FCI to extinguish all its accumulated liabilities to the NSSF. During 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24, the government stayed on course with allocation for food subsidy at Rs 372,000 crore, Rs 287,000 crore, and Rs 211,394 crore respectively adequate to fully cover the requirement. As for payments to the FCI, during 2021-22, the subsidy received was Rs 208,000 crore against the claim of Rs 207,000

crore. During 2022-23, the amount received was Rs 200,000 crore against the claim of Rs 204,000 crore. During 2023-24, the FCI received Rs 139,000 crore against the claim of Rs 133,000 crore. During the current FY, having already received 2/3rd of its likely annual requirement, Rs 147,000 crore, during the first half, the FCI is expected to receive the balance 1/3rd by December 31, 2024. It receives the money almost round the clock, meaning it doesn't have to resort to short-term credit even from banks (forget NSSF), as its operational expenses are fully met from timely reimbursement of subsidy dues by the Centre. From the Centre's perspective, all its liabilities regarding food subsidies are 'fully' reflected in the budget for any given FY. The government no longer indulges in window dressing, no carryover of subsidy dues, and the process is fully 'transparent'. Moreover, there is no interest cost boost to subsidy payments as the FCI need not borrow. But the unsustainable increase in food subsidies continues to haunt us. This has to do with 'universal' coverage of PMGKAY (820 million beneficiaries and at least 100 million waiting to be included as per an order of the Supreme Court), promise to give them 'free' food eternally, purchase of 'unlimited' quantum of food from farmers at MSP resulting in high stocks with FCI (at 44 million ton, its stock of rice as on October 1, 2024 is over three times the requirement) and associated high carrying cost, reimbursement of cost to FCI on 'actual' basis and pilferage of subsidized food. Addressing these maladies calls for major reforms in the Scheme. Can Modi bite the bullet? *(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)*

AI enabled technologies: The game changer in spinal cord injury care

Spinal cord injury care has yet to receive the focused attention it deserves from the government

In the realm of spinal cord injury (SCI) care, recent advancements in enabling technologies are revolutionising treatment, rehabilitation, and long-term care. These innovations are all set to redefine the quality of life for SCI patients. The International Spine and Spinal Injuries Conference (ISSICON) 2024, organised recently in New Delhi by Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute and the Spinal Cord Society, highlighted this potential by bringing together over 600 participants, including national and international experts, all focused on advancing SCI care. Experts discussed the transformative role of technologies like the role of Exoscope, Robotic surgery, Neurorehabilitation



H S CHHABRA

tools, and Artificial Intelligence (AI). It is evident that these enabling technologies are going to be the game changer in SCI care. Unlike in previous decades, where survival was the primary focus, today's innovations allow for the enhancement of function, mobility, and independence, shifting our approach from survival to empowerment and

functionality. Visibility and precision are paramount in spinal microsurgery. The ability to maintain a clear view of the surgical area with magnification is crucial, as it allows surgeons to operate with accuracy while providing adequate illumination. Traditionally, microscopes have been the gold standard in such complex procedures, offering the depth of field and lighting necessary to navigate intricate anatomical structures. However, the limitations of traditional microscopes—primarily the fixed head position required for prolonged periods—often lead to neck and back strain for surgeons. Unlike traditional microscopes, exoscopes are equipped with high-definition cameras and 3D viewing

screens, allowing surgeons to view a magnified 3D image on a large screen rather than through an eyepiece. This shift not only alleviates physical strain but also enhances ergonomic comfort, which can be transformative for procedures requiring extended focus. The exoscope's ability to provide improved illumination and 3D visualisation allows for sustained precision, minimising fatigue and supporting a higher level of surgical performance over prolonged periods. Moreover, it offers seamless integration with digital systems, assisting with documentation and enabling real-time collaboration with other specialists. Remote access to the exoscope's 3D feed allows for consultations with experts out-



side the operating room, which is particularly valuable in teaching hospitals and cases that require multidisciplinary input. By reducing the physical toll on surgeons and offering digital connectivity, the exoscope is paving the way for better, more collaborative care in spinal surgery. The inclusion of AI in spinal surgery is another game-changer, with the potential to reshape the field by allowing for data-driven insights and

more precise treatment planning. Through AI, vast amounts of patient data can be analysed to identify optimal surgical approaches and predict complications. Such AI insights combined with robotic precision could minimise human error and variability in outcomes, enhancing both surgical efficiency and patient safety. Currently, robotic systems are already being used in spinal procedures, aiding in the precise placement of screws, rods, and other implants. With AI-driven data analytics, robotic assistance could reach new levels of effectiveness. AI systems could improve preoperative planning based on large datasets, enabling more accurate hardware placements and efficient decision-making. This

technology can analyse past surgeries to predict potential complications and suggest the most effective treatment paths, offering a personalised, data-backed approach to surgical care. Furthermore, AI-driven analytics have the potential to predict patient outcomes based on prior cases, guiding surgeons on probable recovery trajectories and aiding patient consultations. ISSICON 2024's workshops reflected this commitment to enabling technologies by providing participants with hands-on experience in emerging techniques, such as robotic and navigation-assisted spine surgery and robotic-assisted rehabilitation. The conference was aligned with the World Health Organisation's Rehabilitation 2030 initiative, reinforcing a

global commitment to improving access to advanced rehabilitation services, particularly in underserved areas. To ensure the longevity of these innovations, ISSICON 2024 is developing eight position statements, created through pre-conference deliberations and expert discussions, to serve as guidelines for SCI care. The Spinal Cord Society has been advocating for a National Spinal Care Program that addresses the rising needs in spinal injury care and back pain management. *(Dr H S Chhabra is president of the Spinal Cord Society, director of Spine & Rehabilitation Services at the Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute, and Chairman of the ISSICON 2024 Organizing Committee; views are personal)*

MONEY MATTERS



Canara Bank aims Rs 6,000 cr recovery

State-owned Canara Bank aims to recover about Rs 6,000 crore from bad loans during the second half of the current fiscal. "We are anticipating recovery somewhere about Rs 3,000 crore in the third quarter and a similar amount in the fourth quarter," Canara Bank managing director and CEO K Satyanarayana Raju told PTI. The bank has recovered Rs 2,905 crore, including recovery in written-off accounts, in the second quarter. Slippages would be much less than recovery as the bank would be underwriting good loans, Raju said. Asked about the initial public offering (IPO) of Canara Robeco Asset Management Company, he said it may happen in the fourth quarter of this financial year. The approval from the finance ministry for the IPO of Canara Robeco Asset Management Company (AMC) is expected shortly. The lender holds a 51 per cent stake in the mutual fund. It plans to offload a 13 per cent stake through IPO. Last December, Canara Bank gave an in-principle approval to start the process of listing its mutual fund subsidiary by an initial share sale.



Magicpin slashes platform fee to Rs 5 per delivery

Hyperlocal e-commerce app magicpin has slashed platform charges to Rs 5 per delivery, half of the fee set by its competitors, a top company official said on Sunday. Around two weeks back, Zomato and Swiggy raised platform fees in the range of 42-67 per cent per delivery. Magicpin founder and CEO Anshoo Sharma, on social media platform X, announced the reduction in platform fees applicable for deliveries during the present calendar year. "We can find a balance towards the welfare of our delivery heroes and our customers during festive seasons. Hence, here is a magicpin promise to let more people enjoy the festive season. magicpin's platform fees slashed by 50 per cent of competition to Rs 5 only for the rest of the year," Sharma said. He said there will be no fee hike on food delivery for the rest of the year 2024. Zomato increased the platform fee from Rs 7 to Rs 10, which will be charged to customers besides the delivery fee per order. Swiggy followed suit and raised the platform fee to Rs 10 from Rs 6 it charged earlier. Before Diwali, Magicpin was levying a platform fee of Rs 7, which it has slashed by about 29 per cent, following which it has recorded a two-fold jump in order on a year-over-year basis.



Dr Reddy's recalls over 3.3 lakh bottles of generic medication

Dr Reddy's Laboratories is recalling over 3.3 lakh bottles of a medication used to treat high calcium levels in the blood and hyperparathyroidism in the US market due to manufacturing issues. According to the latest Enforcement Report by the US Food and Drug Administration, Dr Reddy's is recalling the 3.31,590 bottles of Cinacalcet tablets in multiple strengths in the American market due to CGMP (current good manufacturing practice) deviations. The recall is due to the "presence of N-nitroso Cinacalcet impurity above FDA recommended interim limit", it added. New Jersey-based Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Inc., a unit of Hyderabad-based drug major, is recalling 2,85,126 bottles of Cinacalcet tablets in 30 mg strength. Besides, the drug major is recalling 35,880 and 10,584 bottles of 60 mg and 90 mg strengths, respectively, USFDA said. The affected lot has been produced in India, it added. US-based Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Inc. initiated the Class II nationwide (US) recall on October 9 this year. As per the USFDA, a Class II recall is initiated in a situation in which the use of, or exposure to, a violative product may cause temporary or medically reversible adverse health consequences or where the probability of serious adverse health consequences is remote.

India rises as global player in exports with surging share

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's export competitiveness has witnessed healthy gains in multiple sectors -- particularly petroleum, gemstones, agrochemicals and sugar -- during the last five years, as these segments have increased their share in global trade, according to the commerce ministry data.

The other sectors where the share of India's exports has increased during 2018 and 2023 are electrical goods, pneumatic tyres, taps and valves, and semiconductor devices. The ministry data analysis showed that petroleum exports rose to USD 84.96 billion in 2023, with India's market share surging to 12.59 per cent last year from 6.45 per cent in 2018, positioning it as the second-largest global exporter. It was ranked fifth in 2018.

In the precious and semi-precious stones segment, the country's share in global shipments has soared to 36.53 per cent last year from 16.27 per cent in 2018. It has propelled the country to the top position in the category, with exports reaching USD 1.52 billion in 2023 from USD 0.26 billion in 2018. It was at the second spot in 2018.



Similarly, in cane or beet sugar, the country's outbound shipments have more than quadrupled to USD 3.72 billion from USD 0.93 billion in 2018. India has achieved tremendous growth in the export of cane or beet sugar, with its global market share increasing from 4.17 per cent in 2018 to 12.21 per cent in 2023. "As the world's second-largest exporter of sugar, India's success can be attributed to both favourable agricultural policies and its strong production base.

The country has capitalised on the growing global demand for sugar, especially in regions like Southeast Asia and Africa," an official said.

India's share of the global market for insecticides and fungicides has also shown healthy improvement.

The country increased its global share from 8.52 per cent in 2018 to 10.85 per cent in 2023, with exports reaching USD 4.32 billion.

India's ability to meet interna-

tional agricultural and environmental standards and its emphasis on innovation in agrochemicals have led to this improvement, the official said. India is now the third-largest exporter globally against the 5th position in 2018, the data showed.

Further, the country's position in the global market for rubber pneumatic tyres has also strengthened, with exports growing to USD 2.66 billion in 2023 from USD 1.82 billion in 2018.



Mcap of 6 firms jump Rs 1 lakh cr

State Bank, ICICI Bank top gainers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The combined market valuation of 6 of the top-10 most-valued firms surged Rs 1,07,366.05 crore last week, with State Bank of India and ICICI Bank becoming the biggest gainers.

Leading stock exchanges BSE and NSE conducted a one-hour special 'Muhurat Trading' session on the occasion of Diwali on November 1, marking the start of the new Samvat 2081.

Last week, the BSE benchmark climbed 321.83 points, or 0.40 per cent.

While Reliance Industries, ICICI Bank, State Bank of

India, ITC, Hindustan Unilever, and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) were the gainers, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, and Infosys faced erosion from their market valuation.

The valuation of State Bank of India jumped Rs 36,100.09 crore to Rs 7,32,755.93 crore.

ICICI Bank added Rs 25,775.58 crore to Rs 9,10,686.85 crore in its market valuation.

LIC's valuation surged Rs 16,887.74 crore to Rs 5,88,509.41 crore and that of Reliance Industries soared Rs 15,393.45 crore to Rs 18,12,120.05 crore.

Coal India hopes to rejoin dividend list as ECL betters performance



PNS ■ KOLKATA

Coal India aims to eliminate Rs 2,200 crore in accumulated losses at its subsidiary, Eastern Coalfields Ltd (ECL), and to rejoin the dividend list by FY 2025-26, a top official said on Sunday.

At the foundation day event, Coal India chairman P M Prasad said Bharat Coking Coal Ltd, another previously loss-making subsidiary, has already re-entered the dividend list. He expressed confidence that ECL would achieve similar success by FY 2025-26. Coal India has seven coal-producing subsidiaries.

"ECL is performing well and is on track to meet its production target of 54 million tonnes this year. We expect to eliminate two-thirds of its Rs 2,200 crore accumulated losses this fiscal year, with the remaining losses cleared by the following year, allowing it to rejoin the dividend list," Prasad said.



Govt infuses Rs 1,650 cr in RINL to keep it as a going concern

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

According to an official document, the government has infused around Rs 1,650 crore into state-owned RINL, which is gripped with operational and financial issues.

The government is also taking various measures to keep RINL as a going concern, the Ministry of Steel said in a note.

"In this regard, the Government of India has infused Rs 500 crore towards equity on September 19, 2024, and a working capital loan of Rs 1,140 crore on September 27, 2024," according to the document.

It also said that SBICAPS, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the State Bank of India (SBI), is preparing a report on the sustainability of RINL.

"RINL is in serious financial trouble, and the (Steel) Ministry is taking several steps to keep RINL as a going con-

cern in consultation with the Ministry of Finance," it added. Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL), under the Ministry of Steel, is a steel manufacturing company. It owns a 7.5 million tonne plant at Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh. The company has been facing severe financial and operational issues. Two of the three blast furnaces (BF) were closed till October 28 this year, when the second BF was made operational after nearly 4-6 months. The overall dues of RINL have gone above Rs 35,000 crore.

In January 2021, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) gave its 'in-principle' approval for 100 per cent disinvestment of government stake in RINL, also called Visakhapatnam Steel Plant or Vizag Steel, along with RINL's stake in its subsidiaries/joint ventures through strategic disinvestment by way of privatisation.

Fed interest rate, FIIs trading to be key mkt movers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Analysts said the November 5 US presidential elections, the Federal Reserve interest rate decision, foreign investor trading activity, and the upcoming quarterly earnings from domestic firms are the major triggers that will influence sentiments in the equity market this week.

In an eventful week ahead, a host of macroeconomic data announcements and global trends would also drive the markets, experts said.

"The upcoming week is poised to be eventful on the global front. The US presidential election on November 5 is a key focus, and the US FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee) meeting will be crucial. Geopolitical tensions and oil price movements will remain key variables as well," said Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd.

Domestically, the final phase of Q2 earnings will be critical, while foreign institutional investor (FII) behaviour will remain under close watch, Meena added.

"The outlook for the market will be guided by the US presidential election and major macroeconomic data such as HSBC India manufacturing



PMI, services PMI, US Fed interest rate decision, US S&P global composite PMI, US S&P global services PMI and BoE (Bank of England) interest rate decision," Palka Arora Chopra, Director, Master Capital Services Ltd, said.

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Last week, the BSE benchmark climbed 321.83 points, or 0.40 per cent.

"This week, investors' attention will be on developments in the US markets, especially the upcoming elections on November 5 and the Federal Reserve's policy meeting," said Ajit Mishra -- SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

"On the domestic front, earnings reports from key companies, including Dr Reddy's, Titan, Tata Steel, M&M and Tata Motors will be in focus. Additionally, the release of key economic indicators, such as the HSBC manufacturing PMI and services PMI, will provide insight into the country's economic momentum," Mishra said.

Relentless selling by FIIs last month contributed hugely to the over 7 per cent decline in benchmark indices from their all-time peaks.

"Global markets will respond to the US presidential elections for a few days, after which fundamentals like US GDP growth, inflation and rate cut by the Fed will influence market moves," said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services.

ONGC draws a blank on offer of stake in Deen Dayal gas field

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation's (ONGC) third attempt to get a partner to rescue the Deen Dayal gas field in the KG basin in Bay of Bengal has met with the same fate as previous efforts as it got no bids, sources said.

The tender offering stake to technical and financial partners in the Deen Dayal field, which ONGC had acquired from a Gujarat government firm for USD 1.2 billion, received no bids, two sources aware of the matter said.

ONGC on June 12 sought expression of interest from "global oil and gas companies with requisite technical exper-



tise and financial strength to join as partner (with participative interest) for firming up a viable strategy" for the field, according to the tender document. Bids closed on September 12.

The field has produced negligible quantities of gas since ONGC in January 2017

acquired Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation's (GSPC) 80 per cent interest in the KG-OSN-2001/3 block off the east coast of India.

The block contains the Deen Dayal West (DDW) gas/condensate field which was discovered by GSPC almost two decades back. The Gujarat government company had showcased the field as a promising prospect when it sold its stake to ONGC in order to cut its debt.

The field, which was initially said to hold up to 20 trillion cubic feet of in place gas reserves - by far the biggest in any deepsea field in the country - but later trimmed to a tenth, has proved to be tougher than anticipated.

'Gold poised for 15-18 pc returns in Samvat 2081'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold is expected to deliver a stellar 15-18 per cent return in Samvat 2081, driven by positive economic factors and safe-haven demand, analysts said.

Samvat 2081 marks an important period for Indian investors as it signals the start of a new financial year in the Hindu calendar, coinciding with the auspicious festival of Diwali. Gold and silver have delivered a robust performance in Samvat 2080, and the outlook remains positive for Samvat 2081, though investors may see moderate gains amid possible shifts in global market factors, they added.



Lower sales realisation hit margins of cement makers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Major cement manufacturers reported a decline in margins in the September quarter, mainly on account of lower prices, leading to lower sales realisation.

Barring three leading cement producers -- UltraTech Cement, Ambuja Cement, and Dalmia Bharat -- other smaller players, including Nuvoco Vistas Corp, JK Cement, Birla Corporation, and Heidelberg Cement, reported a decline in topline and sales volume in the second quarter of the current fiscal year.

Industry observers said the increase in sales volume of UltraTech and Ambuja Cements is mainly due to the several acquisitions by both companies that consolidated their position further in the industry.

The industry also faced challenges such as extended monsoon, floods, and a slow pickup in government

demand, cumulatively leading towards a weak demand.

Power, fuel, and other costs, however, largely remained stable for the industry. The all-India average cement price was around Rs 348 per 50 kg bag in June 2024. It decreased 11 per cent year-on-year to Rs 330 per bag in September, though it increased 2 per cent on a month-on-month basis.

In the first half of FY25, cement prices declined 10 per cent year-on-year to Rs 330 per bag. A year earlier, the average prices stood at Rs 365 per bag and Rs 375 per bag in FY23, according to an Icria report.

Leading cement maker Ultratech reported a 68 per cent capacity utilisation with a 3 per cent growth in volume terms.

However, its sales realisation for grey cement declined 8.4 per cent year-on-year (YoY) and 2.9 per cent quarter-on-quarter (QoQ), in the July-September period.

FMCG firms worry over high inflation; hint price hike

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leading FMCG companies reported a decline in margins in the September quarter on account of higher input costs and food inflation, which ultimately slowed down the pace of urban consumption.

Rising prices of commodity inputs such as palm oil, coffee and cocoa were also accentuated and some FMCG firms have hinted at a price hike.

Products Ltd (GCPL), Marico, ITC, and Tata Consumer Products Ltd (TCPL) have expressed concerns over squeezing urban consumption, which according to industry experts forms 65-68 per cent of FMCG total sales.

"We think this is a short-term hit and we will recover the margins through judicious price increase and stabilising of costs," said GCPL Managing Director and CEO Sudhir Sitapati in a Q2 earning statement.



GCPL, makers of Cinthol, Godrej No 1, HIT had a steady quarter given the headwinds of oil costs and tough consumer demand in India and its stand-alone EBITDA margin was lower, caused entirely by high inflation in palm oil.

The rural markets, which were earlier lagging behind, continued their growth journey ahead of urban. Besides, FMCG players reported growth from premium products and from sales through quick-commerce

channels.

Another FMCG maker Dabur India also said the demand environment was challenging in the September quarter marked by "high food inflation and a resultant squeeze in urban demand."

The maker of Dabur Chyawanprash, PudiniHara and Real Juice reported a decline of 17.65 per cent in its consolidated net profit to Rs 417.52 crore and revenue from operations slipped 5.46 per cent to Rs 3,028.59 crore.

ON SET WITH AVANTIKA DASSANI, MAKING OF MITHYA: THE DARKER CHAPTER

SHIKHA DUGGAL
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The first season of *Mithya*, which follows a troubled author who finds herself on the brink of a sharp wedge, has enough suspense to entice us to watch it again. But the new season, which was directed by a different person, however produced by the same production house, is everything that the first wasn't. Returning as the aggressive Rhea Rajguru, Avantika Dassani is more determined than ever to ruin Jui's life. She continues to appear at various awkward times, enticing a suspicious man—who has become even more suspicious in the interim—to carry out her nefarious tasks for her, such as kidnapping and killing. Following a fascinating interview with Huma Qureshi, Avantika is now on board to share what she knows from the second season of *Mithya* with us!

When asked how she thinks her character has evolved, Avantika had this to say, "For me, the move from season 1 to season 2 has been a significant and difficult one. My character was portrayed in season one as a disturbed adolescent seeking affection and acceptance, a foolish method of attracting attention and someone who genuinely intended to stir up controversy. She has now experienced repeated betrayal from those who are meant to be her family, never received love or affection and even had those same people put her in jail. As the new owner of the Rajguru estate, she now emerges from prison with a great deal of internal and outward authority, stronger than ever, to assist her in taking charge and obtaining all she desires by any means necessary." She believes that both Rhea and her personality are strong-willed, emotionally invested and reserved. And, like most people, a yearning for love and understanding. These are the main ways the starring actress could identify with her while developing her character, albeit the methods in which each of these qualities appears in her role are clearly different from Avantika's. And realise that they are the main reasons she does everything! The *Menu Student* Sr fame continues, "I believe I gained a lot of knowledge from working with Huma, Param and Indraneil. They are all excellent actors who are skilled at turning things on and off. Additionally, we all had a very warm and cordial relationship with Naveen, Rajat Sir, Krishna Anandita and Anurita during both seasons, which made it extremely simple for us to have fun both on and off set."

The majority portions of both seasons were filmed in Darjeeling and it's reasonable to say that filming season two felt almost like a homecoming to actress Avantika. In both their schedules, the Darjeeling people were extraordinarily friendly and welcoming. This season, they also added a number of stunning new locales that truly enhanced the show's mood! While working, it also gave them the opportunity to see more of Darjeeling. Apparently, they have many enjoyable recollections of strolls along the mall road and the forest region, as well as cosy bonfire nights! And lots of momos. This interview also reveals that "Oh, the new character of Naveen, well, he is nice to deal with! With *Mithya*, I

With her character's transformation from a troubled adolescent to a calculating and ruthless force in *Mithya: The Darker Chapter*, Avantika Dassani delivers a nuanced performance that keeps viewers on the edge. In an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer*, she dives into the complexities of Rhea's evolution, reveals what drives her character's relentless pursuit of power and revenge and more

believe we've been quite fortunate in that everyone who joins the team has not only been incredibly skilled but also genuinely wonderful to be around. It is incredibly easy to work with him because he is such a natural on-screen and reactive actor. The intriguing plot of his novel keeps us on edge and makes us wonder what's actually happening here. Therefore, I believe that this new addition to the *Mithya* realm will be well received by audiences." She added, "This season has seen a lot of changes and back and forth, so I'm not sure if anyone else could have accomplished what Kapil Sir has! Because, in all the chaos, he was the most soothing influence. He was a pleasure to work with because, no matter how busy things became, he was always willing to work with all kinds of ideas, questions and thoughts while bringing an unrivalled enthusiasm that was equal parts calm and enthusiastic. His pet moniker, Kaps, is the fitting name since he is a true captain of the ship." In hindsight, as an actor, Avantika believes she may occasionally be too critical of herself and continuously doubt her performance in an effort to improve. She is certain that she will be able to identify many areas in which she could do better, but she also harbours the optimism that she will always be alive and eager for improvement!



Indianising Citadel-verse with desi melodies

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With an impressive repertoire that seamlessly blends tradition with modernity, Aman Pant is set to elevate the espionage thriller genre with his work on the highly anticipated Amazon Prime series, *Citadel: Honey Bunny*. Starring Varun Dhawan and Samantha Prabhu, this installment of the global *Citadel* franchise—created by the acclaimed Russo brothers—promises to be an edge-of-your-seat ride.

Aman's distinctive sound, which masterfully merges electronic elements with the richness of Indian instruments like the electric sitar, is poised to captivate audiences worldwide. His accomplished career boasts notable milestones, including the theme music for Netflix's *The Great Indian Kapil Show* and the upcoming Shah Rukh Khan starrer *Dunki*, directed by the illustrious Rajkumar Hirani.

As we sit down with Aman Pant, we delve into the creative process behind his innovative scoring, his inspirations and what drives his passion for crafting unforgettable sonic experiences. In this exclusive conversation, Aman shares the story behind his craft, his vision for *Citadel: Honey Bunny*, and the art of elevating storytelling through music.

Starting his career in 2008 in Delhi and moving to Mumbai in 2013, Pant has since built an impressive portfolio of over 4,000 ad films, collaborating with nearly all the leading directors in the industry.

Aman Pant, a rising force in Indian music and cinema, reflects on his remarkable journey, which began at the tender age of 19. "My journey has been an interesting one because I started early," he says. "I started as an advertising composer during my engineering days. For me, the clarity that I wanted to become a composer came at the right time." Pant's passion for music was evident even earlier, as he composed his first song in 9th or 10th standard.

After securing his first salary in Delhi in 2008, Pant continued to build his advertising portfolio, eventually shifting to Mumbai in 2013. "Fortunately, I did not face any sort of thing because everything was an experience," he notes. Despite occasional setbacks, Pant's work largely gained traction through word-of-mouth, leading to collaborations with prominent brands and directors. To date, he has worked on over 3,000 to 4,000 ads. Pant's cinematic breakthrough came with R Balki's acclaimed film *Chup* in 2022, showcasing his ability to craft emotionally resonant scores. This opportunity arose from his existing relationship with Balki and his wife, with whom he had worked on numerous ads. "I used to work with R Balki sir and his wife in many ads. And later *Chup* happened. I did-

n't really have the wish to work in films. I was doing really well in ads. Things were going well."

Chup marked the beginning of Pant's successful foray into films, followed by notable projects such as Bhumi Pednekar's *Thank You For Coming*, *Good Luck Jerry* starring Jahnvi Kapoor and Raj & DK's *Guns and Gulaab*. His work on *Janhit Mein Jaari*, featuring Nushratt Bharuccha, further demonstrated his ability to create socially impactful scores. As Aman Pant reflects on his journey in the music industry, he reveals that working in films was always a subconscious aspiration. "Technically, back of the mind, everybody wants to do films," he admits. However, his experience in advertising has been invaluable. "Ads for me are a lot of fun because they teach you a lot. It was a learning experience, which was financially good as well."

He considers himself fortunate to work with acclaimed filmmakers like Rajkumar Hirani and Raj & DK. "Then Raj & DK asked me to do *Citadel*. It feels so amazing working with them once again." Pant praises Raj & DK's unique storytelling style and the creative freedom they afford him.

Despite his success in films, Pant remains fond of advertising. "Ads will forever be my first love. I've still been working on ads; I never left it." He appreciates the experimentation and learning that advertising provides.

Citadel presented a fresh challenge for Pant, requiring an electronic, high-energy style. He rose to the occasion by incorporating the electric sitar into the main theme. "Usually, we avoid using Indian instruments in global shows, but I felt it fitting to integrate the electric sitar for this India-based *Citadel* series." Pant's innovative approach blends electronic music with traditional Indian elements.

When asked about challenges, Pant responds with a laugh, "Challenge? There's nothing. Trust me, this was not a challenge because I got to experiment and do something that I never did." He attributes his success to creativity and honesty. "If your work has honesty, the universe will help you out."

Pant's philosophy is to continually move forward, seeking improvement and learning from each project. "When you move forward, it's then that you'll be able to learn something new." With *Citadel: Honey Bunny* and future projects on the horizon, Aman Pant's unique soundscape is poised to leave an indelible mark on Indian cinema.

Aman Pant's remarkable journey, from advertising to films, showcases his versatility and passion for crafting unforgettable sonic experiences. With *Citadel: Honey Bunny*, he pushes the boundaries of music composition, seamlessly merging tradition with modernity. As he continues to collaborate with visionary filmmakers, Pant's distinctive sound is set to resonate with audiences worldwide, cementing his status as a leading music composer in Indian cinema.

As Amazon Prime's *Citadel: Honey Bunny* gears up for release, *The Pioneer* engages in an exclusive conversation with its talented music composer, Aman Pant. From his early days in advertising to crafting unforgettable sonic experiences, Pant bares all about his creative odyssey

Discover these four hidden gem resorts for an unforgettable festive getaway

For those looking to break away from the urban bustle of festivities, India's hidden nature retreats and wellness resorts nestled within lush jungles, peaceful beaches and serene plantations make for an ideal escape. These secluded havens offer a rejuvenating experience surrounded by pristine natural beauty, providing a refreshing alternative to the festive hustle

ANCHAVIYO

It is a unique adventure resort with distinctive & conceptual room stays and a range of activities, adventure and water sports, all in the heart of nature. Experience the charm of ultimate luxury hidden amongst innumerable fruit trees and panoramic riverside views. Enjoy the instrumental art of Santoor & Rubab, indulge in entertainments like ghazal nights, karaoke, Tarpa dance and more. The sweet sounds of the Santoor reflect the serenity of nature as they fall soft on your ears in the night air while the ghazals will transport you to a space of introspection revealing the complexities of human emotions. Contrasting fun awaits in the form of karaoke where you get a chance to display your singing talent and learn the art of simplicity and coordination with the Tarpa dance. There's a lot more in store for the guests at Anchaviyo as it hosts a fun-filled festive week celebration.

CANARY ISLANDS

An unparalleled stay awaits as you plan to unwind at a private oasis. Tucked away amidst the clustering trees and the winding mountains nestles a boutique resort surrounded by the beautiful lake, a global gourmet beach bar – the white crane designed and conceptualised to give you a unique experience! You are welcome to visit the Canary Islands with your friends and family. Options to opt for themed meals, festive celebration with entertainment and more. Inspiring food ideas revolving around unique concepts including regional specialities will be a part of the celebration. You can choose from a range of amazing platters and cuisines and even customise some to fascinate your taste buds. Make this festival a homecoming if you are going to choose traditional festival treats at the resort!

THE FOREST CLUB RESORT

Experience India's largest meandering pool with direct access from luxurious executive rooms. Nestled atop a hill with lush, serene views, this resort blends nature's rhythm with modern elegance. From unique trees and an infinity pool to extensive amenities and unmatched hospitality, every detail promises a memorable stay. Festive mela at the resort with different entertainment, fun activities, snacks and more. Celebrate the triumph of good over evil at the traditional mela organised with festivities, music and dance. The entertainment is distinctive and the fun extraordinary. Make your festival memorable and capture-worthily at the resort!

ELEGANT WATERFRONT RESORT

The waterfront resort boasts state-of-the-art amenities, impeccable service and unparalleled magnitudes of hospitality. With much-preferred options for travellers because of the convenient stay options, meeting and conference venues and the plethora of activities that they provide, Elegant Waterfront Resort is situated on the backwaters of Bhama Ashkhed Dam and the property is surrounded with a three sided water body and a beautiful mountain view on the behind. There are options for themed meals, a festive celebration with entertainment and more. Creativity and memorability take over with conceptual meal platters taking centre stage. Appetisers and aphrodisiacs complement each other across the menu, sparking culinary inspiration. Food categories are tweaked to novelty to present a taste that goes beyond the ordinary.



what's brewing?

FIERCE FEMALE SPIES TAKE CENTRE STAGE —WHO'S YOUR FAVOURITE?

The world of espionage has never been more intense! The newest addition to the collection of kickass female spies who have taken the world by the storm is Samantha, with her upcoming series Citadel: Honey Bunny. These ferocious spies are as lethal as they are captivating, each one bringing her own blend of brains, brawn, and beauty to the game. All being a fan-favourite for the ages, below are the fearless femme fatales that we could not get enough of—who's your favorite agent of chaos?

Samantha in Citadel: Honey Bunny (Prime Video):

When struggling actress Honey (Samantha) is recruited by stuntman Bunny (Varun Dhawan) for a side gig, she is hurled into a high-stakes world of action, espionage and betrayal. Years later, as their dangerous past catches up, the estranged Honey and Bunny must reunite and fight to protect their young daughter Nadia. The Indian series is born from the world of Citadel.



Scarlett Johansson in Black Widow (Disney+Hotstar):

A former Avenger, Natasha Romanoff, confronts her past and the dark secrets of her time as a S.H.I.E.L.D. assassin



Matilda De Angelis in Citadel: Diana (Prime Video):

A young and ambitious spy, Diana is thrown into the dangerous world of international espionage. The Italian series is born from the world of Citadel



Priyanka Chopra Jonas in Citadel (Prime Video):

Priyanka Chopra Jonas turns into an elite spy, Nadia Singh, in the high-octane action series Citadel, as she tries to uphold the safety and security of all people from Manticore, a powerful syndicate manipulating the world from the shadows. The global series is currently in production for its second season.



Angelina Jolie in Salt (Prime Video):

A CIA agent goes on the run after a defector accuses her of being a Russian spy



Jennifer Lawrence in Red Sparrow (Prime Video):

A talented ballerina is recruited into a secret Russian intelligence program, training to become a deadly weapon



Gal Gadot in Heart of Stone (Netflix):

A CIA operative, Rachel Stone, is tasked with protecting a powerful AI that could change the course of history



Yamuna and Pranitha



Actress Pranitha Subhash, marked her presence at the opening ceremony of Swayam's new flagship store in Hyderabad. After the online success, the Hyderabad flagship store will provide a direct experience of it's offerings. Located in Khajaguda and founded by Yamuna Baditha, a prime location the store features a diverse collection from classic to contemporary styles, alongside a customisation studio for tailored designs.



Pranitha Subhash



Sameera



Sindhuja



Brunda



Tejaswani

PARTY

Photos by- SV Chary

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



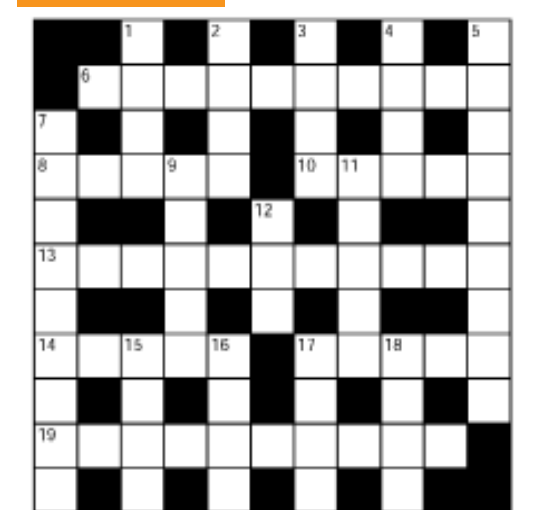
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SPEED BUMP



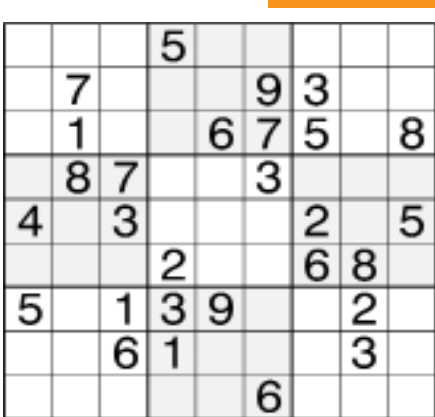
CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- 6 Television advertisement
- 8 Group of eight
- 10 A black and white animal in China
- 13 A kind of small glass tube for showing temperatures
- 14 Time of darkness
- 17 Comes to a standstill
- 19 Rang up
- 9 Our planet
- 11 Watchful, ready for anything that might happen
- 12 Plaything
- 15 A very strong wind
- 16 Adhesive strip
- 17 Shortly
- 18 Unlock

DOWN

- 1 Mistaid
- 2 Leave out
- 3 Put paper around something
- 4 A large African cat
- 5 A very large seabird
- 7 Lucky



GINGER MEGGS



TOLLYWOOD'S FRESH FACES

MANASA AND SRAVANTHI TALK ABOUT DEBUT FILM RAHASYAM IDHAM JAGATH



Two Telugu actresses, Manasa and Sravanthi, are making their debut in the upcoming film *Rahasyam Idham Jagath*, directed by Komal R. Bharadwaj. The movie, primarily filmed in the United States, is a science fiction tale with a mythological twist. Both Manasa and Sravanthi are settled in the U.S. but are now stepping into the Telugu film industry.

For Manasa, acting runs in the family; her parents and grandparents were involved in Telugu cinema. "My parents' grandparents produced films with legends like ANR and NTR," she shared. Manasa studied screen acting and earned a diploma in the field, having worked in theater, short films, web series and even a few Hollywood projects. In *Rahasyam Idham Jagath*, she plays a scientist, a role she prepared for by conducting extensive research. "To portray a scientist, I read books on physics and mythology to understand my character better," she added, noting that the director's clarity and guidance helped her get into the role.

Manasa shared that her passion for acting began in childhood, where she learned singing and dancing. "My parents encouraged me to pursue acting after I completed my education, especially since my grandparents were involved in the film industry," she said.

Sravanthi Pratiapati, born in Rajahmundry and raised in Hyderabad, moved to the United States, where she completed her primary education. She began acting during the pandemic, joining a theater group and appearing in Hollywood commercials. When *Rahasyam Idham Jagath* began casting in Portland, Sravanthi was selected. "I was surprised a Telugu film was being shot here in Portland, but I was thrilled to join the project," she shared. Playing an Indian girl in the film, she worked on perfecting her Telugu accent through workshops with the director.

Sravanthi has now committed to acting full-time, having left her previous job. In addition to acting, she is an event manager and yoga instructor. "Theater taught me a lot about performance, which makes on-screen acting feel more natural," she reflected. Both actresses recalled the environmental challenges they faced while shooting in unpredictable weather, often outdoors in forests, where sudden rain and snow created unique hurdles.



Matka trailer builds anticipation, adding to Varun Tej's confidence

After a series of underwhelming box-office results, actor Varun Tej is hopeful about his latest film *Matka*, directed by Karuna Kumar of *Palasa* fame. The recently released trailer has generated excitement, and the film, set in 1950s-80s Visakhapatnam, features elaborate recreations of iconic locations like the city's Purna Market. The storyline is based on the life of Ratan Khatri, the legendary "Matka King."

Dressed in a retro look for the trailer launch event, Varun expressed optimism, calling the film a fresh take on a commercial drama. "This film will offer audiences something new, and I believe it will resonate with them," he said. Playing the character of Vasu, Varun shared that he crafted the role without relying on any particular reference. "Director Karuna Kumar gave me helpful inputs, but he encouraged me to make the character my own," he added.

Varun's uncle, Megastar Chiranjeevi, praised the trailer, describing it as "massy" when he released it on his social media. Co-starring Meenakshi Chaudhary, *Matka* is set to release on November 14, with Vijayender Reddy Theegala and Rajini Talluri producing the film.

Nora Fatehi brings her unique charm to Matka

Global sensation Nora Fatehi is set to impress audiences as she takes on an exciting role in her first Telugu film, *Matka*. In this exciting venture, Nora shares the screen with Varun Tej and the makers have officially released the film's thrilling trailer, giving fans a taste of the high-octane drama and action in store. Scheduled to hit theatres on November 14, *Matka* promises an exhilarating cinematic experience. Nora shared the official poster on her social media, along with a link to the trailer, building anticipation for her dynamic role. Known for her mesmerising performances and chart-topping dance numbers, Nora is set to bring her unique flair to *Matka*, adding yet another impressive project to her film portfolio. Previously, the song *Le Le Raja* from the movie was released, which featured Nora's signature dance moves. It received rave reviews from fans and highlighted her strong screen presence. With nearly 47 million Instagram followers, Nora's global influence reached new heights when she performed the FIFA anthem *Light the Sky* at the FIFA World Cup finale last year. Her musical hits like *Pepeta*, *Dirty Little Secret* and *Nora* have further cemented her status in the music industry. Recently, her collaboration with international artist CKay on the song *It's True*, from his album *Emotions*, topped the charts and earned rave reviews.



Dulquer Salmaan celebrates success of Lucky Bhaskar

Dulquer Salmaan is thrilled with the positive reception for his third Telugu film, *Lucky Bhaskar*, which follows his successful Telugu debuts in *Mahanati* and *Sita Ramam*. In Hyderabad, to celebrate the film's success, Dulquer credited his Telugu film journey to directors like Nag Ashwin and Hanu Raghavapudi, who first trusted him with major roles. "I never imagined myself in Telugu cinema, but Nagi (Nag Ashwin) believed in me; Hanu sir (Director Hanu Raghavapudi) carried it forward with *Sita Ramam* and I am grateful to him for giving me a movie to remember. Now, *Lucky Bhaskar* is another memorable film in my career," said Dulquer Salmaan.

Dulquer expressed his gratitude to his co-stars and crew, including cinematographer Nimish Ravi, with whom he has a longstanding collaboration. Working with senior actors like Ramky and Sai Kumar was a highlight for him. "Sai Kumar sir's voice resonates on set; it's incredible," he said.

Reflecting on the film's journey, Dulquer thanked director Venky, whom he praised as "wise beyond his years," for creating a blockbuster film. He also acknowledged the expertise of editor Navin Nooli, with whom he had disagreements during the editing process. "But on the first day of release, I realised he knew exactly what was best for the film," Dulquer concluded, adding that he looks forward to future projects with Navin Nooli.



Viplav wears many hats in his debut film

It is time for small films hitting screens next Friday and *Eesaraina* is one of them. Viplav is the director and also played the lead actor in the film. The story is set in a beautiful rural backdrop and follows an unemployed young man as he prepares for a government job and embarks on a journey to find love. The film is releasing on November 8.

"It's a challenging one for me as I am making my debut as lead actor and also at the same time as director," said Viplav. He added that he is confident about the film. "We put our efforts into making a nice film and I hope that everyone liked it," said Viplav.

Another interesting thing about the film is that Viplav also produces this film. He also provided the story, screenplay and dialogue for it. "Though I am the producer, I should thank Sankeerth, who managed everything," said Viplav.

Female lead Ashwini plays the Shirisha role in this one. "Filming for this film felt like a summer vacation and I'm thrilled to have a character like this in my debut film. It's not just a movie—it's an experience," said Ashwini.

DHOOM DHAAM PROVIDES YOU MUCH NEEDED ENTERTAINMENT: DIRECTOR SAI KISHORE

Chetan Krishna and Hebah Patel are the lead pair in the film titled *Dhoom Dhaam*. Sai Kishore Macha is the director and it is releasing on November 8. The director earlier worked with Srinu Vaitla for a film and then worked with a few other directors.

"I worked for *Srikaram* in the direction department and later worked on the *Brinda* web series that stars Trisha. During this time, writer Gopi Mohan introduced me to the *Dhoom Dhaam* project and I instantly connected with the story, which is how the movie began," said director Sai Kishore. The makers wanted to shoot the film in the USA, but they couldn't get the permission. "Eventually, we chose Poland for our European shoot. Producer Ram Kumar ensured that we had all the comforts and facilities, making us feel as if we were in India," said the director. Talking about the story, he said it revolves around the relationship between a father and son. "An unexpected incident occurs in the lead actress's life due to this father-son relationship and the film follows the protagonist's journey to resolve it," he said. He added that the film has loads of entertainment, especially the wedding scenes after the interval.

The director praises the lead actor Chetan and his comic timing in the film. "I am confident that this film will be a significant milestone for him," he said and added that lead actress Hebah Patel also delivered a remarkable performance. The director promises that *Dhoom Dhaam* is going to give full entertainment for the ticket price. "We held a paid premiere in Visakhapatnam recently, and people who have seen the film enjoyed it a lot, which made me incredibly happy," said the director.



Non-performance of batters is worrying, we will strive to do something special in Australia: Rohit

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The disastrous performance of star batters is certainly a cause of concern for India, admitted Rohit Sharma after a stunning reversal against New Zealand but the skipper promised that the team will fight to deliver something 'very very special' in Australia.

New Zealand went strength to strength in the series while hosts India could not bring their floundering campaign back on track and ended up suffering a rare and humiliating 0-3 whitewash.

Rohit (91) and Virat Kohli (93) managed less than 200 runs across three Tests, a major reason for India's debacle. "It's a cause of concern without a doubt. If the batters are not performing, that is a cause of concern," Rohit said.

"What is done, is done now. As a player, as a captain, as a team, we all have to look forward and see how we can correct what we didn't manage to achieve here. There is a good opportunity for us to go and do



something really, really special in Australia. We will focus on that."

India have already been displaced from the top of the World Test Championship table following the embarrassing result at home and it could hasten the impending transition for the Test side but Rohit preferred

to look only at the immediate challenge of Australia tour.

"I don't think we can look that far ahead. I'm not going to look beyond Australia series. Australia series, for us is now very, very important. We will try and focus on that rather than thinking what happens after.

"A lot of our guys have been there before and a lot of the guys haven't been there before, which is why we are trying to get there a little early just to get used to the conditions."

Rohit said India will have to draw a lot of confidence from their last two series wins with the team set to

play five Tests Down Under for the first time ever.

"Australia is not an easy place to play cricket. But we can take a lot of confidence how we played in the last two series in Australia. In the back of our mind, we have to think like that," said Rohit.

Rohit, of late, has adopted an ultra aggressive and risky approach while batting, and it has resulted in him losing his wicket rather quickly.

He maintained that he has not lost faith in his defensive skills and his style of batting was more of an evolution process he chose for himself but promised to have a re-look into it.

"I haven't defended a lot in this series because I haven't been there to defend. Clearly I have to look at my own game and try and see what best I can do. When I go to bat, I always think how I can put the team in the best situation of the game."

"When the openers go in, they set the tone and sometimes you can fall on the other side of it as well. This series, I have fallen on the other side of it. But I don't see that I have lost faith in my defence.

Parthavi, Vanshika, Hemant win gold, Indian boxers return with 17 medals from U-19 World C'ships

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Parthavi Grewal, Vanshika Goswami and Hemant Sangwan punched their way to gold as Indian boxers made a strong impression, clinching a haul of 17 medals at the inaugural U-19 World Championships organised by World Boxing in Colorado, USA.

It was the female boxers who stole the show with as many as 10 of them standing on the podium at the age group tournament.

While Parthavi notched a dominant 5-0 win over Netherlands' Aaliyah Hoppema in the women's 65kg final Vanshika emerged victorious in the woman's +80kg category against Germany's Victoria Gatt by Referee Stops Contest (RSC) one minute and 37 minutes on Saturday.

In the next bout, Hemant clinched India's sole gold medal in the men's category by securing a 4-1 split decision victory over the USA's Rishon Sims in the 90kg category.

Nisha (51kg), Supriya Devi Thokchom (54kg) and Kritika Wasan (80kg) lost their respective finals to sign off with silver medals. This significant medal count was highlighted by the



contributions of 11 Khelo India Athletes (KIAs), of which eight are SAI National Centre of Excellence (NCOE) trainees.

The medalists also included three NCOE trainees who are non-KIAs, all training out of NCOE Rohtak.

Medal-winning Khelo India Athletes: Boys - Sumit, Lakshay Rathi, Krrish Pal (all NCOE Rohtak), Aryan, Rishi Singh. Girls - Krisha Verma (NCOE Aurangabad), Chanchal Chaudhary, Nisha, Vini, Akansha Phalasal (all NCOE Rohtak), Supriya Devi.

Medal-winning NCOE Athletes: NCOE Rohtak - Parthavi, Vanshika (Gold), Chanchal,

Nisha, Vini, Akansha, Kritika (Silver), Krrish Pal, Sumit, Lakshay Rathi (Bronze). NCOE Aurangabad - Krisha Verma (Gold).

Overall medal winners: Gold: Krisha Verma (F75kg), Parthavi Grewal (F65kg), Vanshika Goswami (F+80KG), Hemant Sangwan (M90kg).

Silver: Nisha (F51kg), Supriya Devi Thokchom (F54kg), Kritika Wasan (F80kg), Chanchal Chaudhary (F48kg), Anjali Singh (F57kg), Vini (F70kg), Akansha Phalasal (F70kg), Rahul Kundu (M75kg).

Bronze: Rishi Singh (M50kg), Krrish Pal (M55kg), Sumit (M70kg), Aryan (M85kg), Lakshay Rathi (M90+kg).

Rashid ends tied 25th, Canadian Lee wins title in Jakarta

PTI ■ JAKARTA

Indian golfer Rashid Khan, who was tied third at the halfway stage, faltered in the last two rounds with 72-71 and finished tied 25th at the BNI Indonesian Masters here on Sunday.

Rashid (67-67-72-71) totalled 11-under as fellow Indian SSP Chawrasia (68) was T-41st at 7-under and the 2023 champion Gaganjeet Bhullar (72) was T-44th.

Canadian Richard T. Lee finally ended his long and frustrating seven-year wait for a third victory on the Asian Tour when he recorded a fine four-shot wire-to-wire win.

After dozens of opportunities to win again following his success at the 2017 Shinhan Donghae Open he was relieved to prevail at Royale Jakarta Golf Club after firing



a closing two-under-par 70 for a four-round total of 23-under.

Chinese Taipei's Chang Weilun and Phachara Khongwatmai from Thailand secured second place, after both carded 64s.

Zimbabwean Kieran Vincent finished fourth following a 67.

Lee was six in front at the start of day and in cruise control after lying seven ahead at the turn. A one-and-a-half-hour weather delay,

which began when he was on hole 10 failed to unsettle him. However, an unexpected double-bogey on the 16th, where he took two to get out of a greenside bunker and missed a six-foot bogey putt, led to some uncertainty.

It meant his lead was cut to four over Chang, who was in the clubhouse, but he steadied the ship with a brave five-foot putt for par on the next hole followed by a par on the last.

The victory continued a brilliant run of form as he was tied for second in last week's International Series Thailand, finished joint ninth in the Black Mountain Championship, and came home in 10th at the Yeangder TPC.

American John Catlin, who closed with a 69 here and was tied for sixth, leads the rankings.

Top teams compete for honours in 14th senior men's National Hockey Championship

PTI ■ CHENNAI

A total of 31 teams will fight for the top honours at the 14th edition of the Hockey India Senior Men National Championship set to begin here on Monday.

The 31 teams were divided into eight pools, and the tournament will conclude on November 16.

During the league stage, each team will play against every other side in their pool. The top team from each pool will advance to the quarterfinals to be played on November 13, followed by semifinals on November 15, and the final and 3rd/4th place play-off match on November 16.

Pool A features defending champions Hockey Punjab along with Dadra & Nagar Haveli And Daman & Diu Hockey and Chhattisgarh Hockey.

Pool B includes Hockey Haryana, Telangana Hockey, Hockey Himachal, and



Hockey Mizoram, while Pool C comprises Hockey Unit of Tamil Nadu, Hockey Madhya Pradesh, Hockey Andhra Pradesh, and Hockey Andaman & Nicobar. Pool D consists of Hockey Karnataka, Hockey

Chandigarh, Hockey Uttarakhand, and Tripura Hockey. In Pool E, Hockey Association of Odisha will compete with Le Puducherry Hockey, Hockey Rajasthan, and Hockey Arunachal,

while Pool F includes Uttar Pradesh Hockey, Delhi Hockey, Kerala Hockey, and Hockey Jammu and Kashmir. Pool G consists of Hockey Jharkhand, Hockey Maharashtra, Goans Hockey, and Hockey Gujarat, while

Pool H features Manipur Hockey, Hockey Bengal, Hockey Bihar, and Assam Hockey.

The tournament will open with a series of matches, including Uttar Pradesh Hockey vs Kerala Hockey and Hockey Karnataka vs Hockey Uttarakhand, among other exciting fixtures, setting the stage for a thrilling championship.

Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey expressed his enthusiasm for the upcoming tournament.

"We are delighted to host the 14th Hockey India Senior Men National Championship in Chennai, a city with a rich hockey legacy. This championship provides a platform for showcasing the best talent from across the country and is a key event in developing the future stars of Indian hockey. I wish all the teams the very best as they compete for top honours," Tirkey said.

Rio Takeda wins Toto Japan Classic after six sudden-death playoff holes for her first LPGA Tour win

AP ■ SHIGA

Rio Takeda of Japan won the LPGA's Toto Japan Classic on Sunday in a playoff that lasted six sudden-death holes, defeating Marina Alex of the United States.

It was Takeda's first victory on the LPGA Tour.

Takeda had a birdie on the par-5 18th hole, edging Alex with par. The two were tied after 54 holes at 15-under 201. The tournament was restricted to 54 regulation holes after Saturday's third round was washed out by rain.

They were also even after the first five playoff holes in the sudden-death format, each with a birdie on the first playoff hole and pars on the next four holes. All of the playoff holes were par-5s - the 18th hole and the 13th.

Alex shot a 6-under 66 in the final round and Takeda shot 67.



Haeran Ryu of South Korea was one shot behind after regulation with a 66. She finished at 14-under 202.

Hana Wakimoto of Japan, the leader after the first two rounds, slipped to a 1-over 73 and finished three strokes

behind the leaders. She was also seeking her first LPGA Tour win.

The Japan tournament concludes a four-event Asian swing for the LPGA Tour that included events in China, South Korea and Malaysia.

India slips to 2nd in WTC as Australia takes top spot

PTI ■ DUBAI

India lost their top position in the World Test Championship standings, slipping to second place after suffering an embarrassing home series defeat to New Zealand on Sunday.

India lost to New Zealand by 25 runs in the third and final Test in Mumbai resulting in a 0-3 whitewash, their first in a home Test series since South Africa's 2-0 win in 1999-2000. This was also for the first time India have been swept 0-3 in a home series.

It was India's fifth loss in the ongoing WTC cycle, causing a significant drop in their points percentage (PCT), which fell from 62.82 to 58.33. India thus dropped to the second spot behind reigning champions Australia, who have regained the top spot with a PCT of 62.50.



India are now schedule to fly Down Under to play the five-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy, which has gained more significance now as

both teams will be vying for the top two spots.

India were considered favourites to win a majority of their remaining matches in

their quest for a third consecutive WTC final appearance.

However, to qualify for the final without depending on external results, they now must win four of their remaining five games -- a challenging task in Australia. Australia, on the other hand, are in a better position as they need to win four of their remaining seven Tests.

New Zealand's historic series sweep in India has also bolstered their WTC final aspirations.

They have climbed to the fourth spot with a PCT of 54.55, while Sri Lanka occupy third place with a PCT of 55.56.

South Africa, currently fifth with a PCT of 54.17, also remain in contention for a top-two finish and a place in the next year's one-off Test at Lord's.

Silva scores in stoppage time, Atlanta rallies to beat Messi's Miami 2-1 to even playoff series

AP ■ ATLANTA

Xande Silva scored with about a minute to go in stoppage time shortly after a goal by Lionel Messi was waved off by a clear offside, giving ninth-seeded Atlanta United a 2-1 victory over Inter Miami and evening the best-of-three MLS playoff series at one game apiece.

Silva on Saturday blasted a right-footed shot into the top left corner to beat goalkeeper Drake Callender in the 94th minute. The Atlanta player celebrated by ripping off his shirt and dancing in front of

the supporters section at Mercedes-Benz Stadium while the announced crowd of 68,455 cheered.

Messi had plenty of good scoring chances but only found the back of the net with the flag raised for offside. Atlanta United took off the other way for Silva's game winner.

United rallied from a 1-0 halftime deficit, the result of a huge error by keeper Brad Guzan, to force a decisive game next Saturday in South Florida. Atlanta has a chance to pull off a major upset, having finishing a whopping



34 points behind Messi's star-studded squad, which had the best regular-season record in Major League Soccer.

Derrick Williams tied the game in the 58th minute after a corner kick was turned away by the Herons. Pedro Amador sent a cross back into the box from long range and Williams dove to get a head on it, skipping it past Callender.

Guzan's blunder handed Miami the opening goal in the 40th minute. After easily grabbing a cross into the box, Guzan went to boot the ball away - only to stumble and loose control with

Miami's Federico Redondo running along beside him. Redondo sent the free ball to David Martinez, who casually flicked it over four United defenders into the unguarded goal while Guzan looked on helplessly.

The 40-year-old keeper claimed he was interfered with by Redondo, but the replay clearly showed Guzan tripped himself up.

Messi misfired on at least three shots, going wide a couple of times before blasting one over the net in the 83rd with Miami pressing for the go-ahead goal. He walked away rubbing his

beard, clearly frustrated at his lack of accuracy.

In the 89th, United missed a prime chance to grab the lead when Saba Lobjanidze rocketed one off the crossbar. Bartosz Slisz collected the ricochet, but fired it over the net.

Silva made sure it didn't matter. Miami won the opening game of the series 2-1 at home.

UP NEXT The winner of Game 3 will advance to the conference semifinals, facing the team that emerges from the Orlando-Charlotte series.