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'India-US relations will be on a very firm footing'

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DESIGNING ICONIC SPACES, FROM SUPREME COURT TO RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN

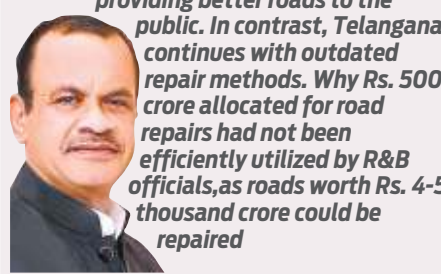
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CITADEL: HONEY BUNNY SAMANTHA IS ACTION QUEEN IN THIS SPY-VERSE

P12

QUOTE OF THE DAY

People are facing hardships due to potholes. Instead of taking immediate action, why are you officials delaying with estimates and tenders? Words aren't enough—we need results. Neighboring states are using advanced jet patching and velocity patching machines to quickly fill potholes, providing better roads to the public. In contrast, Telangana continues with outdated repair methods. Why Rs. 500 crore allocated for road repairs had not been efficiently utilized by R&B officials, as roads worth Rs. 4-5 thousand crore could be repaired



-Komatireddy Venkatreddy, Minister, Telangana

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DON'T MISS...

VIMS expands services to north...

The Visakha Institute of Medical Sciences (VIMS) is set to revolutionise healthcare services in North Andhra with the addition of two crucial departments: a City Diagnostic Centre and a Regional Drug Storage Centre. These new facilities, sponsored by the Andhra Pradesh Medical Development Corporation (APMDC) at a cost of Rs. 20 crore, aim to provide significant benefits to the underprivileged communities in the region. The City Diagnostic Centre at VIMS will offer a wide range of free medical services, including pathology...

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'Never intended to hurt' them...

Actor Kasturi, who sparked controversy with her comments about Telugu-speaking people settled in Tamil Nadu, announced that she has withdrawn all references to Telugus from her November 3 speech. She stated that it was never her intention to "hurt or offend my Telugu extended family." "I am sorry for any inadvertent ill feeling. In the interest of all-round amity, I withdraw all references to Telugus in my speech delivered on November 3," Kasturi said, referring to her...

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Home-cooked meals become...

Both vegetarian and non-vegetarian home-cooked meals became costlier in October due to a pick up in vegetable prices, a report said on Wednesday. The cost of a vegetarian thali increased by 20 per cent to Rs 33.3 per plate compared to the year-ago period and was also up from Rs 31.3 in September primarily due to the surge in vegetable prices, a division of rating agency Crisil said. The monthly 'roti rice rate' report said onion prices were up 46 per cent on year in October, while potato prices...

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Stokes missing as Draca, Netravalkar...

England Test skipper Ben Stokes is missing from the list of 1,574 players while his former teammate James Anderson, Italian quick Thomas Draca and India-born USA medium pacer Saurabh Netravalkar have all registered for the IPL mega auction to be held in Jeddah on November 24 and 25. The list, which will be shortened after the franchises provide their inputs, has all the marquee Indian players who were released from their teams including Rishabh Pant, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul, R Ashwin and Yuzvendra...

-SPORTS

Six Indian Americans win elections of US House of Representatives

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

Six Indian Americans have won the elections to the House of Representatives, increasing their number from five in the current Congress. Indian-American lawyer Suhaz Subramanyam created history by becoming the first from the community to be elected from Virginia and the entire East Coast. Subramanyam defeated Mike Clancy of the Republican Party. He is currently a Virginia State Senator. There is a possibility that the number of Indian Americans in the House of Representatives could increase to seven as Dr Amish Shah was leading by a slender margin against his Republican incumbent in the first Congressional District of Arizona.

DONALD TRUMPS HARRIS, WINS BACK USA PRESIDENCY

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

Former President Donald Trump on Wednesday won the US presidency for a second term in one of the greatest political comebacks in American history, cruising past his Democratic rival Kamala Harris in a bitterly fought election.

The 78-year-old Republican leader cleared the 270 electoral votes needed to clinch the presidency by securing a victory in the key battleground state of Wisconsin.

According to races up to 4 pm (IST), 280 electoral votes had gone to Republican candidate Trump and 224 to Democratic Party's Harris.

Trump addressed his supporters at West Palm Beach in Florida, declar-

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"Every single day, I will be fighting for you and with every breath in my body, I will not rest until we have delivered the strong, safe and prosperous America that our children deserve and that you deserve. This will truly be the golden age of America"

ing victory and promising a "golden age of America."

"This will be the golden age of America. America has given us an unprecedented and powerful mandate," Trump declared with his family by his side amid cheers of his jubilant supporters.

"This is a magnificent victory for the American people. This was a movement like nobody's ever seen before, and frankly, this was, I believe,

the greatest political movement of all time. There's never been anything like this in this country, and maybe beyond," Trump said.

"And now it's going to reach a new level of importance because we're going to help our country heal. We'll help our country...we have a country that needs help, and it needs help very badly," he said.

"We are going to fix our borders. We are going to fix everything about our country. And we made history for a reason tonight, and the reason is going to be just that we overcame obstacles that nobody thought possible, and it is now clear that we've achieved the most incredible political thing."

Trump also promised to usher in a "golden" period in the US.

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WILL BOOST INDO-US TIES: CHANDRABABU NAIDU ON TRUMP WIN

VIJAYAWADA: On Wednesday, several prominent leaders from Andhra Pradesh, including Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Minister for Education, IT, and Electronics Nara Lokesh, and TDP MLA Nandamuri Balakrishna, extended their congratulations to Donald Trump following his victory in the 2024 US Presidential Elections. Taking to the social media platform X, the Chief Minister congratulated Trump on his electoral win and expressed confidence in the continued strengthening

of Indo-US relations under his leadership. "I congratulate @realDonaldTrump on his victory in the US Presidential Elections and wish him success as he prepares to lead his country forward," Chandrababu wrote. He highlighted the strengthening of the Indo-US partnership during Trump's first tenure and expressed optimism that the leadership of both Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will foster even greater cooperation between the two nations.

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Modi calls for boosting Indo-US ties



NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday congratulated "friend" Donald Trump on his "historic" presidential polls victory, and said he looks forward to renewing their collaboration to further strengthen the India-US Comprehensive Global and Strategic Partnership. Former US President Trump was cruising towards winning the White House race in one of the greatest political comebacks in American history. "Heartiest congratulations my friend @realDonaldTrump on your historic election victory."

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BY B KRISHNA PRASAD

Donald Trump's landslide victory in the 2024 US Presidential election makes it clear that a majority of people in American society, irrespective of race, religion, economic status, gender and sexual orientation, voted for him without being swayed by skewed and distorted narratives of most of the United States' mainstream media. In all the swing states, Trump received overwhelming support.

Trump win a slap in the face of media

Till yesterday, everyone thought that it would be a close contest, almost neck and neck or going to the wire. But the verdict that came out on Wednesday is clearly one-sided. This means that the bulk of the US media failed to gauge the mood of the public or worse still (God forbid!) misled the world!

Throughout the campaign period, Trump did not get legitimate coverage, leave alone support or endorsements, from the bulk of the influential segments of the US media, except, of course, his own Fox News. It was rightly described by Elon Musk on his handle in 'X' (formerly Twitter) as "US media news coverage was 84% in favour of Kamal Harris and 89% against Donald Trump". The best example of this biased coverage was



when Donald Trump was shot at during an open-air campaign rally near Butler, Pennsylvania on July 13, 2024. Trump was then the

presumptive nominee of the Republican Party.

Although the attempt was on the life of a former POTUS, most of the US media reported it as if it was of no significance, going by the headlines and column space. The shocking headlines for the shooting included: 'Simple aberration in a rally: Trump shifted away'; 'Donald Trump was taken away from an election rally after some noise'; 'Donald Trump falls in the rally and he was shifted away'. Such inconsequential and misleading headlines, given for an assassination bid on a former President of the United States' speaks volumes about the skewed coverage in the American media.

This also implies that, though the media stooped to that level to support one candidate against another, instead of maintaining absolute neutrality; most of the US citizens relied on their gut feelings, knowledge, and wisdom to cast their vote. They did not rely on information dished out by the mainstream media, but read between the lines of the distorted reportage.

All told, the most important takeaway from the 2024 US Presidential election for enlightened sections of the media is that the media, even in what is considered the most democratic country, cannot influence people's verdict.

QUICK EDIT

Cabinet clears AP Drone Policy

Also approves AP Data Centre Policy, Semiconductor and Display Fab Policy

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has given its approval to the Andhra Pradesh Drone Policy, which is designed to form the State Drone Corporation.

Briefing media persons after the Cabinet meeting on Wednesday, the Minister for Information and Public Relations (I&PR), Kolu Parthasarathi, said that the State is moving fast towards transforming the State into a drone hub and it has been decided to set up a Drone Development Centre at Kurnool to achieve this goal. Stating that this centre at Kurnool will be on plug-and-play system, he said that a training centre for drone pilots and a drone manufacturing unit also will be established there.

Expressing confidence that with this policy, at least 100 drone manufacturing units will come up in the State, the Minister said this will result in the setting up of 20 drone pilot training centres and 50 skill development centres across the State. The State government is expecting Rs 1,000-crore investments in this sector which will provide direct employment to over 15,000 youth and indirect employment to another 25,000, to ultimately generate Rs 3,000-crore revenue per annum, he added.

The Cabinet has also approved the Andhra Pradesh Data Centre Policy aiming at adding an additional 200

Revokes AP Land Grabbing (Prohibition) Act-1982



megawatts of data and attracting investments for setting up the most modern data centres with Artificial Intelligence (AI), Parthasarathi explained. The meeting also unanimously approved the Andhra Pradesh Semiconductor and Display Fab Policy, which will be in force between 2024 and 2029. The Centre will also extend a 50 per cent subsidy in a phased manner while the State government will provide an additional 30 per cent subsidy, he said.

Continued on Page 2

'Landmark Land Grabbing Act will curb illegal occupation'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In an important step to tackle the growing menace of land grabbing across the State, the Cabinet has approved the Andhra Pradesh Land Grabbing Act-2024, said Revenue, Registration, and Stamps Minister Anagani Satya Prasad. The new law aims to put an end to land encroachments, protect public and government lands, and to ensure accountability for those involved in land grabbing activities.

Minister Satya Prasad explained

that as land prices have risen in the State, land grabbing incidents have escalated. He stressed that the new legislation is designed to act as a deterrent to land grabbers and safeguard rightful landowners. "Over the past five years, we have seen an alarming rise in land grabbing. This law is being introduced to put a stop to such illegal activities," he said, adding that the YSR Congress Party enabled land grabbing during the tenure of YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Continued on Page 2

CM assures overhaul of law and order in AP

Pawan Kalyan raises concerns over misinformation campaign, police inaction

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has assured that the law and order situation in Andhra Pradesh will be streamlined within a month through the implementation of strict measures. This commitment came during the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday, which also saw Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan raise serious concerns over the ongoing misinformation campaigns against the State government and coalition leaders, as well as the perceived inaction by law enforcement.

Pawan Kalyan, during the meeting, pointed to the increasing number of inflammatory social media posts targeting the government, coalition leaders, and even their families. Specifically, he criticised the police for failing to take action against the individuals responsible for these abusive posts, some of which he claimed had crossed the line by targeting women in the families of political leaders.

The Deputy Chief Minister expressed frustration over the lack of accountability within the police force, accusing certain officers of being complacent, especially when it came to dealing with posts from leaders associated with the opposition YSRC.

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Rushikonda Palace to open for public viewing



An aerial view of the Rushikonda hill in Visakhapatnam

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Chandrababu's inspection of the palace on November 2 revealed its extravagant design and luxurious fittings, prompting him to call for an open debate. The goal, according to the general public, is to engage the public not only in witnessing the grandeur, but also in deliberating on the potential future use of the complex.

During the YSRC's tenure, the Rushikonda palace — consisting of seven sprawling blocks spread across 61 acres — remained off-limits to the general public. Party officials defended the restricted access, citing the need for high security due to its intended use for visiting VVIPs. Despite a three-member committee's suggestion that the structure could be ideal for a Chief Minister's Office, the government of the time chose to maintain its exclusivity.

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Contract bid period increased to 10 years

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

To support contractors across the State, the Minister for State Roads and Buildings, Investment, and Infrastructure, BC Janardhan Reddy, has announced a key decision to increase the contract bid period for contractors from five years to 10 years. The decision, aimed at providing a fair opportunity to contractors, particularly those in the small and medium sectors, comes in response to concerns raised by the stakeholders.

Janardhan Reddy explained that the extension was necessary due to the challenging circumstances faced by contractors in the last five years. "Over

Decision aimed at providing a fair opportunity to contractors: Minister Janardhan Reddy



the past few years, there has been a significant decline in major development works, especially in the roads and

infrastructure sector," he said. The Minister attributed the slowdown to several factors, including the Covid-19 pandemic, which halted development activities for nearly three years, and the lack of development initiatives during the previous administration's tenure under the YSRCP rule.

"The majority of contractors in the State, regardless of their capability, are facing the prospect of being disqualified from bidding for upcoming projects because of the five-year

blacklisting period," the Minister said. "This move will allow a greater number of contractors to participate in tenders for Roads & Buildings (R&B) projects, ensuring that they have a fair opportunity to contribute to the State's development."

The move is expected to open doors for more contractors to participate in the State's infrastructure projects, particularly in the wake of ambitious plans for road development, maintenance, and repairs across Andhra Pradesh.

Workshop on Polavaram focuses on seepage control, design improvements

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A four-day workshop involving experts and key stakeholders of the Polavaram Irrigation Project commenced on Wednesday at the project site in Polavaram. The workshop aims to address critical issues related to the project's construction and provide solutions for ongoing challenges.

The first day of the workshop began with a site visit that lasted until the afternoon, where participants assessed the progress of the project and identified the next set of tasks for construction. This was followed by a series of discussions addressing key concerns, including the seepage issues in both the Upper and Lower Coffers Dams. The experts reviewed the health assessment test reports, which were recommended during their earlier visit to the site.

Over the remaining days of the workshop, the focus will shift to finding ways to control seepage in the Upper

Participants assess progress of project and identify next set of tasks for construction



CofferDam, as well as refining the diaphragm wall designs. Other major topics of discussion include the schedule for the construction of the main dam, balancing ground improvement works, and the strategy for de-watering during the construction phase.

Narasimha Murthy, Chief Engineer-in-Charge of the Polavaram Project, empha-

sised the importance of the workshop, saying, "We will have detailed discussions on the designs of various components and the methods to be adopted to implement these designs as per the approved plans."

The workshop brings together an extensive team of national and international experts. Notable participants

include four international experts—Charles Richard Donnelly, Sean Douglas Hinchberger, David Bryan Paul, and Gianfranco Di Cicco. Other attendees included officials from the Central Water Commission (CWC), Polavaram Project Authority (PPA), Central Soil and Materials Research Station (CSMRS), Water and Power Consultancy Services, and the Water Resources Department (WRD).

Key representatives at the workshop include Vijai Saran, CWC Chief Engineer (Designs, NW & S), Rakesh Toteja, CWC Director, EMB (NW&S), Dr. R. Chitra, Director of CSMRS, Dr. Manish Gupta, Scientist-E at CSMRS, Atul Jain, CEO of PPA, M. Raghuram, Member Secretary of PPA, and Sai Prasad, Special Chief Secretary, WRD, among others.

CM applauds Minister Subhash for boosting voter registration

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has lauded Minister Vasamshetti Subhash for his efforts in significantly increasing the voter registration percentage. In a statement following the appreciation, Minister Subhash praised his leadership and dedication, highlighting the achievement of raising voter registration to 90 per cent within a short period.

The Chief Minister expressed his admiration, stating, "You have demonstrated the power of young leaders by achieving such a remarkable increase in voter registration. This accomplishment is a testament to your hard work and commitment." He further encouraged Minister Subhash and other young leaders to continue their efforts, assuring them of his full support.

During the discussion, Chandrababu also urged all public representatives to collaborate and raise awareness about the various development and welfare initiatives undertaken by the government. He stressed the importance of working together to ensure that citizens are well-informed about the government's programmes, which are aimed at improving the lives of the people.

Steel Plant privatisation takes a toll on employees' mental health

Research highlights a surge in stress levels and related health issues, especially among executive staff

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A recent study conducted by Andhra University professors MVR Raju and G Sharvani has unveiled the alarming impact of the Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited, the corporate entity Visakhapatnam Steel Plant's privatisation on the mental health of its employees. The research, published in the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology journal, highlights a surge in stress levels and related health issues, especially among executive staff.

"The looming threat of job insecurity has significantly affected the mental well-being of employees, particularly those in leadership positions," said Prof Raju. The study further revealed a stark disparity in mental health concerns across different age groups, with PG graduates earning Rs 11 lakh annually experiencing



higher levels of stress.

"Employees aged 25 to 35, who are tech-savvy and actively seeking opportunities outside the plant due to privatisation, are grappling with heightened anxiety regarding job security and financial stability," added Prof Sharvani. This uncertainty has impacted their ability to manage personal expenses and educational costs for their children.

The Union Cabinet's 2021 decision to fully privatise the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant further exacerbated employee anxiety. The study assessed the impact on Visakhapatnam

Steel Plant employees, considering factors like age, education, income, and job status. Executive staff were found to be disproportionately affected by mental health issues.

"Many executives derive a significant part of their identity from their roles, including salary, seniority, and experience," explained Prof Raju. "The uncertainty surrounding privatisation is amplifying feelings of social isolation and increasing stress levels."

As the plant prepares to send 500 employees on deputation to the NNDC Nagarnar plant, employees remain uncertain about their future. "We hope the government will provide clear communication and support during this challenging time," stated a concerned executive employee. "Without this, we fear for our jobs and our future."

Rushikonda...

Continued from Page 1

"It was disheartening to see such a project hidden from public view under the guise of security," said HRD Minister Nara Lokesh. His recent comments suggest that the current government is keen to redefine the project's role in a more inclusive manner. Deputy Chief Minister K Pawan Kalyan said, "We need to find a constructive way to utilise this space. Leaving it idle is not only wasteful but financially burdensome due to the high maintenance costs."

The decision on whether the public can visit the palace for free or with an entry fee has yet to be finalised. However, officials are optimistic that this move will shed light on past governance practices and encourage constructive dialogue. The CM stated that the revelation of Jagan Mohan Reddy's governance decisions, especially regarding public funds and resources, is critical for maintaining accountability.

New TTD Trust Board Chairman sworn in

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

BR Naidu took oath as the Chairman of the TTD Trust Board in Tirumala temple on Wednesday.

TTD Executive Officer J Syamala Rao administered the oath in front of Sri Venkateswara Swamy at Bangaru Vakili inside the Tirumala temple. Later, he had darshan of the presiding deity along with his family members. At Ranganayakula Mandapam, he was offered Vedaservachanam by the Vedic pundits followed by the distribution of Theertha Prasadam, a portrait, TTD calendars and diaries.

Earlier, following the temple tradition, BR Naidu had darshan of Sri Bhuvaneshwara Swamy and Swamy Pushkarini. Later, he reached Mahadwar of the temple through Vaikuntam Queue Complex. He was welcomed by TTD officials at the



entrance of the temple. Thereafter, TTD Additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chowdary administered the oath along with Endowments Secretary Satyanarayana, Vemireddy Prasanthi Reddy, Janga Krishnamurthy, Mallela Rajasekhara Goud, Jastipurna Sambasiva Rao, MS Raju, Narsi Reddy, Boogunur Mahender Reddy, Anugolu Ranga Sri, Anand Sai, Janaki Devi Tammiseti, RN Darshan, M Shantaram, S Naresw Kumar and Dr Adit

Desai as members of the TTD Trust Board.

After darshan, they had Vedic blessings and Theertha Prasadam at Ranganayakula Mandapam, while the TTD officials presented them with a picture of Srivara, diaries and calendars.

TTD JEO Veerabrahmam, CVSO Sreedhar, Deputy EOs Lokanatham, Bhaskar, Prasanthi and others participated in the programme. Meanwhile, P Ramamurthy will take oath at 2 pm as TTD Trust board member.

'Transparency foundation of Indian Constitution'

Speaker participates in workshop at 67th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Sydney

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Assembly Speaker Chintakayala Ayyanna Patrudu has delivered a speech at the 67th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Sydney, Australia. He extended heartfelt thanks to legislators from around the world and expressed his delight at the opportunity to participate in the workshop on 'Benchmarking, Standards and Guidelines: Strengthening the Institution of Parliament through the Adoption of Best Practices'.

In his address, Speaker Ayyanna Patrudu highlighted that transparency is the foundation of the Indian Constitution. He noted that legislative sessions in India are conducted openly, except in situations related to national security.

"This transparency," he said, "is enshrined both in the Constitution and in legislative rules, allowing citizens to closely follow developmental activities and form their own opinions."

The Speaker mentioned that Andhra Pradesh is fostering civic engagement by live broadcasting Assembly sessions. However, he acknowledged that there is still scope for improvement in ensuring full transparency, especially in committee meetings. He suggested that there is a need for a comprehensive governance approach to make committee proceedings accessible to the public.

Another key point discussed was the limited time legislators have to deliberate on crucial proposals due to their active involvement in addressing



local issues.

He suggested that if each government department fulfils

its responsibilities effectively, legislators would have more time for legislative develop-

ment and amendments. Speaker Ayyanna Patrudu also observed that while legislative procedures like Zero Hour and Question Hour are designed to keep the government accountable, the effectiveness of such measures can be impacted by the limited number of legislative sessions. He proposed a minimum of 70 Assembly working days each year to address the gap.

He concluded by emphasising that the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly is moving towards a paperless system through ICT adoption, setting an example as a technologically forward-thinking State. He reiterated the State's commitment to adopting the best practices from around the world and staying ahead in implementing new technologies.

Cabinet clears...

Continued from Page 1

Pointing out that several semiconductor companies from the United States and Europe have established their units in States like Gujarat, Karnataka and Maharashtra, Parthasarathi expressed confidence that this policy adopted by the Cabinet on Wednesday will certainly take Andhra Pradesh, too, to that stage of development.

The I&PR Minister said that the Cabinet also gave its consent to the proposal to the draft Bill to revoke the AP Land Grabbing (Prohibition) Act-1982 and replace it with the Land Grabbing (Prohibition) Bill-2024. "We are formulating legislation to severely punish those who resort to land grabbing," the Minister explained, and said that besides punishment payment of compensation also will be imposed on such elements.

Modi calls for boosting...

Continued from Page 1

As you build on the successes of your previous term, I look forward to renewing our collaboration to further strengthen the India-US Comprehensive Global and Strategic Partnership," Modi said in a post on X. "Together, let's work for the betterment of our people and to promote global peace, stability and prosperity," he said.

The prime minister also posted pictures of his previous meetings with Trump, who was the US president from 2016-2020.

Last month, Trump had praised Prime Minister Modi as "the nicest human being", saying the Indian leader is "a friend of mine".

Trump had made the comments in response to a question during the Flagrant podcast.

"Modi, India. He's a friend of mine. He's great... Before him, they

were replacing them every year. It's very unstable. He came over. He's a friend of mine. But on the outside, he looks like he's your father. He's the nicest, but he's a total killer," he had said.

Trump had also recalled Modi's visit to Houston in 2019 to attend the 'Howdy Modi' event during his tenure, saying, "It was beautiful. It's like 80,000 people going crazy. We were walking around..."

The Republican candidate had said he shares a "very good relationship" with Modi.

The 'Howdy Modi' event was followed by Trump's 2020 visit to India, where he was welcomed with the 'Namaste Trump' rally, organised by PM Modi in Ahmedabad, with about 100,000 people attending the event at a cricket stadium. Modi and Trump had also met in 2017 in Washington DC.

'Landmark Land Grabbing Act will...

Continued from Page 1

The Minister also referred to the controversial Land Titling Act introduced by the previous government, which, he claimed, allowed land grabbers to legalise occupied properties. According to Satya Prasad, the new Land Grabbing Act will replace the Land Titling Act, which was scrapped as soon as the TDP-led NDA government took charge.

Under the provisions of the new law, anyone found guilty of land grabbing could face imprisonment ranging from 10 to 14 years, along with a hefty fine equivalent to the market value of the illegally occupied land. The law also includes provisions for the confiscation of assets linked to land grabbing activities. Additionally, a special court will be established to handle land grabbing cases. Victims of land encroachments can either approach the court directly or lodge a complaint with a committee headed by the District Collector. This mechanism is expected to expedite the resolution of land disputes and provide a streamlined process for justice.

Minister Satya Prasad stressed that the new law will act as a safeguard for both public and private landowners and offer reassurance to people concerned about land security.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH PANCHAYAT RAJ DEPARTMENT
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTIFICATION
No.10/2024-25, NIT No. 36 to 40 Date: 04-11-2024
Superintending Engineer, Panchayat Raj Circle, Guntur, has been inviting tenders for execution of 5 works with an estimate cost of Rs 2798.00 lakh which has been sanctioned under various grants. Tender Date: From 11-11-2024
E-Market Place contact: www.approcurement.gov.in Sd/- Supervising Engineer, Panchayat Raj Circle, Guntur
R.O. No: 1448/C/L&D/T/11/2024-D2, Dt: 08.11.2024

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Shashthi: Nov 07 12:41 AM to Nov 07 11:47 AM
Saptami: Nov 08 12:35 AM to Nov 08 11:56 PM
Nakshatram: Purva Ashadha: Nov 06 11:00 AM to Nov 07 11:47 AM
Uttara Ashadha: Nov 07 11:47 AM to Nov 08 12:03 PM
Rahukalam: 1:24 PM to 2:49 PM
Yamagandam: 6:20 AM to 7:45 AM
Varjyam: 07:52 PM to 09:29 PM
Gulika: 9:10 AM to 10:35 AM
Amritakalam: 06:49 AM to 08:28 AM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:37 AM to 12:22 PM
VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: Mostly Sunny
Temp: 34°C
Humidity: 63%
Sunrise: 6:07 AM
Sunset: 5:35 PM
Updated: November 6, 2024 5:00 PM

DONALD TRUMPS...

Continued from Page 1

"I want to thank the American people for the extraordinary honour of being elected your 47th president and your 45th president," he said. "I will fight for you, for your family and your future." "Every single day, I will be fighting for you and with every breath in my body, I will not rest until we have delivered the strong, safe and prosperous America that our children deserve and that you deserve. This will truly be the golden age of America," he added. The victory by Trump is largely being seen as a remarkable comeback after he lost the 2020 presidential election to Joe Biden which appeared to be the end of his political career. Trump won the battleground states of Pennsylvania, Georgia and North Carolina and Wisconsin. Counting of votes is still underway in some other battleground states of Arizona, Michigan and Nevada.

As a clear trend in the counting of votes emerged earlier, Harris cancelled an election watch party in her alma mater Howard University. The results are a big disappointment for Harris. She joined the race after President Biden dropped out from his reelection campaign in July, weeks after he came under severe scrutiny following his incoherent performance at a televised debate with Republican nominee Donald Trump.

Generally, there is not much surprise over the candidates picking up victories in states other than the pivotal battleground ones. Overall, a total of 538 electoral college votes are up for grabs.

WILL BOOST INDO-US TIES...

Continued from Page 1

"With the leadership of Prime Minister @narendramodi Ji and President Trump, I am confident our two nations will further strengthen their ties and foster greater cooperation," the CM added.

Meanwhile, Nara Lokesh, who had recently visited the US to attract investments for Andhra Pradesh, also congratulated Trump on his re-election. Lokesh's message on social media also celebrated the victory of JD Vance, a fellow Republican who was elected Vice President. "My hearty congratulations to President-elect @realDonaldTrump for a historic triumph as he takes charge as the 47th President of the United States. This is a very special moment for the people of Andhra Pradesh, especially West-Godavari district, as

@JDVance is elected Vice President," Lokesh posted. He also noted that Usha Vance, the Second Lady designate, has roots in Andhra Pradesh. "We're proud as people of AP origin continue to make their mark in various spheres across the world."

TDP MLA from Hindupur, Nandamuri Balakrishna, also congratulated Trump on his victory, calling it the start of a "new era" in US-India relations. In his statement, Balakrishna stressed the importance of continuing the strong ties between the two countries, particularly in areas of mutual cooperation and development. "This victory marks the beginning of a new era in US-India relations," Balakrishna said, adding that he hoped for continued cooperation for the welfare, development, protection, and security of Telugu people in America.

Govt sanctions Rs.953.71 cr for SRKVM Scheme

Kits to be distributed to those studying in classes 1 to 10

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government has granted administrative approval of Rs. 953.71 crore to procure and distribute student kits for the academic year 2025-26 under the Sarvepalli Radhakrishna Vidyarthi Mitra (SRKVM) scheme. Of this amount, Rs. 175.03 crore will

be covered by the Central government, with the remaining Rs. 778.68 crore provided by the State. The initiative will benefit students from classes 1 to 10 in all government-run schools. The Sarvasiksha Abhiyan recently submitted budgetary estimates for these student kits to the School Education

Department, which, after a thorough review, received administrative approval from Department Secretary Kona Sasidhar, who issued G.O.Ms.No.35. Under the SRKVM scheme, student kits will include notebooks, belts, shoes, bags, pictorial and Oxford dictionaries, text-

books, workbooks, and three pairs of uniform cloth, marking an increase in uniform provision this year. The Government Order (GO) also directed the School Education Department Director and the Samagra Shiksha Director to oversee the procurement and distribution process effectively.

Durga temple earns Rs.2.83 crore in Hundi income

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Sri Durga Mallethra Swamy Devasthanam in Vijayawada has earned Rs.2,83,53,460 as hundi income. After the Dasara Sarannavaratri festivities, the temple authorities opened Hundis and conducted the counting process on Wednesday. The temple earned Rs.2,83,53,460, besides 431 grams of gold and 6,450 kgs of silver ornaments. The temple received Rs.89,633 in income online from devotees. Also, devotees offered the following currencies in the goddess Sri Kanaka Durga: 324 USA Dollars, 25 UAE Dirhams, Rs.30,000 Indonesia currency, 10 Europe, 40 Canadian dollars, 1 Omani Riyals, 400 Bysa, 220 Canada Dollars, 30 British Pounds (England), 25 Australian Dollars, 6 Saudi Riyals, and 144 Qatar Riyals. As per the direction of Durga Temple EO KS Rama Rao, Deputy EO Ratna Raju supervised the hundi counting process.

Minister Savita rushes accident victims to hospital

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Minister for BC, EWS, Handlooms, and Textiles, S Savita, displayed humanity and quick thinking when she came to the aid of four women seriously injured in a road accident on Wednesday evening. The incident occurred near Jayabheri Apartments in Kunchanapalli, Tadepalli, when an RTC bus traveling from Vijayawada to Guntur hit the women as they were crossing the highway leaving them with serious injuries. Minister Savita, who was passing by the scene at the time of the accident, immediately stopped to assist. She offered words of comfort to the injured and assured them that help was on the way. Rather than waiting for an ambulance, Minister Savita took swift action and personally transported the four women to Mangalagiri NRI Hospital in her vehicle. She then continued to the hospital in another vehicle to check on the condition of the injured and to ensure they received prompt medical attention. The doctors at the hospital reported that



one of the women was in critical condition, while the others were being treated for various injuries. Local residents and bystanders praised Savita for her quick response and selfless act of kindness. "She didn't hesitate for a moment and took the injured women to the hospital herself. It was an act of true compassion," said one witness. The road accident caused significant traffic disruption on the Tadepalli highway, with long delays as the scene was cleared. The injured women were identified as Adilakshmi, Narayanamma, Saraswathi, and Narayanamma, according to staff at the Jayabheri Apartments.

Usha Chilukuri, Telugu-origin woman, set to become Second Lady in US

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a remarkable turn of events, Usha Chilukuri, a woman of Telugu origin, is set to become the Second Lady of the United States, as her husband, JD Vance, is projected to be elected as Vice President after the Republican Party's victory in the US presidential election. Vance's anticipated success follows a significant lead in electoral votes, securing the Republican majority, while his political mentor, Donald Trump, is expected to secure a second term as President.



The United States in the 1970s is a reflection of the broader wave of Indian immigrants who sought better educational and professional opportunities.

Today, Usha herself is a well-educated professional residing in the US, where she has built a reputation not only as the wife of JD Vance but also as a prominent figure in her own right. Her heritage has made her a symbol of achievement for many in her home state of Andhra Pradesh, where her success has become a point of pride.

While the US presidential race traditionally garners global attention, this time, Usha's family roots in Andhra Pradesh have brought a fresh wave of excitement and pride among the Telugu-speaking community in India. Usha's rise to prominence parallels the achievements of Kamala Harris, who, with her Indian heritage, made history as the first woman and person of South Asian descent to serve as US Vice President. This time, Usha's connection to the Andhra Pradesh region has sparked discussions across the state, particularly in her ancestral village of Saipuram, located in Vyuru mandal of Krishna district.

Usha Chilukuri's lineage is steeped in academic distinction. She is the granddaughter of the esteemed physicist C Shanthamma, a 96-year-old professor who taught at Andhra University and now resides in Visakhapatnam. Shanthamma, who continues to inspire many with her intellectual contributions, revealed that Usha's paternal grandfather, T Rama Sastry, was a renowned professor at IIT.

Rama Sastry's children, Radhakrishna and Lakshmi, both migrated to the US in the 1970s and have since built successful careers as professors, Radhakrishna in engineering and Lakshmi in molecular biology, both based in San Diego. Usha's roots in Saipuram village, a small settlement in the Krishna district, highlight the journey of a family that has moved across continents to make their mark in the world of academia and beyond. The migration of Usha's relatives to

Oppn has the right to question: Jupudi

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Reiterating that the Opposition has the right to question the misdeeds of the government, YSRCP has warned that the government would be made accountable for its dictatorial attitude by harassing the social media activists. Speaking to media on Wednesday, party spokesperson Jupudi Prabhakar Rao said they have the right to criticise and social media is an avenue to vent the people's views on the governance.

Chinna Appalanaidu is YSRCP MLC candidate

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has announced the name of former MLA Shambangi Venkata Chinna Appalanaidu as the party's MLC candidate for local bodies in Vizianagaram district. The decision was made after a meeting with party leaders from Vizianagaram. YS Jagan Mohan Reddy stated that Appalanaidu was chosen based on unanimous support from party leaders, representing the Velama community as part of YSRCP's inclusive approach. In the previous Vizianagaram MLC elections, the party opted for Botsa Satyanarayana, who hails from Turpu Kapu community. Hence, this time, leaders endorsed Appalanaidu's candidacy who represents the Velama community.



He highlighted Appalanaidu's dedication to public service, with over 40 years in politics and four terms as MLA for Bobbili. He also served as Pro-tem Speaker in 2019, showing his leadership skills. YSRCP believes that his reputation and commitment will help secure the Vizianagaram MLC seat. With a strong base in Vizianagaram, where 592 out of 753 local body representatives are from YSRCP, YS Jagan urged party members to work with renewed energy to secure this MLC seat, strengthening party base in the district.

YSRCP social media activist Venkata Rami Reddy arrested

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Nagara Palem police in Guntur district have arrested Meka Venkata Rami Reddy, a YSRCP social media activist from NTR Colony in Tadepalli, for allegedly posting derogatory comments and morphed images targeting Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. The arrest followed a complaint from Maguluri Koteswara Rao, who reported that Rami Reddy's social media posts contained defamatory content against the Chief Minister, potentially impacting law and order in the State.

According to the police, Rami Reddy has served as the YSRCP Social Media Convener for Guntur District over the past three years and operated five accounts: Guntur Media, YSRCP Guntur Parliamentary, YSRCP Guntur Social Media, YSRCP Mangalagiri, and Meka Venkata Rami Reddy. His social media activities included posts supporting YSRCP and critical content against the TDP.

'Govt vitiating investment opportunities in State'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former MLA Kasu Mahesh Reddy has questioned how new industrialists would come to the State if the atmosphere in the State is not conducive and filled with vindictive politics. Speaking to media here on Wednesday, he said, the Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan's visit to Palnadu had disappointed locals who were expecting some announcements for developing the backward region.

Instead he singled out Saraswathi Cement and Industries casting aspersions while there were other cement industries in the region, which were non-functional despite the government giving land. In the case of the Saraswathi unit, YS Jagan Moan Reddy had purchased the land paying more than the then market price with a vision of developing the backward region and providing jobs to the locals.

Machavaram was a Naxal affected area and leaders have fled the region. But YSR had tackled the issue and YS Jagan Mohan Reddy had bought the land much before he entered politics. But then Congress government had foisted false cases and the subsequent TDP government in the State had cancelled the mining lease licence, which was the cause of the delay in commissioning of the unit. The visit seems to be purely

with political motive only to divert the attention of the people on the growing cases of molestation and attacks on women and minor girls and the deteriorating law and order situation, a fact which was acknowledged by Pawan Kalyan himself. The Kadapa Steel Plant, which has seen light of the day after 15 years, too has become a victim of vindictive politics as the coalition government is coercing the investor to leave.

Workshop for visually challenged persons

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Loyola College in Vijayawada is set to host a free workshop, 'Reading Without Seeing', aimed at empowering visually impaired individuals through assistive technology. Organised by the college's Higher Education for Persons with Special Needs (HEPSN) wing, in collaboration with Enable India, Telugu Vision, and the Visually Challenged Employees Association Andhra Pradesh, the workshop will take place on November 9.



In a poster release event held at the Principal's chamber, College Principal Kishore, Visually Challenged Employees Association president Ravindra Babu, Enable India trainer Venkat, and HEPSN coordinator Dr G Sahaya Baskaran introduced the initiative.

The workshop will guide 80 participants through assistive technologies such as Android's Talkback, Seeing AI, and travel apps like Uber. Devices like talking thermometers and Orbit Readers

will also be demonstrated, providing tools to boost independence. Highlighting the importance of AI in enhancing self-reliance for visually challenged individuals, Ravindra

Babu noted that expert trainers from Enable India and Telugu Vision would deliver hands-on training. Those interested can register by contacting Venkat from Enable India at 96529 75737.

VIMS expands services to north Andhra

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Visakha Institute of Medical Sciences (VIMS) is set to revolutionise healthcare services in North Andhra with the addition of two crucial departments: a City Diagnostic Centre and a Regional Drug Storage Centre. These new facilities, sponsored by the Andhra Pradesh Medical Development Corporation (APMDC) at a cost of Rs. 20 crore, aim to provide significant benefits to the underprivileged communities in the region.



The City Diagnostic Centre at VIMS will offer a wide range of free medical services, including pathology, cancer diagnostics, MRI, CT scans, ECG, 2D Echo, blood tests, and other scanning procedures. This expansion is a boon for the region, as similar services at King George Hospital (KGH) have been

charging nominal fees. With the new centre, all diagnostic services will be available free of cost. Furthermore, plans are underway to establish a radiology centre with funding from both Central and State governments, which will help alleviate the heavy patient load at KGH.

Another significant addition to VIMS is the upcoming Regional Drug Storage Centre. Managed by the State Medical Education Department, this facility will serve as a central hub for storing essential medicines and surgical equipment for the districts of Uttar Andhra. By reducing the time it takes for supplies to arrive from the state capital, the center will ensure quicker access to necessary resources for the region's major hospitals.

"KGH's diagnostic services are often overwhelmed due to high demand," said VIMS Director K Rambabu. "The new City Diagnostic Centre will significantly relieve this pressure by providing a range of medical tests. Additionally, the drug storage centre will ensure a steady supply of medicines to government hospitals in the region. We are preparing to launch these services soon."

This expansion of services at VIMS is expected to make high-quality medical care more accessible to the people of Uttar Andhra, particularly benefiting those from lower-income backgrounds. The new facilities are a testament to the government's commitment to improving healthcare infrastructure and ensuring the well-being of its citizens.

VMRDA's financial woes deepen, future projects hang in balance

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Region Development Authority (VMRDA) is grappling with a severe financial crisis, jeopardising its ability to undertake crucial infrastructure projects and maintain its core functions. A senior VMRDA official, speaking on condition of anonymity, revealed that the authority faces an annual expenditure of around Rs 50 crore for various activities,

including road construction, staff salaries, maintenance, and new projects. However, its annual revenue, primarily from sources like layout approval fees, land use conversion charges, and rents, falls significantly short of this figure. "Despite generating some revenue, our expenses far exceed the funds coming in," the official lamented. The situation has been exacerbated by past government decisions that drained VMRDA's financial resources. During the tenure of

former Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy, VUDA, under its purview, was tasked with selling government land. When the expected revenue from these land sales did not materialise, VUDA was forced to withdraw Rs 1,000 crore from its bank deposits and transfer it to the State government. This move triggered an Income Tax Department investigation, leading to further



financial losses. The subsequent government led by YS Jagan Mohan Reddy also tapped into VMRDA's funds to finance the Jagananna scheme, withdrawing an additional Rs 450 crore from the authority's bank deposits. To address the mounting financial crisis, VMRDA officials have urged the state government to compensate for the losses by providing land of

equivalent value. However, the state government, facing its own fiscal challenges, has expressed limitations in providing immediate relief. Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA&UD) Minister P Narayana, who recently visited Visakhapatnam to assess the situation, acknowledged the crisis and assured VMRDA of the State government's support within its financial constraints. "We are aware of the situation, and though the State is facing

financial constraints, we will do our best to support the VMRDA," he said. VMRDA officials are now concerned that the financial crisis could derail critical infrastructure projects and hinder the overall development of the Visakhapatnam metropolitan region. They are hopeful that the State government will prioritise their financial recovery and allocate necessary funds to ensure the authority's continued operations and future growth.

Extra Neutral Alcohol sample testing being modernized: Kolly

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Minister for Mines, Excise Kollu Ravindra Alcohol Prohibition, Kollu Ravindra said that the government would conduct new tests according to different standards with the aim of providing quality liquor to the consumers.

In a statement here on Wednesday, he said that the Extra Neutral Alcohol (ENA) testing procedure has been completely modernized. The Regional Excise Laboratories used to conduct Extra Neutral Alcohol samples as per six basic standards namely ethyl alcohol, acidity, aldehydes, methanol and water combination.

"On the other hand, in relation to whiskey, brandy, vodka, gin and rum produced in the form of Indian made foreign liquor, only the percentage of alcohol (strength) is calculated in the mixed samples before



bottling. While only one parameter was being tested till now, radical changes have been brought in these procedures as per the orders of the government. They are taking steps to adopt modern technology," the Minister revealed.

Minister Kollu Ravindra explained that gas chromatography has been made available to test the Extra Neutral Alcohol and blend (the sample prepared before bottling) and it is recognized as a 'technically superior approach'.

"On the other hand, in relation to whiskey, brandy, vodka, gin and rum produced in the form of Indian made foreign liquor, only the percentage of alcohol (strength) is calculated in the mixed samples before bottling. While only one parameter was being tested till now, radical changes have been brought in these procedures as per the orders of the government. They are taking steps to adopt modern technology," the Minister revealed

Before bottling all types of liquor are tested by Regional Probationary and Excise Laboratories in Visakhapatnam, Guntur, Chittoor, Kurnool and Kakinada to ensure compliance with Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) guidelines and norms for various types of alcohol and liquor, Kollu Ravindra observed.

The Minister clarified that 13 parameters were set ready for testing extra neutral alcohol (ENA) following modernized tests. As many as nine parameters are determined to test the blend (whisky, brandy, vodka gin). As a result of implementation of new standards, situations like chemical reactions would be prevented, adding that this procedure will benefit the health care of alcohol users.



Collector asks self-help groups to achieve financial empowerment

PNS ■ ONGOLE

District Collector A Thameem Ansariya exhorted self-help group women to strive to achieve financial empowerment.

Collector Thameem Ansariya participated as the chief guest in the district level workshop organized on the management of self-help groups profiling app held in the Grievance Hall of the Collectorate on Wednesday.

Addressing the self-help group women on the occasion, Collector Ansariya asked the members of self-help groups to take advantage of the various schemes, being implemented by the Central and State Governments for women empowerment and strive hard

to achieve financial self-sufficiency.

The members of the Self-help groups should take advantage of the schemes offered by the Central and State Governments to become entrepreneurs and work for women empowerment. The members of self-help groups should work hard to ensure that every girl gets an education and also work for social change.

The Collector revealed that under the 'Bangaru Balyam, programme, the district is focusing on children in the age group of 0 to 18 years, especially girls. She lamented that child marriages are galore in the district and informed that a massive campaign is being launched to prevent child marriages. She appealed to the self-

help groups' women to take part in the campaign.

"The State Government is bringing a new app to strengthen the Self-help groups. In this app, financial and social comprehensive data of the members of the Self-help groups will be uploaded. Every self-help group member, who attended the training programme today on the management of the app should be explained" the Collector observed.

She suggested that efforts should be made to record comprehensive data, stating that this app will be available in the month of January, 2025. MEPMA PD Ravi Kumar, AO Vinil and other officials were among those who attended the meeting.



No uranium mining in Kurnool district: SP clarifies

PNS ■ KURNOOL

Superintendent of police G Bindu Madhav has made it clear that there is no Uranium mining in the district and asked people not to trust misleading news.

In a statement here on Wednesday, the SP said Uranium mining was not being carried out at Kappatralla reserve forest. He asked the people of the Kappatralla area not to worry about the Uranium mining as no such activity was taking

place there.

The SP said that some people were spreading false news that Uranium mining was being carried out at the forest area at Kappatralla division.

The SP said that the Collector of the district has also made it clear that no Uranium extraction was being carried out in the district. The SP warned of taking stringent action against those who were spreading false and misleading information among people regarding Uranium mining in the district.

Abhaya Women Safety Logo unveiled



PNS ■ ELURU

The Abhaya Women Safety Logo was unveiled at a programme held in the police parade grounds on Wednesday for which Eluru Range IG GVG Ashok Kumar, Collector K Vetri Selvi, SP K Pratap Shiva Kishore and Joint Collector Dhatri Reddy attended.

Speaking on the occasion, IG GVG Ashok Kumar said women constitute 30 percent in the police force in the State and congratulated SP Pratap Shiva Kishore for unveiling the Abhaya logo for women's safe-

ty. The IGP emphasized that the grama mahila samrakshana secretaries should conduct patrolling at vulnerable places including colleges and women's hostels to check eve teasing.

The IGP suggested that awareness seminars should be organized to sensitize women not to open messages or links received from strangers. SP Shiva Kishore directed the Mahila Samrakshana secretaries to ensure that no atrocity takes place against women in their jurisdiction.

Collector K Vetri Selvi appreciated the SP for unveiling the

Abhaya app for women's safety. Joint Collector Dhatri Reddy exhorted women to excel in all fields.

SP Pratap Shiv Kishore highlighted that women are excelling in all fields and underlined providing them protection. He asked to dial 95503 51100 for help when they are in trouble. He asked the women police to behave politely with those who come to the police station to lodge a complaint.

Additional SP N Suryachandra Rao, DSP Srevan Kumar and a host of police personnel were among those who attended the event.

TTD, IOCL to set up Rs 12.85 cr biogas plant in Tirumala hills

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) and IOCL would jointly set up a 40-tonne Biogas plant at Tirumala. TTD Additional Executive Officer Ch Venkaiah Chowdary laid the foundation stone for the Rs 12.85 crore plant on Wednesday.

The plant would be set up on 2.22 acres of land with a compost storage unit on 0.17 acres and would generate 40 tonnes of gas daily. Out of the total cost of Rs 12.85 crores, while TTD will invest Rs 5.80 crores, the remaining would be invested by IOCL.



On completion of the project, biogas generated from the mixed wastes every day shall be supplied through a 2.5 km

long pipeline to the Matrushi Tarigonda Vengamamba Anna Prasadam complex (MTVAC).



10th class student commits suicide

PNS ■ NELLORE

A 10th class student committed suicide by hanging himself in the hostel room at Dhanalakshmiapuram in Nellore rural mandal on Wednesday.

Police said that the deceased Duvvuru Pranith (15) was studying 10th class at VBR high school. He was staying in the hostel.

He committed suicide by hanging himself in his hostel room. The deceased belonged to RR Colony at Muthukur. The motive for the boy taking the extreme step was yet to be ascertained, police said.

The police registered a case and shifted the body to the GGH for postmortem.

5 arrested in triple murder case



PNS ■ KAKINADA

The police on Wednesday arrested five accused in connection with the sensational triple murder case which took place at Selapaka village under Gollapalem police station limits a few days ago.

DSP Raghuvver Vishnu told the media here on Wednesday that the five accused of the same family were arrested and remanded to judicial custody. The arrested included Potlakayala Nageswara Rao (56) of China Harijana peta, Selapaka village, Kajuluru Mandal and his family members - wife Baby (49), eldest son Subramanyam (32), second son Dorababu (29) and

the third son Vinod (26). The DSP said that on Diwali day night all the accused armed with sickles and knives raided the house of the deceased family and brutally killed three persons on the spot and inflicted grievous injuries on the other. The DSP informed them that the weapons used by the accused were seized from them. The situation in the village is well under control, the DSP added.

It may be mentioned here that the accused waylaid and murdered siblings Bathula Chinnayya, Bathula Raju and Bathula Ramesh son of the deceased Chinnayya. Rivalry between both families was the motive for the brutal murders.

Kadapa SP Harshavardhan Raju transferred

PNS ■ KADAPA

Superintendent of police V Harshavardhan Raju was transferred on Wednesday and he was asked to report in the Headquarters. Annamayya district SP Vidyasagar was asked to act as in-charge SP of Kadapa.

The Government took serious note of Kadapa SP Harshavardhan Raju's dereliction in taking action against YSRCP social media activist Varra Ravindra Reddy. Moreover, a Circle Inspector of police was suspended on the same issue. The transfer order of SP and the suspension order of CI were issued on Wednesday.

Sources said that though sev-



eral complaints were lodged against YSRCP social media activist Varra Ravindra Reddy, the district police failed to take stringent action against him. Sources said that the police held



Varra Ravindra Reddy on the evening of Tuesday and took him to the Taluka police station.

However, the police later let him free after issuing him a notice under 41A. Interestingly,

the Rajampet police were ready to take into custody after being freed by Taluka police. But the Taluka police station officials sent Ravindra Reddy without informing Rajampet police officials.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu vented his anger over the Kadapa district police indifference in taking action against Ravindra Reddy. The Chief Minister ordered Kurnool Range DIG Koya Praveen to go to Kadapa and conduct an inquiry on the police inaction. The DIG immediately rushed to Kadapa and held a meeting with Kadapa SP Harshavardhan Raju and inquired how Ravindra Reddy was freed by the police. The State

Government also asked the Intelligence chief to submit a report on the matter.

Social media activist Varra Ravindra Reddy has gained notoriety for uploading objectionable and obnoxious posts on social media degrading and humiliating the TDP and JSP leaders. Many complaints have been lodged against him for his obnoxious postings on social media. He posted many abusive and obnoxious postings on social media against Chandrababu Naidu, Lokesh and Pawan Kalyan. As many as 30 criminal cases were registered against Ravindra Reddy in Pulivendula, Kadapa, Mangalagiri, Rajampet and Hyderabad, sources added.

130 quintals of PDS rice seized

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The Vigilance officials seized 130 quintals of rice when being transported in a lorry illegally here on Wednesday.

Vigilance officials here on Wednesday said that on top of that the officials conducted a checking of vehicles.

They found 130 quintals of PDS being transported illegally in a lorry.

The PDS rice was being taken to Kakinada from a rice mill located in Prathipadu.



The seized 130 quintals of PDS rice and the lorry. The officials held the lorry driver.

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy expressed strong displeasure over the state of road repairs, urging officials to act promptly in a review meeting on Wednesday. Addressing the Roads and Buildings (R&B) department officials, he questioned their complacency while citizens suffer due to roads damaged by recent rains.

"People are facing hardships due to potholes, and instead of taking immediate action, why are you delaying with estimates and tenders?" the minister asked, adding, "Words aren't enough-we need results." He highlighted that while officials claim roads are in good condition during reviews, public feedback paints a different picture, and he urged officials to conduct field inspections to understand the ground reality.

The Minister also pointed out the delay in patchwork, questioning why it was taking so

Komatireddy vents ire over officials' laxity in repair roads

long to address potholes. He reminded officials that they are in service for the public, and this awareness should reflect in their work.

Komatireddy criticised R&B officials for lagging behind other states in road repairs. He cited neighbouring states using advanced jet patching and velocity fill potholes, providing better roads to the public. In contrast, he noted, Telangana continues with outdated repair methods. The Minister pointedly questioned State Roads Chief Engineer, Mohan Naik, on why Rs 500 crore allocated for road repairs had not been efficiently utilised, emphasising that with



this budget, roads worth Rs 4-5 thousand crore could be repaired.

The Minister also raised concerns about junior engineers failing to inspect field conditions and questioned why engineers

are more focused on preparing new road proposals instead of addressing existing potholes.

Komatireddy emphasised the importance of weekly reviews, directing Special Chief Secretary Vikas Raj and Special Secretary Dasari Harichandana to keep him informed on the progress.

During a separate review of Mamnoon Airport in Warangal, Venkat Reddy discussed land acquisition progress with Aviation Director Bharat Reddy, Special Chief Secretary Vikas Raj, Special Secretary Dasari Harichandana, and other senior officials. The Minister directed them to expedite land acquisition to complete the airport within two years.

Constable arrested in connection with red sanders smuggling

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

A police constable was arrested in connection with the red sander logs smuggling.

Police here on Wednesday said that Constable Chalakunta Gurappa was arrested on Wednesday for his involvement in a red sander smuggling case.

The Constable has been under suspension for the past two months. The police team during investigation identified the constable had links with the red sander smugglers.

As the Constable's links with the red sander smugglers was established, SP L Subba Rayudu issued orders for the arrest of Constable Gurappa (PC 2958).

ACROSS THE STATES



Haryana to instal CCTV cameras at ration depots

Haryana Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Minister Rajesh Nagar on Wednesday directed the officials to ensure CCTV cameras are installed at all ration depots in the state. This measure is intended to enhance transparency in the operations of depots, said an official statement after the minister held a meeting here. Nagar emphasized that any irregularities in the distribution of rations to the underprivileged will not be tolerated. He said the CCTVs will be monitored at both the district and headquarters levels. Nagar, who was presiding over a meeting with the senior officials from the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department here, also directed the officials to ensure that all depot holders in the state distribute rations as promptly as possible. Action will be taken against those depot holders who deliberately delay distribution, he said.



Kharge dissolves PCC in Cong-ruled Himachal

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday dissolved the entire Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) unit in Himachal Pradesh along with the district and block units with immediate effect. The move is seen as part of the Congress' plan to restructure the Himachal unit of the party. There has been no change in the PCC ever since the Congress formed its government in the hill state. Outgoing president of Himachal Pradesh Congress Pratibha Singh has already become a member of the Congress Working Committee (CWC), the highest decision-making body of the party. Singh, who is wife of former chief minister Virbhadra Singh, was appointed as state Congress chief in 2022. "Congress president has approved the proposal to dissolve the entire state unit of the PCC, district presidents and Block Congress Committees of Himachal Pradesh Congress Committee, with immediate effect," an official communication from AICC general secretary K C Venugopal said.



Air quality remains 'very poor' in Delhi

Despite recording a marginal improvement, the air quality in Delhi continued to remain in the 'very poor' category on Wednesday. The 24-hour average Air Quality Index (AQI) recorded until 4 pm on Wednesday was reported at 352, down from 373 on Tuesday, 381 on Monday, and 382 on Sunday. However, Delhi's air quality still ranked as the third worst in the country, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), which provides hourly AQI updates. Across India, Hanumangarh in Rajasthan recorded the worst air quality at 396, followed by Sri Ganganagar in the same state at 369, CPCB data showed. In Delhi, five monitoring stations - Bawana (403), Jahangirpuri (419), Mundka (417), NSIT Dwarka (440), and Wazirpur (420) - remained in the 'severe' category on Wednesday. On Tuesday, 13 stations recorded severe AQI readings above 400.

'India-US relations will be on a very firm footing'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and US relationship will be on "a very firm footing" with Donald Trump returning to the White House, as the cooperation between the two nations extends from environment to technology, space and defence, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said Wednesday.

As a candidate, Trump had spoken of revamping US foreign policy, focusing on 'America First' principles, and has also talked about imposing tariffs on foreign goods, raising concerns in New Delhi.

Scindia's comments, the first by a senior Indian government functionary after Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Trump on his victory, indicate that India remains optimistic that it will continue to have unhindered trade and economic ties with the world's largest economy and strongest military power. The United States is also India's largest trading partner with the total annual trade crossing USD 190 billion.

"I think that the US-India relationship under the stewardship of both Prime Minister Modi and President-Elect Donald Trump will be on a very, very firm footing forward," Scindia said in a video and text interview with PTI.

Scindia said that the India-US relationship in the last decade under Modi has led to huge amounts of trade, economic thrust as well as strate-



Trump is very tough on China which is good for us: Tharoor

NEW DELHI: Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Wednesday said there will be basic continuation of the India-US relationship with Donald Trump staging a comeback and noted that his being tough on China "is good for us".

Tharoor, the chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs and former minister of state for external affairs, also flagged concerns on immigration and trade with Trump coming to power and noted that the US leader has a "transactional attitude" on many matters. Trump was elected the 47th president of the United States on Wednesday, an extraordinary comeback for a former president. "Frankly there

should not be major surprises because the gentleman has been an open book for some time. He was president for four years, so we have the experience of dealing with him. He has been quite outspoken on various issues," Tharoor said.

"We know for example that he has a transactional attitude on many matters. He essentially will say 'what you will do for me before he decides to do anything for you'. He also has a very tough line on trade, he has criticised India for its tariffs and said that 'if India raises tariffs we will also raise tariffs for India', that is something we should be watching out for because that is what it will effect companies on their viability of their exports to America," the Congress leader added.



gic relationship between the two countries on many global issues.

The election result makes Trump the only US president after Grover Cleveland to serve non-consecutive terms in more than 130 years. Cleveland was both the 22nd and 24th president, serving from 1885 to 1889 and then again from 1893 to 1897.

Noting that India is the world's largest democracy and the US is the world's oldest democracy, Scindia said, "There have been huge parts of intersection between Indo-US relations".

"Those relationships have taken a much more concrete form in the last decade since Prime Minister Modi has forged an independent relationship with the US. It has resulted in not only a huge amount of trade and economic thrust coming to the fore but also led to a strategic relationship on many global issues," he noted.

Trump has during electioneering alleged that India imposes the highest tariffs on foreign products and vowed to introduce a reciprocal tax if elected to power. This, it was construed, may disrupt the ties between the two nations.

Scindia said that besides cooperation in the field of environment, technology, and space to defence, India and the US have signed an agreement to set up a semiconductor manufacturing unit that will supply chips to US defence companies.



INDIA bloc's guarantees are like 'dud bombs': Chouhan

PNS ■ BHOPAL

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday termed the INDIA bloc guarantees for the upcoming Jharkhand assembly elections as "lies" and "dud bombs".

Talking to reporters here, Chouhan claimed the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and Congress had made promises during the previous assembly elections, but none were fulfilled.

"They (JMM and Congress) had said that they will provide five lakh government jobs. Not given. They promised to give Rs 2,000 monthly for chulha-khar (domestic expenses). Not given. They brought a scheme to give Rs 1,000 just two months ahead of elections. They promised unemployment allowance to the jobless. Not given," Chouhan said.

These parties had promised to purchase the paddy crop by giving bonus on the minimum support price (MSP), but it was also not given, the BJP leader said.

"The JMM had made 117 promises (in the last assembly elections), Congress made 344 promises. Not even one of them was fulfilled in the last five

years and they have now come up with new promises. These guarantees are the dud bombs which never burst and the people have no faith in them," he said.

On the other side, the BJP fulfils all its promises, as witnessed in Chhattisgarh and Odisha, Chouhan said. "We are fulfilling all the guarantees in Chhattisgarh and Odisha, where elections were held recently, because our leader and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the guarantee of fulfilling all the guarantees. Nobody has faith in INDI alliance guarantees because they speak lies," he said.

On Tuesday, the INDIA bloc unveiled its manifesto for the upcoming Jharkhand assembly elections, assuring 10 lakh jobs for youth and health insurance coverage of up to Rs 15 lakh for the poor among other promises.

Asked about Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's statement about breaking the reservation cap of 50 per cent after a caste census, Chouhan remarked, "On a foreign land, Rahul Gandhi also said he will end the reservation when time comes.

There is no Chinese infiltration on Himachal border, says Governor

PNS ■ SHIMLA



Himachal Pradesh Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla on Wednesday said there is no infiltration by China on the border of the state.

His remarks came days after Revenue Minister Jagat Singh Negi said that drones have been spotted on the Indo-China border in Kinnaur district.

"China has now understood that they cannot take even a single inch of Indian land," Shukla said.

He was speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an event organised by the Panchayati Raj Department at the Raj Bhawan here.

"China has now understood that they cannot take even a single inch of Indian land," the governor said.

The tribal districts of Kinnaur and

Lahul and Spiti share a 240-km border with China which is traversed by nine high altitude mountain passes.

When asked about the statement of Revenue Minister Negi that drones have been spotted on the Indo-China border in Kinnaur district and that they are likely being used for surveillance and espionage purposes, Shukla said, "I have visited the border areas of the state and met the soldiers. There

is no infiltration by China on the border of Himachal Pradesh."

Negi, the MLA from Kinnaur, had on October 12 said that multiple drones frequently flying near the border area have been spotted in the past week and several people have informed him about such sightings.

He had said that public representatives should visit the border to boost the morale of the soldiers.

'Won't allow Assembly to function'

BJP demands withdrawal of resolution on Art 370

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Opposition BJP on Wednesday said it will not allow the proceedings of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly to go on until a resolution asking the Centre to hold talks with the elected representatives from the region for the restoration of the erstwhile state's special status was withdrawn.

"This is an illegal resolution and until they roll it back, we will continue our protest and not allow the proceedings of the House. They will have to roll it back and then we will debate it," Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Sunil Sharma told reporters here.

He said the resolution was not part of the Assembly's listed business and reflects the mindset of the newly-elected government in the Union Territory.

Sharma said the provisions of Article 370 of the Constitution, which had conferred special rights on the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, was abro-



gated in Parliament, the highest temple of democracy.

"Then some people challenged the Parliament's decision in the Supreme Court. The court ruled that the Parliament's decision was right. So what constitutional right do they have to bring this resolution? We have opposed it strongly and the BJP will continue its protest and not accept it at any cost," he said.

Taking a dig at Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather, Sharma said he behaved as an agent of the rul-

ing National Conference (NC) and "ripped apart" the dignity of the chair.

He also asked the Congress, an alliance partner of the NC, to clear its stand on the resolution.

"Congress leaders should come out and clearly say whether they support it or not. If they support it, the people of the country will question them. If not, then without their six MLAs, the resolution as well as the government is in minority," Sharma said.

MUDA CASE
Lokayukta police questions K'taka CM for 2 hours

PNS ■ MYSURU

The Lokayukta police on Wednesday questioned Chief Minister Siddaramaiah here in the MUDA site allotment case.

Siddaramaiah appeared before the Lokayukta police in response to the summons issued to him and responded to questions put to him by a team led by Lokayukta Superintendent of Police (SP) T J Udesh, official sources said.

"The questioning lasted for about two hours," a Lokayukta official said.

He is said to be the first sitting CM of the state to appear before a probe agency as an accused.

Siddaramaiah arrived at the Lokayukta office here in a private car accompanied by senior



advocate and the CM's legal advisor A S Ponnanna, a Congress MLA. After being questioned, he left Mysuru for Channarayana, to take part in Congress campaign for assembly by-polls there.

The CM, who has been named as accused number 1 in the FIR lodged by the Lokayukta police, is facing allegations of illegalities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife Parvathi B M by the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA).

MENTAL WELL-BEING OF LAWYERS
SC refuses to entertain plea

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to entertain a plea over the mental well-being of advocates and allowed the petitioner to approach the Bar Council of India (BCI) with a representation. A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra observed that the bar associations should take voluntary steps to address the issue. The bench said the issue of mental well-being concerned other professions as well.

"The union of India will say why only for lawyers? What about chartered accountants, engineers, doctors and others," observed the bench. Senior advocate Balbir Singh, appearing for the petitioner, said the Indian Medical Association had a mechanism to address the issue of mental well-being of medical professionals.

'Never intended to hurt' them

Actor Kasturi withdraws reference to Telugus

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Actor Kasturi, who sparked controversy with her comments about Telugu-speaking people settled in Tamil Nadu, announced that she has withdrawn all references to Telugus from her November 3 speech.

She stated that it was never her intention to "hurt or offend my Telugu extended family." "I am sorry for any inadvertent ill feeling. In the interest of all-round amity, I withdraw all references to Telugus in my speech delivered on November 3," Kasturi said, referring to her speech at an agitation of the Hindu Makkal Katchi in support of Brahmins, here.

"I reiterate that my opinions were contextually specific to certain individuals and not directed at the broader Telugu



community. This controversy has unfortunately diverted attention from the more important points I raised in that speech," she wrote in a post on the social media platform 'X'.

Kasturi appealed to the Telugu community in Tamil Nadu to support the Brahmins of the state in their fight for

dignity.

The actor also shared that she had received numerous threats and criticisms over the last two days following her speech, which only strengthened her resolve. "A respected Telugu friend of mine patiently explained the impact of my words on the entire Telugu population of Tamil Nadu and beyond," she explained in her post.

Kasturi added that she has always lived above caste and regional differences and feels fortunate to have a special connection to the Telugu community. "I grew up admiring the glorious days of the Nayak kings, Kattabomman Nayaka, and singing Tyagaraja kritis. I cherish my film career in Telugu cinema. Telugu people have given me a name, fame, love, and a family," she said.

Bus driver dies of heart attack mid-route; conductor steps in to prevent mishap

PNS ■ BENGALURU

A 40-year-old BMTC bus driver died of a heart attack while driving the vehicle in the city on Wednesday, officials said.

The incident occurred at 11 am while the bus was en route from Nelamangala to Dasanapura.

A video of the incident shows that after the driver collapsed from the heart attack, the bus brushed past another Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) bus. The conductor quickly jumped into the driver's seat and took control of the vehicle.

According to BMTC officials, the Kiran Kumar was operating vehicle number KA 57 F-4007 on route 256 M/1, during its final trip from Nelamangala to Dasanapura.

While on duty, Kumar suffered a heart attack and collapsed. In a courageous act, the conductor, Obalesh, immediately brought the vehicle to a safe halt, ensuring the safety of all passengers and preventing any accident.

Subsequently, Obalesh rushed Kumar to the nearby hospital, where doctors, after examination, confirmed that the driver had succumbed to a heart attack.

"It is with great sadness that we announce the untimely demise of Kiran Kumar, a driver from Depot 40, who passed away due to a sudden heart attack on November 6. The Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) expresses its deepest condolences to the family of Kiran Kumar.

Duty-bound to comply with SC order on 'clock' symbol: NCP

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The ruling Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) led by Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Wednesday said it was duty-bound to comply with the Supreme Court order on the "clock" symbol.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant, Dipankar Datta and Ujjal Bhuyan has directed the NCP to publish a disclaimer in newspapers, including Marathi ones, that the issue of allocation of "clock" symbol was pending in court. The disclaimer is to be published within 36 hours of the court order.

The SC gave the directive while hearing the pleas of Sharad Pawar and Ajit Pawar factions of the NCP over the



purported use and misuse of the symbol.

Reacting to the SC ruling, which has come just two weeks ahead of the assembly polls, NCP spokesperson Sanjay Tatkar said in Mumbai his party has been complying with the apex court order from time to time.

"We are duty-bound to comply with the SC order," he asserted.

Clyde Crasto, a spokesperson of the opposition NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar), said appropriate action should be taken against the rival faction if the order was not complied with.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Trump wins hands down

Donald Trump makes a sensational comeback in the closely fought US presidential elections

The US presidential election is one of the most influential political events worldwide, with major implications not only for domestic policy but also for international relations, economic stability, and global security. In 2024, the election has been particularly charged, with significant issues driving the race. Though the counting is still on and the winner is yet to be officially announced but going by the trends, Trump has won and he has already claimed victory. Kamala Harris failed to perform in the swing states leading to her defeat. Trump's victory brings a mix of continuity and radical shifts in several key areas. The 2024 US election has revolved around several pressing issues which were important not only for the Americans but for the people across the world. High inflation rates and concerns over economic recovery post-pandemic have been at the forefront. Voters were focused on job security, rising costs of living, and access to affordable healthcare. Trump's stance included pushing for lower taxes, reducing government spending, and deregulation to stimulate growth, which he claims would address inflation and boost job creation. Another major issue that was widely debated was immigration. The debate over immigration intensified, with Trump advocating for stricter border controls and policies aimed at reducing illegal immigration. His focus includes building stronger physical barriers at the US-Mexico border and increasing enforcement, framing immigration as a matter of national security and economic stability. Besides, Healthcare accessibility and costs remain contentious topics. Trump in his campaign emphasised reducing healthcare costs and revisiting the Affordable Care Act. His approach included providing tax credits and fostering competition among providers, but it also drew criticism for potentially reducing access to affordable care for some citizens. Interestingly Trump has taken a critical stance on climate regulations, advocating for energy independence through expanded oil and natural gas production. His stance contrasts with those calling for robust climate action, as he argues that deregulation is essential for economic stability and growth. However the issue that is of utmost importance for the world at large is the US foreign policy. Foreign policy has emerged as a defining factor, particularly in relation to China and Russia. Trump's "America First" strategy focuses on reducing overseas military commitments and renegotiating trade agreements to protect American interests. This stance resonates with some voters concerned about national sovereignty but worries international allies and those advocating for a more collaborative global approach. However, Trump's victory may be well taken in New Delhi as he has had good chemistry with Prime Minister Modi and has supported India's stand. It would be interesting to see how Trump would steer international choppy waters this time as Ukraine war and Palestine issue would be two major issues he would need to handle immediately after assuming the office.



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PICTALK



A photographer takes a photo of a macaque monkey at the Shrine Galtaji temple, in Jaipur

Why are women overlooked for leadership? It's time for a change!

Deep-rooted biases and outdated stereotypes frequently overshadow women's capabilities, despite evidence that women leaders enhance company performance and culture

In India, women are frequently overlooked for management and senior leadership roles despite their proven capabilities in both personal and professional settings. It's a complex issue often attributed to stereotypes, unconscious biases, and a society that still grapples with entrenched gender roles. Yet, if we pause and consider the day-to-day roles women play, particularly in an Indian household, it becomes evident that they possess an array of skills crucial to any organisation's success. Imagine a typical day for a woman managing her household. She coordinates with household help, ensures that her family's needs are met, oversees children's schedules, and often also supports extended family members. Each of these tasks requires quick thinking, negotiation skills, empathy, and time management. Such daily acts of coordination and problem-solving are, at their core, management skills. The inquiry at hand is, why do we fail to acknowledge these abilities when they are



showcased in a professional setting? Do these skills lose their validity simply because they originate from home-based experience? Many argue that women's ability to blend emotional intelligence with logical decision-making makes them especially adept at leadership roles. Their approach is often holistic—they not only focus on completing tasks but also on nurturing relationships, fostering team morale, and ensuring that the process is as smooth as the outcome. Research indicates that companies with gender-diverse leadership teams tend to achieve better financial performance and foster a more satisfied workforce, contributing to a healthier com-

pany culture. Women bring different perspectives and problem-solving approaches, which complement male colleagues' styles. When women are given a seat at the table, companies gain a more nuanced understanding of their markets and customers. And yet, despite clear advantages, women remain vastly underrepresented in senior roles. The reasons are rooted in a long history of gender bias. Women are often pigeonholed as too "emotional" or too "soft" for the challenges of executive positions, while men are assumed to be inherently more decisive and resilient. Yet, resilience is something that women exemplify every day—balancing multiple roles in a society that demands more of them both at home and at work. Change is on the horizon, with many organisations now actively working to bridge the gender gap in leadership. However, it requires a deeper cultural shift to truly unlock the leadership potential of women. Organisations need to embrace mentorship pro-

grams, implement unbiased hiring practices, and encourage flexible work policies that allow women to balance personal and professional responsibilities. Moreover, celebrating women's leadership styles rather than forcing them to fit into traditionally masculine roles can create more authentic, powerful leaders. The argument is simple: women already demonstrate essential leadership skills every day, whether in boardrooms or in households. It's time to recognise their contributions and give them the opportunities they deserve. For any organisation that values growth, empathy, and resilience, overlooking women isn't just unfair—it's a missed opportunity. Let's champion a future where leadership is based on talent and vision, not on outdated biases. Women are ready for the challenge, and it's time we give them the space to lead. (The writer is a motivator and a freelance journalist; views expressed are personal)



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

Hazardous Delhi air is putting lives at risk

As Delhiites face a significant decline in their health and life expectancy due to pollution, there is an urgent need for finding solutions to tackle this menace



RAJDEEP PATHAK

Delhi's air quality has reached dangerous levels, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) crossing into the "hazardous" zone shortly after Diwali celebrations. This post-Diwali spike is not new, as the city frequently ranks among the most polluted in the world. In early November 2024, AQI levels in Delhi surged to nearly 500 in some regions, a threshold considered extremely harmful. According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), key areas in Delhi like Anand Vihar, Alipur, and RK Puram reported AQI readings above 300. This rise indicates severe pollution levels far above the World Health Organisation's (WHO) recommended safety limits, posing substantial health risks for millions of residents. The AQI measures air quality on a scale that categorises air quality into six levels: "good," "satisfactory," "moderate," "poor," "very poor," and "hazardous." Readings above 300 signal critical pollution, while values over 400 reach the "severe" range. At such levels, exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) becomes dangerous, as these minuscule particles can infiltrate deep into the lungs, affecting respiratory and cardiovascular health. The factors behind this annual pollution crisis are complex, involving both local and regional contributors. Delhi's high vehicular emissions, industrial output, construction dust, and waste burning are persistent contributors. However, during the harvest season, stubble burning in nearby states like Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh intensifies the problem. In October and November, farmers often burn leftover crop residue, producing vast smoke clouds that drift toward Delhi and blend with local pollutants. Vehicular pollution is another significant factor, with over 15 million registered vehicles in Delhi alone. Despite policies mandating regular Pollution Under Control (PUC) checks, enforcement remains a challenge. Emissions from diesel vehicles and two-wheelers, which lack proper pollution controls, further degrade the air quality. Attempts by the



Delhi Government to curb pollution have included measures like the odd-even traffic scheme, a firecracker ban during festivals, and incentives to use public transport. However, these initiatives have only provided limited relief. Residents continue to experience issues like breathlessness, sore throats, headaches and dry cough, compounded by long-term respiratory conditions. This year, the Supreme Court criticised Delhi's inadequate enforcement of pollution control measures during Diwali, particularly the lack of compliance with firecracker bans. The court expressed frustration over the non-implementation of its orders, highlighting the collective failure to safeguard public health. The Delhi government has also activated the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), designed to address pollution levels as they rise. GRAP consists of multiple stages, with Stage III activated only when AQI reaches "severe" levels. At this stage, vehicle movement and construction activities are restricted, and educational institutions may close to protect students' health. While GRAP has achieved some improvements, its impact is often temporary, as citizens and businesses frequently ignore these directives. The severe air pollution in Delhi has profound effects on public health and quality of life.

THIS YEAR, THE SUPREME COURT CRITICISED DELHI'S INADEQUATE ENFORCEMENT OF POLLUTION CONTROL MEASURES DURING DIWALI, PARTICULARLY THE LACK OF COMPLIANCE WITH FIRECRACKER BANS. THE COURT EXPRESSED FRUSTRATION OVER THE NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS ORDERS

During high-AQI periods, particularly vulnerable groups, like children and the elderly, are advised to stay indoors to avoid severe respiratory and cardiovascular issues. Outdoor activities are restricted, with schools occasionally closed to protect students from toxic air exposure. Additionally, dense smog disrupts transportation, leading to frequent flight and train delays due to poor visibility. As residents increasingly rely on air purifiers to maintain indoor air quality, the economic and psychological impacts of Delhi's air pollution crisis only deepen. In response to the deteriorating situation, the Delhi Government announced a series of measures to tackle pollution. These include developing green pathways, walkways, and open spaces along roads to reduce dust and improve urban greenery. Efforts are underway to enhance municipal waste management, including recycling 100 per cent of construction and demolition waste by 2025. To further manage waste, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi is establishing a fifth recycling unit in Tehkhand, capable of processing 1,000 tons daily. Biomining is also planned at major landfill sites, such as Okhla, Ghazipur, and Bhalswa, to excavate and treat years' worth of accumulated waste. Expanding public transportation is another goal, with

plans to grow Delhi's bus fleet to 10,500 by next year, 80 per cent of which will be electric. This is accompanied by a focus on impounding older, polluting vehicles. Such measures aim to address longstanding pollution sources sustainably. Experts emphasise, however, that reducing air pollution in Delhi will require more than Government policies; public engagement and behavioral change are also essential. A multi-pronged approach is crucial to effectively reduce air pollution. Introducing alternative methods to stubble burning, such as subsidising crop-residue management equipment, is one solution. Increasing urban greenery and limiting industrial emissions are further steps toward a healthier environment. On an individual level, Delhi residents can contribute by using public transportation, minimising car usage, and adopting energy-efficient practices at home. Additionally, improved air quality monitoring and early-warning systems could help raise public awareness and enable quicker responses. India's dedication to conservation aligns with the broader goal of creating a healthier environment for future generations. (The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PAPER BALLOTS OVER MACHINES

Madam — In spite of being at the top of technologically advanced countries, the United States of America falls back on ballot paper voting to root out any suspicion of foul play stemming from voting through EVM. Over the last two decades, the United States has gradually moved back from electronic voting machines to paper ballots. Given ballot paper voting, unlike EVM, builds confidence among voters and opposition party members, it undoubtedly strengthens democracy. Another highly commendable step the USA election authorities have taken. They have printed the ballot papers in all major languages of a state, depending on its demography. While a voter in New York can choose a ballot paper in Bengali instead of English, Chinese, Spanish, and Korean, voters in Illinois can opt for a ballot paper printed in Hindi. It also shows how a democratic country should honour the mother tongue of even those voters who have origins in different countries. These actions reflect the attitude of catering and prioritising the interests of the demos (people) above everything. India needs to get back to ballot paper voting without any delay. It must also be remembered that to impose a language ignoring the major languages spoken in a particular area flouts democratic principles. There is no room for the 'one nation, one language' policy in a multilingual democratic country like India. **Sujit De | Sujit De**

DIVISION OVER CASTE

Madam — Since the last Lok Sabha elections, immediately followed by the state Assembly election and ensuing Assembly in Maharashtra and Jharkhand and by-elections in several states, demand for caste census is in top gear in the Opposition camp, while the BJP has been silent on it and is meekly supportive. Though not constitutionally valid and having no authentic official database of individuals' caste identity, the caste politics in the facade of the caste census is

Prioritise student wellbeing



Student suicides are rising worldwide. Every day, we read news about young students taking their own lives due to overwhelming pressure. Many of these students are studying far from their families, aiming to crack high-stakes exams like JEE, NEET, UPSC, and CA. Parents often send them away at a young age, where they're not fully prepared to handle the intense stress. At a time in life meant for playing, making friends, and

exploring their interests, they are pushed to lock themselves in rooms and study for hours. This isolation and pressure can lead to anxiety, and, tragically, some may feel that ending their lives is the only escape.

Parents should avoid imposing career paths on their children and instead allow them to explore and decide what they want for themselves. Governments can also take steps to address this crisis, such as offering personal counselling sessions for students where they can discuss their struggles and implementing mental health awareness programmes in schools and communities. Ultimately, pressuring children to study hard for the sake of a "better future" can end up damaging their wellbeing and happiness. It's far better to let children decide what they want to work towards rather than forcing them into paths that might not be right for them. **Priya Thakur | Ujjain**

retrograde and has its own misgivings. While the political spectrum finds this issue as a crowd-puller and hot for winning formula in elections, it lacks commitment to empowering the backwards impartially and fairly and is selective on favouring region wise dominant castes, which is against the principles of equality and natural justice. Several reports, news, opinions and articles have been published in all the leading newspapers and magazines, as well as on social media. Though the issue of the caste census has not yet come under the judiciary's lens and scrutiny, the issue is a presser in desperation, as if the political class is failing to address the upliftment of the downtrodden, who genuinely deserve governments' welfare schemes with the entire society's helping hand. The demand of the caste census has been perceived as a tool for dividing society on the caste lines, and a counter has emerged, 'Batenge to Katenge', which appears to have caught the nerve and put the caste census demand on defense. **Vinod Johri | Delhi**

TEMPLE ATTACK CONDEMNED

Madam — The Canadian soil is becoming a battleground for the anti-India sentiments these days, as the Khalistani groups and supporters managed to score win after win in their anti-India agendas. The recent terror attack in the Hindu temple based in Canada is getting a global backlash and condemnation. India is particularly annoyed with the Canadian authorities for not paving the way for the miscreants who are spoiling India's image and hurting Indian sentiments as a whole. We Indians in particular wish strong Canadian intervention and demand speedy justice from the side of Canadian government and authorities as soon as possible. **Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur**

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

THE ART OF HEALING

True healing must be comprehensive, nurturing both the physical and spiritual self



RAVI VALLURI

Humans are creatures of their habits. I was addicted to smoking, drinking and consuming 'Gutakha'. It had become almost a quotidian habit and had taken a severe toll on my health. Ailments could be self-inflicted or they could be a professional hazard. In all such cases, the victim suffers physically and emotionally. The healing must be both physical and spiritual. I vividly recall how the Sri Lankan cricket team was a victim of terror and violence in Lahore. They underwent therapeutic care by psychiatrists and underwent several mind management and mental strengthening therapies. Similarly, the Tsunami victims of 2004, those affected by the 26/11 Mumbai terror strikes and the earthquake victims of Gujarat (2001) and Uttarakhand (2013) were revived up by the bouquet of self-healing courses by several spiritual organisations and professional help offered by numerous self-help groups. Such tragedies are traumatic experiences. Cities, towns, villages and settlements are razed to rubble.

I come back to my story, where like an ignoramus I started consuming liquor, ignoring all warnings. Thus, my moral compass fell prey to the predilections of a weak mind. It was at this time that my mother, a trained social worker, and a practitioner of Siddha and Pranik healing, refused to entertain my supercilious and specious arguments and extolled certain dormant virtues in me so that I could upend the pyramid. My mother was afflicted by repeated attacks of Paroxysmal Atrial Tachycardia (PAT). This is a type of arrhythmia (irregular heartbeat) that is accompanied by severe sweating, dizziness, palpitations, angina and acute breath-



lessness. I had seen my mother suffering from this condition on several occasions and being admitted to the ICU. However, after undergoing the ten-day Vipassana spiritual sojourn, she recovered from the debilitation. She simultaneously learnt Siddha and Pranik healing, which augured well for her recovery.

These healing techniques along with proper medication and diet helped her in healing. This is the unbounded power and scientific attribute of the breath. Breathing techniques, meditation proper medication and diet are all healthy habits. These can change the traction of our lives and rejuvenate the body and mind. During 'Operation Parakram' our defence forces, after a protracted stay of more than a year at our borders, returned to their cantonments. The fractious behaviour of our unfriendly neighbour did not make them lose their sanity. It is not only the deaths, but defence personnel get maimed during such operations.

Further, their mental state becomes foggy and they become highly irritable. Mere administration of drugs does not act as a panacea. It is medication plus something more to revive their physical and mental bodies. As our defence and para-military forces work in hostile environments it is heartening to know that yoga, Vipassana and Art of Living Courses are conducted for them so that they can maintain physical and mental equilibrium. A soldier asked Gurudev whether he would become passive if he continued with his sadhana, to which Guruji responded, "Most certainly not." Further, he added that Gita Upadesh itself was revealed by Lord Krishna during the Mahabharata war. Arjuna regained the power of discrimination after witnessing the "Divine Spectacle." Be it an individual or a cricket team, those affected by environmental disturbances or our defence forces, all require continuous physical and mental healing to continue their journey. The mystic Rumi has succinctly said, "The wound is the place where the light enters you."

(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)

CoP 29: A pivotal moment to act on climate crisis



B K SINGH

With the upcoming CoP 29 summit in Azerbaijan, world leaders face mounting pressure to deliver on pledges for climate finance and reduced fossil fuel reliance



Back-to-back hurricanes Helene and Milton originating from the Gulf of Mexico, that have battered the western coast of Florida in the United States have led to political debates and blame games ahead of the US Presidential election. The Republican team targeted the Biden-Harris duo for not doing enough to save lives and restore electricity. More than 200 people have perished in each of the hurricanes and also people have lived without electricity for more than 24 hours. Tropical typhoon Trami over the South China Sea claimed more than 150 lives in the Philippines, and 10 in Vietnam, injured thousands and damaged properties and infrastructures in both countries. Further, the deadliest flood in 50 years in Spain has also claimed more than 250 human lives. As against this, India's disaster management response during cyclones has been praiseworthy.

Whether it was cyclone Nisarga on our West coast in 2020 cyclone Fani in West Bengal in 2019, or the recent Dana in Odisha and West Bengal we have evacuated million of people on each occasion in a record time of 24 to 48 hours and as a result, there has hardly been any loss of life. Recent images from Valencia and other regions of Spain, last month's image from Italy where vehicles were swept away as roads became rivers, and before that similar flooding in France, Poland, Austria, and Czech are reminders of frequent flooding and associated misery to people. The global physics of fossil fuels has destabilised the world. The warmer the atmosphere gets; the more moisture it can hold. This would mean more intense downpours and longer drought.

In Spain, a year's worth of rain was dumped in half a day. While India's track record in dealing with disasters is good, what it should relook is its decisions to sacrifice natural forests for infrastructures, development projects and mining. Consumption of coal, oil and natural gas is swelling worldwide, despite leaders knowing that the surge in emission of greenhouse gases leads to increased warming of the planet and we face more destructive and frequent climatic catastrophes. Forests are the best sink for carbon and sacrificing them for GDP is only



THE TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY FROM DEVELOPED COUNTRIES TO DEVELOPING AND THIRD-WORLD COUNTRIES FOR TRANSITION TO RENEWABLE ENERGY AT SPEED AND SCALE IS ANOTHER KEY TO CLIMATE MITIGATION

to invite more frequent disasters. Earth is already warmed by 1.2 degrees Celsius. The year 2023 has been the warmest in the recorded history of post-industrialisation.

The trend from 2024 till July suggests that we are on course to break the 2023 temperature record. Developed countries are responsible for the warming so far. Scientists are consistently forecasting that beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius warming, part of many countries especially island nations will be submerged in the Sea. United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) has provided a forum for World leaders to meet annually and decide on actions to be taken to keep the warming within 1.5 degrees.

In the annual conference (CoP 25) in Paris in 2015 countries pledged their nationally determined contributions (NDC) to cut the consumption of fossil fuel and to develop renewable energy at speed and scale by 2030. Among G20 countries India is the only one, which is on course to fulfil the pledge. Donald Trump as US President in 2017 refused to toe the line with the Paris Agreement and said that climate is a hoax. No CoP meeting took place till he was in office. Corona pandemic delayed it further even after Biden took over and CoP 26 at Glasgow was held in November 2021.

Here again, leaders reiterated their pledge at Paris and also revived climate finance of \$100 billion that developed countries would contribute towards the cost of climate adaptation in the developing world annually. Another rhetoric was started during CoP 27 at Sharm el Sheikh that developed and some developing countries like China would pay for loss and damage in global south countries. This has again not been complied with. The climate finance of \$100 billion

annually has been agreed upon in Copenhagen CoP in 2009 but has not been complied with so far. African countries and island nations are suffering from extreme climate events like droughts and floods as well as supply chain disruptions owing to geopolitical tensions in West Asia and Ukraine.

Countries like Namibia and Zimbabwe have ordered to cull of thousands of wild elephants (a threatened species) for food. If climate finance and loss and damage funds were made available, there was no need to cull threatened species and endangering the ecological security of the region further. The pledge regarding cutting fossil fuel consumption and transition to renewable energy especially by Western nations and China has been overlooked. There has been unprecedented growth in oil and gas drilling in the US and coal production in China.

Biden and other European leaders are not on course to fulfil their commitment to bring down fossil fuel consumption by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2050. China has pledged net zero by 2060 and India by 2070. Scientists are telling us to keep the warming within 1.5 degrees lest we face the consequences. 2050 and 2060 are far ahead and the question is whether we will be able to stand the disasters till then.

During the nomination as Republican presidential candidate in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Trump in his address said to abandon climate - drill baby drill. He cut jokes in his election rallies saying that if the Sea level rises due to warming, the people will have more buildings facing the Sea. The transfer of technology from developed countries to developing and third-world countries for transition to renewable energy at speed and scale is another key to climate mitigation. India, China and Western nations have gone

ahead substantially, yet they need to step up their efforts.

Renewable energy transition should take place at such a pace that we automatically cut fossil fuel consumption. Countries' demand at Glasgow CoP 26 to 'phase out' fossil fuel did not have total acceptance and was modified to 'phase down' on the insistence of China and the support of India. Further at Dubai CoP 28 another phrase 'transition away from fossil fuel' was agreed upon. Irrespective of the phrases used in the CoP resolutions, leaders are only concerned about the growth and GDP and are not inclined to bring down fossil fuel consumption. CoP 29 is scheduled to commence in Baku, Azerbaijan on November 13th, when world leaders will again take stock of the situation and roll out further actions.

Unfortunately, the host country along with its neighbours Armenia and Georgia is experiencing relatively more warming as compared to the global average. While every nation should put in their efforts to cut emissions, India should have relook at the projects requiring the sacrifice of natural forests, whether for linear infrastructures in the Himalayas, in Western Ghats or deforestation of 130.75 sq km forests for great Nicobar Development projects.

India's track record for growing compensatory afforestation for the trees lost is very poor. Supreme Court recently threatened contempt against agencies for not taking up planting ten times the trees lost in the project. 3700 trees were sacrificed in 2015 for the widening of NH 123 Bharatpur Dholpur road and Apex court's condition to plant up 37000 trees has not been fulfilled so far.

(The writer is retired principal chief conservator of Forests- Head of Forest Force- Karnataka; views are personal)

How AI, big data and personalisation are transforming B-school curricula

From integrating AI into decision-making processes to adding global perspectives, B-schools are merging traditional education with innovative technology

In 2024, technology is influencing every aspect of life, transforming the way we communicate, learn, and run businesses. With advancements in Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, IoT, Big Data, Blockchain, and other digital technologies, we are currently navigating the fourth wave of the industry revolution.



PRABHU AGGARWAL

Businesses primarily prioritise automation and machinery to enhance workforce operations, with 88 per cent of small business owners using automation to increase their workforce efficiency, according to an Unmud study. This shift is driving up the demand for digitally literate and tech-savvy professionals in the industry, inspiring business schools to redesign their academic cur-

ricula. Following are the revolutionary ways technology is reshaping the business industry.

Reshaping Business Education through AI: According to the Future of Jobs Survey, 75 per cent of companies plan to adopt AI technologies in the coming years. This signals a significant shift brought about by technology in business education; the integration of AI and ML

Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning are revolutionising how future business leaders think and make decisions, disrupting the traditional learning models. Emerging technologies such as generative AI provide real-time feedback and high-level interactivity, inspiring B-schools to employ learning approaches to develop AI skills in students, thus, preparing them to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving business landscape. **Integration of Data Analytics into Business Intelligence:** Data has become the primary currency in business intelligence, helping businesses make informed decisions to enhance their growth. Technological trends such as statistical techniques, predictive analysis, machine learning,

and artificial intelligence allow businesses to identify leading patterns and tailor their offerings. As recent studies by Edge Delta point out, more companies will adopt big data and technology, increasing the employment rate by 58 per cent. To help students stay competitive, B-schools actively embed data analysis into their offered curriculum, improving students' data proficiency. Incorporating data analytics into higher education curricula, particularly in PGDM and MBA programmes, will promote innovation and solution-oriented thinking among students. **Experiential Learning and Real-World Applications:** With the rapid inclusion of technology in business, the leading employers are ex-



sively prioritising professionals with industry-ready technical and soft skills. The technologically integrated method of business education complements the traditional teaching pedagogy, preparing students to tackle real-world challenges and provide futuristic solutions. Through industry internships, consultation projects, case studies, and business simulations, B-school students gain hands-on experience and practical skills necessary to

excel in today's competitive job market. While a business degree holds significant importance, practical experience allows students to turn their learnings into actionable solutions.

Personalised Learning Approach: The amalgamation of technology and education has made education personal. The traditional learning model employs a one-size-fits-all approach, ignoring individual learning needs. On the other hand, the modern learning model is tailored to meet individualistic demands, making learning seamless for every student. Through tech-integrated personalised education, students can adapt the learning materials and understand at their own pace. This shift is especially impactful in

business education, where personalised learning helps students stay current with industry trends, bridge the skill gap, and learn based on their proficiency.

Balance Between Human Creativity and Automation: While many view the current era as Industry 4.0, others argue we are swiftly moving towards Industry 5.0. Unlike its predecessor, Industry 5.0 emphasises the well-being of professionals, fostering prosperity beyond jobs and promoting ecologically balanced economic growth. The upcoming industrialisation era envisions close collaboration between humans and AI tools, enhancing operational efficiency and cost-effectiveness. This has led top B-schools to thoughtfully curate the core

management courses, integrating human-centricity, sustainability, and automation.

Bringing Global Perspective to Classrooms: Business challenges today are inherently global in nature, such as sustainability issues, supply chain management, foreign regulations, and cultural diversity. By embedding a global outlook in business education, B-schools equip students with essential tools to effectively address these problems. Facilitating worldly industry collaborations and connecting peers from diverse cultures through virtual modes fosters a deeper business understanding in the students, enabling them to drive positive changes.

(The writer is Dean BMS Hyderabad; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



Gold falls Rs 150 to Rs 81,150 per 10 gm

Gold prices fell by Rs 150 to Rs 81,150 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday in line with weak global trends, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Subdued demand from jewellers and retailers also impacted the prices, the association said. However, silver remained flat at Rs 96,700 per kg. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity declined by Rs 150 to Rs 80,750 per 10 grams against the previous close of Rs 80,900 per 10 grams on Tuesday. In the futures trade, gold contracts for December delivery fell by Rs 333 or 0.42 per cent to Rs 78,174 per 10 grams on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX). During the day, the yellow metal plunged Rs 1,007 or 1.3 per cent to hit a low of Rs 77,500 per 10 grams. "Gold prices experienced intense volatility, fluctuating sharply between Rs 78,500 and Rs 77,500, as the US election outcome bolstered the dollar index. This dollar strength pushed gold to lows of Rs 77,500 and USD 2,700 in dollar terms.



IGX sees three times jump in gas volume trade

The Indian Gas Exchange (IGX) traded 8 million MMBtu of gas volume in October, nearly triple as compared to the previous month, the exchange said in a statement. Decreased administered gas allocations to the city gas sector and high global LNG prices contributed to increased trade volumes, it said. The Gas Index of India (GIXI) for October 2024 was Rs 1,098 (USD 13) per million British thermal unit (MMBtu), lower by 4 per cent from last month. GIXI-South was Rs 986 (USD 11.7) per MMBtu and GIXI-West Rs 1,102 (USD 13.1) per MMBtu. Different spot international gas benchmark prices were recorded in October. A total of 124 trades were executed in October 2024. The most active delivery point for free market gas was Dahej and KG Basin for selling price gas, other trading delivery points were - Hazira, Suvali, Mhaskal, Ankot, and Bokaro," the statement said. Around 72 per cent of the total volume was traded at Dahej delivery.



Reserve Bank amends master direction on KYC

The Reserve Bank on Wednesday made changes to the Know Your Customer (KYC) norms to align them with recent amendments carried out in the Prevention of Money Laundering (Maintenance of Records) Rules and revised certain existing instructions. According to the Amendment to the Master Direction - Know Your Customer (KYC) Direction, 2016, regulated entities (REs) will have to apply the customer due diligence (CDD) procedure at the unique customer identification code (UIC) level. "Thus, if an existing KYC-compliant customer of a RE desires to open another account or avail any other product or service from the same RE, there shall be no need for a fresh CDD exercise as far as identification of the customer is concerned," it said. The amended provisions in the Master Direction have come into force with immediate effect, said the circular issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in this regard. Amendments have also been made regarding CDD Procedure and sharing KYC information with the Central KYC Records Registry (CKYCR).

TRUMP 2.0 MAY BRING NEW CHANCES

India better placed than China in trade with US: Experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Donald Trump's Presidency of the United States will open new opportunities for India though certain sectors, especially pharma and IT, may face the heat if the incoming president decides to impose restrictions on imports and H1B visa regulations, experts said on Wednesday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's friendly relationship with Trump will have a positive bearing on Indo-US relations but India may have to adapt its strategies to maintain cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

Former Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar said: "Trump's presidency can be a new opportunity for India. Trump will impose tariffs and import restrictions on countries that he thinks are not friendly to the US, like China and even some European countries, and this can open markets for Indian exports".

Barclays, in a research report on Wednesday, said trade poli-



cy is where Trump is likely to be "most consequential" for emerging Asia, which includes India and China.

"We estimate Trump's tariff proposals would subtract 2 per cent from China's GDP - and greater pain on the more open economies in the rest of the region," Barclays said. The more domestically oriented economies, including India, Indonesia and the Philippines, would be less vulnerable to higher tariffs, it added.

maybe there would be little difference in the way they are going to deal with India when compared to the way they deal with China".

However, some experts feel that his trade protectionist views could have some negative impact on India's exports and might exert some pressure on the rupee in the short term. Since Trump's protectionist philosophy of economics is well known, the process of globalisation may become more strategic and less fair to emerging economies, including India, NIPFP visiting Professor Pinaki Chakraborty said. The Trump administration is likely to bring renewed trade tensions, with potential adverse effects on India's key export sectors and capital inflows, said Client Associates director (investment, research and advisory) Nitin Aggarwal.

The economic outlook for India will depend on how quickly the US economy adjusts to the policy changes coming after the Trump administration takes charge.

Kumar said Trump will see India as a friendly country, and it can expect larger investments by US firms into India.

"...overall, Trump's victory is a very positive development for the Indian economy," he added. Madras School of Economics Director NR Bhanumurthy said: "I doubt, Trump will impose tariff on Indian products because my own feeling is that the concern for the US is not much of India, but more of China. So,

PSBs asked to meet loan targets for agri-allied sector

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The finance ministry has asked public sector banks (PSBs) to meet loan targets for the agri-allied sector during the current financial year. Department of Financial Services Secretary M Nagaraju in a meeting held on Tuesday reviewed the progress of credit disbursement to agri-allied activities like animal husbandry, dairying and fisheries with Public Sector Banks (PSBs), NABARD and State/ UT Level Bankers' Committee.

Representatives of state governments/UTs, the Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying and the Department of Fisheries also participated in the discussions, the finance ministry said on Wednesday.

The secretary urged PSBs to take all necessary steps to ensure that respective targets are met during the current financial year and stressed

the state governments to facilitate banks in improving the flow of credit to these sectors.

Nagaraju underscored the importance of the allied sector in driving agricultural growth and its employment potential in rural areas and highlighted the trend of regional disparity in credit disbursement in allied activities.

He also directed banks to conduct regional-level assessments/meetings to ensure disbursement of credit-banks (PSBs), NABARD and State/ UT Level Bankers' Committee. it in all areas as all regions have huge potential in allied activities. During the meeting, NABARD was asked to coordinate with state line departments and LDMs in the identification of fish farmers and providing them with the benefit of the KCC scheme.

He underlined the central government's focus on seamless access to affordable credit to allied sectors and urged all stakeholders to take all necessary steps to increase credit flow to the sector.

Trump win ignites crypto frenzy

PNS ■ LONDON

The price of bitcoin hit a new high Wednesday as investors bet that former President Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential election will be a boon for cryptocurrencies.

Bitcoin jumped nearly 8% in early trading, climbing above \$75,000 and smashing its previous record set in March. Other cryptocurrencies also soared, including ether, the world's second most popular cryptocurrency after bitcoin, which rallied 8%.

Trump was previously a crypto sceptic but changed his mind and took a favourable view of cryptocurrencies ahead of the election.

He pledged to make America "the crypto capital of the planet" and create a "strategic reserve" of bitcoin. His campaign accepted donations in cryptocurrency and he courted crypto fans at a bitcoin conference in July. He also launched World Liberty Financial, a new venture with family members to trade cryp-



tocurrencies.

Bitcoin is up 77% this year. "Bitcoin is the one asset that was always going to soar if Trump returned to the White House," said Russ Mould, investment director at AJ Bell, a British online investment platform. After touching its new high, the market is now speculating about "when, not if, it will smash through \$100,000," he said.

"Trump has already declared his love of the digital currency and crypto traders now have a new narrative by which to get even more excited about where the price could go," Mould said.

Crypto industry advocates welcomed Trump's victory, in hopes that he would be able to push through legislative and regulatory changes that they've long lobbied for.

"Tonight the crypto voter has spoken decisively - across party lines and in key races across the country," said Brian Armstrong, CEO of Coinbase, one of the biggest cryptocurrency exchanges.

"Americans disproportionately care about crypto and want clear rules of the road for digital assets. We look forward to working with the new Congress to deliver it."

Will work closely with new US administration: Nasscom

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Nasscom on Wednesday said it looks forward to working closely with the new US administration to strengthen the dynamic technology partnership between the two nations, as the IT industry association described the tech sector as the "key lynchpin" of the US-India bilateral engagement.

The US is the largest market for India's USD 254 billion tech sector where its overall contribution is USD 80 billion to American GDP, Nasscom said in a statement.

Notably, the industry plays a key role in supporting US companies in strengthening the American economy.

Conversely, India is a prime destination for American businesses, with over 1,000 US companies driving innovation and leveraging India's digital infrastructure to create competi-

tive solutions, according to Nasscom.

"Huge congratulations to President Donald J Trump on his election victory," Nasscom said.

The tech sector is the key lynchpin of the US-India bilateral engagement, Nasscom noted.

As the tech industry association in India representing both Indian and the US tech companies, Nasscom said it looks forward to working closely with the new US administration to strengthen the dynamic tech partnership between the two nations.

"As the largest and oldest democracies, we look forward to collaborating on various areas including AI and cybersecurity," it further said.

Nasscom emphasised it remains committed to advancing this collaboration for a democratic, inclusive and sustainable innovation ecosystem.

Earlier on Wednesday, Nasscom Chairperson Sindhu Gangadharan had emphasised that India and the US have maintained strong ties in strategic areas of cooperation and technology over the years and that focus is expected to continue.

Nasscom's views assume significance as there have been concerns in certain quarters about the implications of US Presidential elections for the USD 254 billion Indian outsourcing industry as well as on employment-based immigration.

On how she sees the US election outcome impacting the Indian industry, Gangadharan told PTI: "I think India and the US have always focused on strategic areas of cooperation, when it comes to tech...there's no doubt that the cooperation has been extremely strong over the last years."

'Tremendous opportunity for growth in India, APAC region'

PNS ■ MILAN

US-based Zero Motorcycles sees tremendous growth opportunity in India where it has tied up with Hero MotoCorp for co-developing premium electric bikes, according to CEO Sam Paschel.

The California-based firm, which specialises in electric motorcycles and powertrains, feels that it needs to have a product which could help it penetrate the price-sensitive market.

"We see tremendous opportunities for us in those (APAC and India) markets. But I think you have to have a product that fits the use case and the price points of those markets," Zero Motorcycles CEO Sam Paschel told PTI here in an interaction.

In future, the company will have models that should allow it to start penetrating the Asia



Pacific and India as key markets, he added.

Zero Motorcycles, which is a global leader in electric motorcycles and powertrains, currently sells the majority of its vehicles in the US and Europe.

Terming Hero MotoCorp as a long-term committed development partner, Paschel noted that partners are developing electric vehicles together.

"I think they're a great partner for us to attack the Indian market. For us, Asia, APAC are very large two-wheeler markets. Most of them end up being mid or low-price. So you need vehicles that are within the strike zone of what the price for most consumers are, and we're moving there quickly," he noted.

In September 2022, Hero MotoCorp's board approved an equity investment of up to USD 60 million in Zero. In 2023 the companies announced collaboration for the development of premium electric bikes.

When asked about the company's long-term plans for the Indian market, Paschel said: "That's definitely where it will start (partnership with Hero MotoCorp). That's the first step. They are absolutely the right partner. We are so proud of the partnership."

Sagility India IPO subscribed 52 pc on day 2

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The initial public offer of Sagility India Ltd, a technology-enabled services provider in the healthcare space, received a 52 per cent subscription on day two of bidding on Wednesday.

The initial share sale received bids for 20,09,58,500 shares against 38,70,64,594 shares on offer, as per NSE data.

The portion for retail individual investors (RIIs) fetched 2.24 times subscription while the quota for non-institutional investors got subscribed 24 per cent. The qualified institutional buyers (QIBs) part received a 7 per cent subscription.

Sagility India Ltd on Monday said it has mobilised over Rs 945 crore from anchor investors.

IT stocks sparkle; TCS, Infosys jump over 4 pc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IT stocks appreciated sharply on Wednesday, fuelling a rally in the benchmark indices after it became clear that Donald Trump will take over as the next US president for the second term.

Shares of Tata Consultancy Services surged 4.21 per cent, Infosys jumped 4.02 per cent, Tech Mahindra soared 3.85 per cent, and HCL Technologies climbed 3.71 per cent on the BSE. Also, Persistent Systems zoomed 5.86 per cent, LTIMindtree jumped 4.75 per cent, and Wipro advanced 3.75 per cent.

The BSE IT index surged 4.04 per cent.

Trump on Wednesday won the US presidency for a second term in one of the greatest political comebacks in American history, cruising past his Democratic rival Kamala Harris in a bitterly fought election.

"Given their significant presence in the US market, IT companies may benefit from a rebound in US equities following the Republican sweep in the US elections, which is one of the major factors behind today's

gain in the Indian stock market. "Strong quarterly results from IT companies or optimistic profit expectations could stimulate purchasing interest.

Another reason is that Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) may be reviving their interest in Indian IT stocks, which would raise buying pressure," Praveesh Gour, Senior Technical Analyst, Swastika Investmart Ltd, said.

The BSE Sensex jumped 901.50 points or 1.13 per cent to settle at 80,378.13. During the day, it soared 1,093.1 points or 1.37 per cent to 80,569.73. The NSE Nifty soared 270.75 points or 1.12 per cent to 24,484.05.

"The feel-good factor of Trump's win in the US election had a rub-off effect on world equity markets, including local indices as domestic investors resorted to value buying, especially in IT stocks, which pushed the benchmark Sensex above the 80k mark. The market is hoping that the new regime will not hurt the HIB visa rules, leading to a rally in the recently beaten-down IT stocks," said Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd.

Home-cooked meals become dearer on costlier vegetables

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Both vegetarian and non-vegetarian home-cooked meals became costlier in October due to a pick up in vegetable prices, a report said on Wednesday.

The cost of a vegetarian thali increased by 20 per cent to Rs 33.3 per plate compared to the year-ago period and was also up from Rs 31.3 in September primarily due to the surge in vegetable prices, a division of rating agency Crisil said.

The monthly 'roti rice rate' report said onion prices were

up 46 per cent on year in October, while potato prices were up 51 per cent primarily due to the continuing rains, which led to lower arrivals and also impacted harvests in Maharashtra and Karnataka, it said.

The report also said that the prices of tomatoes more than doubled to Rs 64 per kg from Rs 29 per kg in the year-ago period as rains impacted the arrivals, the report said, adding that prices of this commodity are likely to stabilise from November with supplies from Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal



Pradesh. The report said vegetable prices have a 40 per cent weightage in the overall thali cost and hence fluctuations impacted the overall costs.

Prices of pulses which have an 11 per cent weight in a vegetable meal, were up by 11 per cent during the month due to lower opening stock, lower stock pipeline and festive demand, the report said, adding that a cool down in prices is expected from December on fresh arrivals.

An 11 per cent drop on year in fuel cost helped restrict the jump in meal costs, the report

said. In the case of a non-vegetarian thali, a 9 per cent decline in broiler prices which accounts for half of the thali cost led to a relatively slower uptick in costs, the report said.

A home-made non-veg thali cost Rs 61.6 in October as against Rs 59.3 in the month-ago period and Rs 58.6 in the year-ago period, the report said.

Vegetable prices, which account for 22 per cent of the non-veg thali costs, also influenced the overall non-veg thali cost, it said.

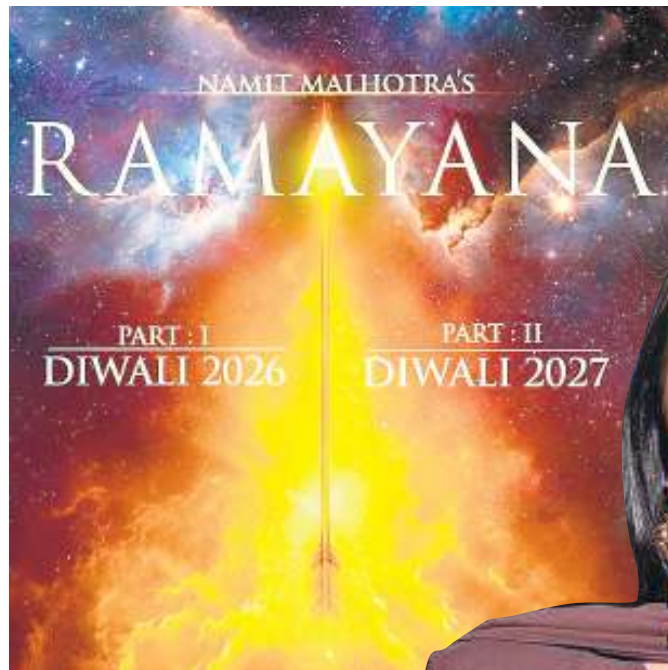


NAMIT MALHOTRA UNVEILS RELEASE DATES FOR EPIC RAMAYANA

Namit Malhotra has announced the release dates for the highly anticipated two-part epic, *Ramayana*, with part one set to hit theaters on Diwali 2026 and part two on Diwali 2027. Directed by acclaimed filmmaker Nitesh Tiwari, this grand adaptation of one of India's most treasured stories promises to elevate Indian cinema to new heights.

Known for his groundbreaking work with Prime Focus Studios, Malhotra has contributed to major Hollywood projects like *Dune*, *Inception* and the recent *Garfield* movie, as well as the upcoming *Angry Birds 3*. His expertise in visual storytelling has made him a prominent figure in both Bollywood and Hollywood.

In an Instagram post, Malhotra shared a captivating poster for *Ramayana* and reflected on his years-long journey to bring this legendary tale to the big screen. "More than a decade ago, I set out to honour a story that has inspired millions over thousands of years," he wrote. "Our team is committed to creating the most faithful, sacred and visually compelling adaptation of our culture's heritage—our *Ramayana*—for audiences everywhere." Get ready to experience a cinematic milestone on Diwali 2026 and 2027 as *Ramayana Part One* and *Part Two* aim to enchant viewers around the world.



Baby John title track teaser to new heights

After the phenomenal success of the title tracks for *Jawan* and *Aarya 3*, Raja Kumari is back with a powerhouse track for Varun Dhawan's upcoming film, *Baby John*. The recently released teaser showcases all the makings of a blockbuster, but it's Raja Kumari's electrifying title track that has truly amplified the excitement. Her signature musical flair adds a compelling edge to the film, promising to make its theatrical experience unforgettable.

Reflecting on the project, Raja Kumari shared her enthusiasm: "Working on *Baby John*'s title track has been an incredibly fulfilling experience. I'm thrilled for audiences to hear it and can't wait for them to experience the full impact on the big screen." The teaser has already sparked a buzz among fans, who are thrilled by Raja Kumari's latest contribution to the film's soundtrack. Known for her chart-topping work on Shah Rukh Khan's *Jawan* and *Sherri Aayi* from *Aarya 3*, she has once again struck a chord with audiences. With *Baby John*'s release on December 25, Raja Kumari looks set to continue her streak of hits. The film, directed by Kalees, stars Varun Dhawan, Keerthy Suresh, Wamiqa Gabbi and Jackie Shroff.



VIKRANT MASSEY DRAWS PARALLELS BETWEEN HIS LATEST ROLES

One of the most anticipated films of the year, *The Sabarmati Report*, has already captivated audiences with its teaser, offering a gripping glimpse into a story centered around one of India's most shocking historical events. This sneak peek has sparked widespread excitement, especially with Vikrant Massey stepping into the role of a determined journalist, known for bringing depth to intense characters.

Following his acclaimed role in *12th Fail*, Vikrant finds himself drawn to another compelling character. He describes the parallels between the two roles, noting how both characters are intellectually driven, ambitious and face personal struggles that resonate with audiences. "Interestingly, my roles in *12th Fail* and *The Sabarmati Report* share unique similarities," Vikrant shares. "Both characters are driven by intellect and ambition yet struggle with everyday challenges. Each has a different shade, which I've worked to portray authentically within the demands of the script." Produced by Balaji Motion Pictures and Vikir Films, *The Sabarmati Report* also features Raashii Khanna and Ridhi Dogra, with direction by Dheeraj Sama. The film is a collaboration between Shobha Kapoor, Ektaa R Kapoor, Amul V Mohan and Anshul Mohan, and it's set for a worldwide release on November 15, 2024, through Zee Studios.

Rasha Thadani poised to shine highly anticipated debut with Azaad

This year's most anticipated debut, Rasha Thadani, is all set to make waves in Bollywood with the upcoming release of *Azaad*. Today, a new poster featuring the fresh talent has been unveiled, capturing her girl-next-door charm that has already struck a chord with fans. In the recently released teaser, Rasha exudes a natural sweetness and beauty, sparking excitement among audiences eagerly awaiting her on-screen presence.

Even before her debut, Rasha has quickly become a popular figure in the industry, frequently spotted around the city and capturing the media's attention. Now, she's set to enchant audiences alongside fellow newcomer Aaman Devgan, delivering a performance that promises both charisma and depth.

Set in pre-independence India, *Azaad* offers an emotionally rich narrative about a family's profound bond with their horse. The film, directed by Abhishek Kapoor, is a collaborative production by Ronnie Screwvala and Pragma Kapoor and features an impressive cast, including Ajay Devgn, Diana Penty and Mohit Malik. Scheduled for a January 2025 release, *Azaad* is already generating significant buzz among fans and critics, who eagerly await the debut of Bollywood's newest star, Rasha Thadani.



Tulsi Kumar and Ikka light up music scene with new dance-pop anthem

In an electrifying new release, Tulsi Kumar teams up with rapper Ikka for *Dil Kuch Hor Ni Mangda*, a dance-pop track that promises to take over playlists and party scenes alike.

Released by T-Series, this song combines high-energy beats, memorable lyrics, and striking visuals, making it a must-listen for fans of contemporary Indian pop music. With its stylised visuals and irresistible choreography, *Dil Kuch Hor Ni Mangda* stands out as a visual and musical spectacle. Tulsi Kumar shines in her foray into the dance-pop genre, delivering catchy vocals that perfectly complement Ikka's dynamic rap verses. Known for his musical experimentation, Ikka brings his signature flair to the song, adding depth to its upbeat rhythm. The creative forces behind this track include composer Sanjoy, lyricists Rooh Sandhu and Ikka, director Post Guru, and choreographers Piyush-Shazia, whose unique approach brings the song's energy to life. Every element, from the vibrant choreography to the sleek production, is crafted to keep listeners engaged and ready to hit the dance floor. Now available on T-Series' YouTube channel, *Dil Kuch Hor Ni Mangda* is more than just a song—it's an experience set to define the dance-pop scene.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



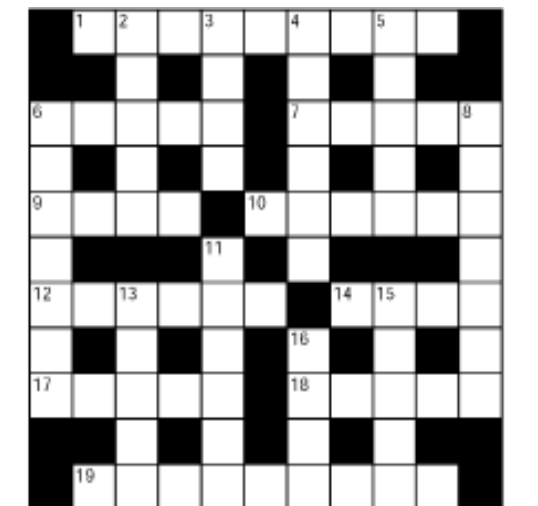
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

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Yesterday's solution

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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

- A shawl keeps these warm
- Move along on hands and knees
- Parts of a skeleton
- Young males
- Picture theatre
- Reply
- A hard black fuel
- Vote into power
- Thoughts
- Exactly the same

DOWN

- Very weighty
- Crotesque
- Capital city of the Republic of Ireland
- Wash the soap out of
- A green vegetable
- Housing for horses
- Defeated
- How quickly something moves or happens
- A sung stage drama
- Short skirt



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MAHASANGAM OF BIHARI CULTURE IN HYDERABAD

With the gentle rustle of leaves, the soft whisper of prayers and warm rays of the sun dancing across the city, a city that embraces diversity and culture, Hyderabad gears up to celebrate the majestic festival of Chhath Puja, an evidence of Bihar's rich cultural heritage. With Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh's biggest festivals of the year beginning with *Nahay Khay*, *Lohanda* and *Kharna* coming to an end, today we celebrate the main day of this auspicious festival in Hyderabad.

Keeping alive this tradition of the Bihar community, the Bihar Association in Hyderabad plays a pivotal role in recreating the authentic spirit of Chhath Puja in the city, fostering unity, cultural exchange and social bonding. With elaborate rituals, traditional folk songs and cultural events, the association recreates the magical ambience of Bihar's Chhath ghats in Hyderabad. From sunrise to sunset, devotees gather to offer arghya to the Sun God, seeking blessings, prosperity and well-being. As the association celebrates Chhath Puja, it reaffirms its loyalty to preserving Bihar's cultural legacy, fostering a sense of belonging among the Bihar community and enriching Hyderabad's cultural landscape. Established in 1986, the Bihar Association in Hyderabad has been a beacon of community and cultural preservation for the Bihar diaspora. Manvendra Mishra, trustee member and advisor, shares the association's journey.

"The association was started in 1986 when people of the Bihar diaspora were increasing in the city. Our seniors thought, 'Why don't we all come together and make a group of our own?' Mishra recounts. 'Even then, we used to do many social activities and cultural gatherings. However, in the late '90s, the association got dull since the body was not so dynamic. In 2008, it was again reactivated and since then has been rigorously working.'

Looking back at their history, they had their first meeting held at the park of Osmania University. Back then, there were not many Biharis residing here in Hyderabad! It would be a moment of happiness to even know there's anyone, Bihar. Today, the association comprises people from different corners of Bihar, Jharkhand and UP, representing

Behind the vibrant celebrations of Chhath Puja in Hyderabad lies a story of community and culture. Uncovering the spirit of the Bihar community in Hyderabad, *The Pioneer* engages in an exclusive conversation with Manvendra Mishra, Trustee Member and Advisor of Bihar Association, exploring the association's contributions to cultural preservation



all sub-castes of Biharis.

"We organise many gatherings like *Holi Milan*, *Diwali Milan*, so people from the city can get to know each other. We also facilitate marriages within the community, making it easier for people to find suitable matches," explains Mishra. The association's efforts have transformed the community's social landscape.

Coming to the Chhath Puja, the association begins to start preparations for it, about a month back itself. Adding to Manvendra, Binod Kumar Gupta, the treasurer of the association, says, "In all

these places, we've been getting the cleaning and lighting done. We also have got area-wise incharges for the Chhath Puja ghats, where the association takes care of including Tank Bund, Uppal, Nagole, Fox Sagar, Suraram, Miyapur, Patancheru,

Hafeezpet, Durgah, Ameenpur, Mallapur, Hasmathpet, Gangaram, RC Puram, Katedhan, Shamirpet, Nallagandla, Shamshabad, Balanagar, Necklace Road and many other baby ponds in and around the city." Amongst these ghats, the

ghat in Tank Bund, opposite Marriott, has the biggest crowd gathering. Every Ghat has all the facilities for the devotees. "Last year, we invited Kesari Lal and Pawan Singh for the Chhath Puja celebrations. During the chhath puja, one can just not recognise if it's Bihar or Hyderabad," adds Gupta.

Then Mishra continues, "One of our achievements is making a Bihar Bhavan here in Hyderabad. We have approached the government many times; however, we haven't

got it from them yet. The previous government had helped many people get land and had given funds too. Somehow, the Bihar association has still not gotten their chance yet. So what we did was, we ourselves brought a *200 gaj ki zameen* and made a 2-story building and named it Bihar Bhavan. We organise our meetings and all of it there itself." The association has played a significant role in transforming the perception of Biharis in Hyderabad. "Earlier, Biharis were associated with low-level jobs," Mishra notes. "Now, many are IAS and IPS officers and business leaders. Arvind Kumar, the former Chief Secretary of Telangana, for example, hails from Bihar." The community's growth is evident in the increasing recognition of Chhath Puja and Bihar culture. "People today eat *Litti chokha* with so much delight."

The office bearers of the association have made sure to yearly approach the government and make representations about the pooja and its importance for the community. This year, the 1st *Argh* will take place on November 7, 2024, from 3:00 pm to 1:00 pm and the 2nd *Argh* will be held on November 8, 2024, from 4:00 am to 8:00 am at Bathukamma Ghat at Tank Bund opposite Marriott hotel, which will mark the presence of Tourism Minister G. Kishan Reddy, Sanath Nagar MLA Talasani Srinivas Yadav, along with other dignitaries of the association.

As the Bihar Association continues to thrive, its impact extends beyond the community. Manvendra Mishra aptly puts it, "It's heartening to see people from other backgrounds participate in our celebrations." This sentiment encapsulates the association's vision of unity, inclusivity and cultural preservation. As the Bihar Association moves forward, its legacy as a beacon of community spirit and cultural pride will continue to inspire generations to come. Through its various initiatives, including Chhath Puja celebrations, social gatherings and charitable activities, the association has created a sense of belonging among Biharis in Hyderabad. This year, just like previous ones, the city is all set to welcome Bihar superstars and their presence is making the celebrations even livelier.

As the association continues to grow and thrive, its impact extends beyond the community. By promoting cultural exchange and understanding, the Bihar Association has helped break down barriers and build bridges between different communities in Hyderabad. Its efforts have not only preserved Bihar heritage but also contributed to the city's rich culture.

Designing iconic spaces, from Supreme Court to Rashtrapati Bhavan

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We interviewed Dr Masooma Rizvi today because it appears that she has worked on projects that will last a lifetime, including the Supreme Court of India, Rashtrapati Bhavan, the New Parliament Building, 27 airports and a representation of Lord Ram's Return at the Maharishi Valmiki International Airport in Ayodhya Dham. Her work narrates India's fascinating cultural story with passion and elegance, combining tradition and modern flair in a wonderful way! Her creative ventures provide a visual and emotional experience that speaks to the heart and uplifts the spirit by skillfully fusing art and culture.

She explains: "Respect for India's heritage and a desire to create environments that connect our rich cultural history to the present are the driving forces behind my work. Every project should make people feel proud and like they belong, especially those located in iconic locations like Rashtrapati Bhavan or the New Parliament Building. For this reason, I adhere to ideas like *Vocal for Local*, which guarantees the participation of underrepresented local artists and contributes authentic stories to the venues I curate." She sees art as a bridge that depicts the journey of our nation while bringing disparate cultural components together. The selection of each selected item and space design is based on its capacity to provoke discussion between the past and the present in addition to its aesthetic value. These works of art serve as storytellers in certain respects, emulating the values of fortitude, solidarity, and inventiveness that form the cornerstones of our national identity.

She says: "Maintaining this balance calls on both competence and accountability. My strategy is to see modernity and heritage as complementary forces that may strengthen each other. Every choice is motivated by the desire to respect tradition while embracing modernity, creating spaces that seem timeless and current. I emphasise the enduring qualities of old art forms, techniques and narratives when working on projects that protect India's cultural legacy. But I also make use of contemporary architectural features and materials to guarantee longevity, usefulness and relevance in the modern world." Traditional art is exhibited in ways that align with contemporary space aesthetics, demonstrating the careful integration. For instance, advanced technologies and environmentally friendly materials could be used as the base, with aspects of our history included into the surface design. In addition to maintaining cultural significance, this integration keeps the areas creative and appealing to audiences today.

She adds: "When designing public areas like courts and airports, a whole new design criterion is used. The airports act as entry points to Indian culture and welcome millions of visitors. This calls for striking a delicate balance between unique cultural identity and inclusivity. Accessibility, or areas that are both aesthetically pleasing and physically hospitable to people from all backgrounds, is, in my opinion, the first step in creating an inclusive atmosphere. To ensure that everyone feels included and at ease, this is achieved through clever layout planning, user-friendly design and universal symbols that speak to a variety of demographics." She used a palette of symbols, motifs and colours derived from our background to highlight aspects that encapsulate India's diverse culture and give these locations a distinctively Indian feel. She gave each location a unique character while connecting it to the larger Indian story by fusing regional art forms, such as paintings and sculptures, that represent the local culture. She worked with regional artists and craftspeople to produce décor that honours India's

From airports to iconic government buildings, Dr Masooma Rizvi's work seamlessly integrates art, culture and tradition, reflecting India's diverse story. In this exclusive conversation, she reveals the driving forces behind her creative genius, her approach to inclusive design and her vision for India's evolving national aesthetic



rich cultural heritage while also preserving traditional techniques and environmentally conscious ideals. She clarifies, "By using this method, locations that embody Indian culture are created, allowing tourists to take in a little bit of our nation's depth and artistic diversity. Every visitor will have a memorable and significant experience at these locations, which reflect India's variety and togetherness by fusing historical customs with modern ideas. When creating courts, the subject must be clear and the artwork must be understated. An excellent illustration is the Supreme Court of India Annex, which features themed artwork inspired by the Court's several seminal rulings." Storytelling is essential to her design for the Maharishi Valmiki International Airport in order to create an atmosphere that deeply connects with guests. She tackled this by using visual art that embodies the spirit of the area to weave together historical and cultural narratives. More than merely a stunning feature, the mural of Lord Ram's Return connects visitors to the spiritual and cultural significance of Ayodhya by acting as a narrative thread. After all, the sole reason people travel to



Ayodhya is to worship Lord Ram in his home and it truly does feel like a farewell! "For instance, the 180-foot-long Madhubani panel honours traditional inventiveness while adding a contemporary twist to historical themes and improving the airport's atmosphere. Overseeing a multicultural team of more than 100 painters from several states enabled the blending of regional styles and methods, which enhanced the story. In addition to encouraging inclusivity, this collaborative endeavour honours the diverse fabric of Indian culture and makes sure that each visitor may relate to the tales being told. Consequently, the airport becomes a gateway to understanding and valuing Ayodhya's cultural heritage," she shares.

She believes that women contribute a distinct viewpoint to Indian architectural and cultural spaces, one characterised by empathy, teamwork and a deeper understanding of community needs as a woman in a traditionally male-dominated field. Her own experiences were characterised by doubts about her abilities, particularly when she first began working in architecture. She had to confidently assert her position when others asked her, "Where is the main architect?" She now has a better understanding of the value of representation and the contributions of diverse voices to the design process as a result of the journey.

A more harmonious fusion of traditional and modern architectural styles will characterise India's national aesthetic as it develops and grows. The three main ideas that will characterise this advancement are inclusivity, cultural authenticity and sustainability. Using ancient methods and local resources as inspiration, architects will give priority to eco-friendly materials and energy-efficient designs that blend in with the environment. Future designs will continue to emphasise cultural authenticity by reinterpreting ancient forms and themes from a modern perspective. She concludes, "Lastly, I want my work to make an impression that people will remember and encourage others to share their experiences and opinions. By doing this, I want to rekindle interest in India's cultural treasures, allowing people to engage with our common history more deeply and appreciating the narrative and connecting potential of art and architecture. During Sushma ji's stint as Minister of External Affairs, I incorporated Indian textile themes into architectural spaces in our embassies overseas, giving them a distinctively Indian feel! I encourage women who are just starting out to have huge aspirations and to pursue them with unshakable determination. Even though your path may not always be straightforward, keep in mind that every significant achievement starts with a vision and the will to follow it. Since you may achieve your goals if you are passionate and determined, embrace setbacks as learning opportunities."



Heal, grow, thrive

The state of your mental health affects how you think, feel, and ultimately act. It's crucial that we express these emotions with others daily. We are talking about mental health these days, but are we really taking care of ourselves? It is very difficult to accept the fact that I have some stress or anxiety that needs immediate attention.

Mental health is critically important because it affects every aspect of a person's life, including their emotional well-being, relationships, physical health, and daily functioning. Good mental health helps people cope with stress, make sound decisions, and handle life's challenges with resilience. It supports a sense of inner peace, balance, and emotional stability. This state leads to poor physical health; poor mental health can contribute to physical issues like weakened immune systems, high blood pressure, and chronic diseases. Conversely, good mental health can lead to healthier habits and better overall well-being. It impacts positive relationships. It enhances communication, empathy, and emotional connection, which are essential for family, friendships, and work-related interactions. Prevention of disorders: Prioritizing mental health can prevent the development or worsening of mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, or substance abuse. Early intervention and support are key to avoiding long-term consequences.

How can you take care of your mental health?

Asking care of mental health involves adopting techniques and habits that promote emotional well-being and resilience. Here are some effective techniques:

Mindfulness and meditation: Everyone is talking about mindfulness and meditation.

Meditation is a technique that teaches you to control your thought process, and it takes time. It is important to practice in the right way with the right mindset. This involves staying present and fully engaging in the current moment. It can reduce stress and improve emotional regulation.

2. Physical activity: Any physical activity that you like the most and that is easy to adapt to is important. It releases endorphins, the body's natural stress relievers. Whether it's walking, running, yoga, or sports, moving your body can improve mood and reduce anxiety. Outdoor activities are better than indoors.

3. Sleep cycle: A regular sleep routine: Prioritise 7-9 hours of sleep per night and maintain a consistent sleep routine to maintain emotional balance. Avoid screens before bed and inculcate the habit of reading.

4. Healthy diet: Nutrient-rich foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and omega-3 fatty acids, support brain health. Reducing caffeine and sugar can also help prevent mood swings. Drink enough water throughout the day to maintain optimal brain function.

5. Emotional awakening: talk about your feelings, sharing your emotions with friends and family wherever you are comfortable. It is important to take professional help.

8. Relaxation techniques: Deep breathing: Slow, deep breathing helps calm the nervous system, reducing stress and anxiety.

9. Positive thinking and gratitude: By incorporating these techniques into daily life, we can build resilience and maintain better mental health. Your brain is listening to you!

Stokes missing as Draca, Netravalkar line up in long list for IPL mega auction

PTI ■ MUMBAI

England Test skipper Ben Stokes is missing from the list of 1,574 players while his former teammate James Anderson, Italian quick Thomas Draca and India-born USA medium pacer Saurabh Netravalkar have all registered for the IPL mega auction to be held in Jeddah on November 24 and 25.

The list, which will be shortened after the franchises provide their inputs, has all the marquee Indian players who were released from their teams including Rishabh Pant, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul, R Ashwin and Yuzvendra Chahal. Each of these five cricketers have listed themselves at a base price of Rs 2 crore.

India quick Mohammed Shami, who has been sidelined from action due to various injuries since last November, was also released by his former team Gujarat Titans and has listed himself at Rs 2 crore and so has left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh. Among the other Indian players in the list with the maximum base price of Rs 2 crore are Khaleel Ahmed, Mukesh Kumar, Venkatesh Iyer, Avesh Khan, Deepak Chahar, Ishan Kishan and Bhuvneshwar Kumar. This list also includes Shardul Thakur, Mohammed Siraj, Devdutt Padikkal, Krunal Pandya, Harshal



Patel, Prasidh Krishna, T Natarajan, Washington Sundar and Umesh Yadav. India batters Sarfaraz Khan and Prithvi Shaw, who were unsold in the last IPL auction, have registered themselves at the base price of Rs 75 lakh each. Stokes, who had decided to give the last season of the IPL a miss in order to manage his workload and



focus on his fitness, has opted out for the 2025 edition as well. The 42-year-Anderson, who retired from Test cricket earlier this year, has registered for the IPL for the first time. The veteran pacer last played a T20 10 years ago in 2014. He has never competed in a global franchise T20 league. He has a base price of Rs 1.25 crore. Netravalkar, who rose to



prominence due to his stupendous performance for USA during the T20 World Cup earlier this year, has also lined up to go under the hammer in Jeddah. The software engineer in Oracle has a base price of Rs 30 lakh. Ace Australian off-spinner Nathan Lyon, who has gone unsold in previous auctions, has also entered the fray with the a base price of Rs 2 crore. Australian pacer Mitchell Starc, who was the most expensive buy in the IPL's last auction at a price of Rs 24.50 crore, is back in the pool for this year's auction with a base price of Rs 2 crore. England quick Jofra Archer, who last played in the 2023 edition, is also listed for the same base price. **DRACA BECOMES FIRST**

of the tournament with 11 wickets to his name from six innings at an average of 10.63 and an economy of 6.88.

The Italian pacer was recently signed by the Mumbai Indians owned MI Emirates for the upcoming season of the ILT20 in the UAE.

Draca has registered himself at abse prices of Rs 30 lakh in the all-rounders' category.

With up to six players permitted to be retained ahead of the mega auction, IPL teams can build a squad of 25 players each and there will be 204 slots available after 46 players were retained by 10 teams put together.

Each team will have a total purse of Rs 120 crore as Punjab Kings have Rs 110.5 crore available with them, followed by Royal Challengers Bengaluru with Rs 83 crore, Delhi Capitals with Rs 73 crore and Gujarat Titans with Rs 69 crore. Lucknow Super Giants will also have Rs 69 crore in their purse while five-time winners Chennai Super Kings will have Rs 55 crore. Last year's winners Kolkata Knight Riders will come into the auction with Rs 51 crore in purse while five-time champions Mumbai Indians will have Rs 45 crore, last year's runner-up Sunrisers Hyderabad will have Rs 45 crore and Rajasthan Royals will have Rs 41 crore.



Rishabh Pant climbs five places to sixth spot in ICC Test batters' rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

India wicket-keeper batter Rishabh Pant on Wednesday rose five places to sixth spot in the latest ICC Men's Test Batter Rankings following his strong performance in a losing cause in third Test against New Zealand in Mumbai last week. Pant made the jump on the back of a pair of half-centuries during the Mumbai Test, in a sure sign that he is back to his best following a serious car accident, with the attacking left-hander now just one spot behind the career-best fifth position he first occupied in July 2022. The other Indian batter in top Test batter's chart is young left-handed opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, who dropped a rung to fourth. New Zealand secured a narrow 25-run victory in Mumbai to claim an unprecedented 3-0 series whitewash over India, with Pant and visiting side's Daryl Mitchell the main beneficiaries in the top 10 Test batter rankings. Mitchell jumped eight places to seventh after scoring 82 in the first innings against India in the Mumbai Test, joining teammate Kane Williamson (second) as the only New

Zealanders inside the top-10. England right-hander Joe Root maintained his healthy lead at the top of the list, with Williamson, Harry Brook (third), Jaiswal (fourth) and Steve Smith (fifth) his closest challengers. India's Shubman Gill (up four places to 16th) also makes some ground on the list for Test batters following a score of 90 in the first innings against New Zealand in Mumbai, while player-of-the-series Will Young of New Zealand gained 29 spots to move to 44th overall. Ravindra Jadeja climbed two spots to sixth in the Test bowler rankings after taking 10 wickets against New Zealand, placing him just behind top-ranked Kagiso Rabada. Australia's Josh Hazlewood occupied the second spot ahead of India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah and Pat Cummins and Ravichandran Ashwin. Teammate Washington Sundar jumped seven places to move to 46th on the same list for Test bowlers, while spin duo Ajaz Patel (up 12 places to 22nd) and Ish Sodhi (up three rungs to equal 70th) are among the gainers from New Zealand.

Ponting predicts 3-1 win for Australia, says India will struggle without Shami

PTI ■ DUBAI

Former captain Ricky Ponting reckons Australia will clinch the Border-Gavaskar Trophy 3-1 against India as the visitors will find taking 20 wickets in a Test as their "biggest challenge" in absence of Mohammed Shami.

Australia are keen on ending their barren run in the Border-Gavaskar with India winning each of the four series since 2014-15, including the historic triumphs Down Under in 2018-19 and 2020-21.

However, with India suffering the historic low of a first-ever whitewash by 0-3 against New Zealand, Ponting believes the hosts have a better chance of defeating India now. "Probably more so now (than before)," Ponting said about Australia's chances on the ICC Review Show.

Shami has been out of action since last November due to injuries and Ponting believes his absence leaves a big hole in India's bowling attack comprising Jasprit Bumrah,

Mohammed Siraj, Akash Deep, Prasidh Krishna and the uncapped Harshit Rana.

Ponting said, "Shami just leaves such a big hole in that bowling group. Back then (in August), there was still some conjecture whether Shami would be fit or not."

"I think taking 20 wickets in a Test match for India is going to be the biggest challenge. I think they'll bat well enough out here with the current group of batters that they've got."

While hailing Australia as a more settled unit, Ponting backed India to not be absolute pushovers when the series gets underway from November 22 in Perth. "I think India will win a Test match somewhere through the five Test matches," Ponting predicted. "But I still think now, Australia probably look a bit more settled, a bit more experienced and we know that they're a very hard team to beat at home. So I'll stick with the 3-1."

Ponting feels one among the veteran Steve Smith or the flamboyant Rishabh Pant would be the highest



run-scorers over the five Tests. "Leading run scorer, I'm going to go Steve Smith or Rishabh Pant," Ponting said.

"I think Smith, the fact that he's moved back down from opener to No 4 probably makes it feel like he's got more of a point to prove... that maybe

he shouldn't have gone up to open in the first place," he added.

"...And that No 4 is his spot and where he should have probably been the whole time and where he probably finished his career now."

Pant, who was the highest run-getter during the series against New Zealand, appeared to be the only in-form batter heading to Australia.

"With Rishabh back in the side and probably coming into bat in the middle order when the ball's probably lost a bit of its shine and a bit of its hardness, and the form that he's in, I'll go for him as one of the leading run scorers as well," Ponting said.

The legendary Ponting picked Josh Hazlewood to get more wickets for Australia than his fast bowling partners Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins.

"I think Hazlewood out of the Australian quicks, is right at the moment, is probably at the peak of his powers more than the other guys. So I'll go with him for the leading wicket-taker," Ponting said.

India A players protested against replaced ball, claims report

PTI ■ SYDNEY

India A players expressed dissatisfaction over the condition of the replaced ball provided during the final day of play against Australia A in their first unofficial Test, a report has claimed, even as David Warner and Ed Cowan have called on Cricket Australia to clarify what transpired.

On the final day of the four-day game in Mackay last week, the umpires provided the Indian players with a different ball to use at the start of play. The Indian players, particularly Ishan Kishan, were unhappy with the decision with the wicketkeeper-batter terming it "a very stupid decision."

A report in Sydney Morning Herald said on Wednesday that the argument from the Indian camp was not about the replacement of the ball but the condition of the ball which was provided as replacement.

"What has not been known before now is that the angst on show from India A, led by Ishan, was not because the ball had been changed," the media house said on its website.

"Instead, it was because the touring team were unhappy with the condition of the replacement ball: a drama, but not a major one, since umpires and players have debated the condition of replacement balls for decades," it added.

The report described umpire Shawn Craig for his "straight shooting" who was heard on the stump mic telling the Indian players, "You scratch it, we change the ball. There will be no more discussion, let's play. This is not a discussion, you will be playing with that ball."

Kishan retorted: "So we are going to play with this ball... that's a very stupid decision." Former Australia openers David Warner and Ed Cowan have now called on Cricket



Australia to clarify what transpired on the final day of the match at Mackay. Warner, whose years-long leadership ban has just been lifted by CA, has said the board "squashed" the matter "as quickly as possible" since the Indian senior men's team is bound for a five-Test series Down Under.

"I think the ultimate decision with CA, isn't it? I think they've obviously squashed it as fast as they could, given that India's coming out here this summer," Warner said. "But if the umpires deem that something happened, then I'm sure there'll be a follow-up and I think the umpires or the match referee should be

standing here answering those questions."

"I think the match referee should be coming out and addressing his own staff, who are the umpires, and if they're sticking by the umpire's decisions, then you've got to stand up for that. I think that's obviously a statement that CA probably need to release," he added.

Warner's former opening partner and current board director of the New South Wales Cowan said the reaction perhaps could've been different if the opposition team wasn't India. "Part of me just thinks if this wasn't India there would be a totally different reaction," Cowan said.

"If that was Pakistan A, or England A, or choose any A team, or even a Shield game, the reaction would be totally different and for me, that's the wrong approach." "To be fair, it's just us joining dots. These dots may be

totally incorrect, we'd have imperfect information, but I do think it's on Cricket Australia to clarify this, and it's also probably imperative on the BCCI to clarify this," he said.

Hours after the game finished, CA issued a statement saying, "The ball used in the fourth innings of the match was changed due to deterioration. Both teams' captain and manager were informed of the decision prior to the start of play. No further action is being taken."

Under the laws of cricket, a five-run penalty is imposed if the umpires change the ball after determining it has been unfairly altered.

However, CA's playing conditions include an additional clause that allows the umpires to change the ball without applying penalty runs if it's unclear how the ball became damaged. Australia A were not awarded five penalty runs.

PTI ■ SYDNEY

David Warner was on Wednesday appointed as captain of Big Bash League side Sydney Thunder, returning to a leadership role in Australian cricket six years after being implicated in the ball-tampering scandal on a tour of South Africa. His lifetime leadership ban was overturned by Cricket Australia last month, paving the way for his captaincy before he bids goodbye to competitive cricket. He had retired from the international game after Australia's elimination from the T20 World Cup in the Caribbean in June. Warner, 38, served a one-year ban from the game for his involvement in the Newlands ball-tampering scandal in 2018 alongside Steve Smith and Cameron Bancroft. Returning to the leadership role is a huge moment for Warner and the significance was not lost on the swashbuckling opener who regaled everyone with his explosive batting. "Captaining the Thunder again this season means a lot to me. I

Warner named Sydney Thunder Captain, returns to leadership role in Australian cricket after six years

was part of the team from the start, and now to be back with that 'C' next to my name feels fantastic. I'm looking forward to leading from the front and sharing my experience with the young talent coming through," Warner said in a statement on Wednesday. The former Australian player replaced all-rounded Chris Green as Thunder's captain ahead of this year's campaign. The 2016 BBL winners finished at the bottom of the table in the last edition. Despite CA imposed leadership ban, Warner has captained teams in franchise cricket around the world including Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) and Delhi Capitals (DC) in the IPL. Warner, who has played 110 T20 Internationals for Australia, has previously led Thunder back in 2011.



Warner became eligible for captaincy after Cricket Australia's Code of Conduct Commission revoked the ban citing it has "achieved its purpose", after the combative cricketer had appeared before the independent panel comprising three members. **BACKS MCSWEENEY TO OPEN AGAINST INDIA:** Warner backed Australia A captain Nathan McSweeney to open for Australia in the upcoming five-match Test series against India. Since Warner's retirement from the format in January, Australia have struggled to find a player good enough to fill the huge void at the top of the order. But Warner has picked McSweeney as the man for the challenge against India, terming him a "complete player". "I think McSweeney's got the runs

on the board, but I think you look further down the track as well. I know you've got Marnus (Labuschagne) and Travis Head (Labuschagne) and Travis Head (Labuschagne) and Mitch Marsh, but he's got leadership potential as well," Warner was quoted as saying by Fox Sports. "He looks a complete player, and I think he's a good fit with Uzzie (Usman Khawaja) at the top of the order. We're in a good position, and we've got a lot of talent, which is exciting," he added. McSweeney has so far scored 2213 runs in 33 first-class matches at an average of 38.82. The upcoming Border-Gavaskar Trophy will start on November 22 in Perth, followed by matches in Adelaide (December 6-10), Brisbane (December 14-18), Melbourne (December 26-30), and Sydney (January 3-7).

CITADEL: HONEY BUNNY SAMANTHA IS ACTION QUEEN IN THIS SPY-VERSE

Plot

Citadel spans two timelines, 1992 and 2000, tracing the story of Honey (Samantha), a small-town woman who moves to Bombay with dreams of becoming an actress. The road to stardom, however, is fraught with obstacles and she finds herself struggling to gain a foothold in the industry. Her boyfriend (Varun Dhawan), who works as a stuntman, harbours a hidden life as an undercover agent. When Honey uncovers his secret, she is drawn to his world, hoping it might bring her the sense of purpose that the film industry hasn't. But when one of their missions goes wrong, the repercussions follow them into the future, forcing them to confront past choices and the stakes they now face.

Performances

Samantha delivers a compelling performance as Honey, portraying her journey from hopeful actress to determined field agent with intensity and grit. Her character's transformation is relatable, infused with resilience that makes her stand out. Varun Dhawan, as her partner leading a double life, balances the demands of action scenes with moments that reveal his character's vulnerability, bringing depth to his role. The supporting cast, comprising seasoned actors, enhances the authenticity of the spy agency environment, especially in high-tension scenes involving covert operations and loyalty tests.

Highlights

Directors Raj & DK infuse *Citadel* with their distinctive style, blending Indian elements into the global spy narrative. Known for their previous successes like *The Family Man* and *Farzi*, they collaborate here with



REVIEW

Directed by: Raj & DK

Produced by: Anthony Russo, Joe Russo, Raj and DK, Mike Larocca, etc.

Cinematographer: Johan Heurlin Aidt

Cast: Samantha, Varun Dhawan, Kay Kay Menon, Simran Bagga, Kashvi Majumdar

Streaming on: Amazon Prime Video

Rating: 3/5

the Russo Brothers (*Avengers: Endgame*), creating a storyline that's rooted in India while appealing internationally. The series examines themes of ambition, secrecy and betrayal, all while exploring the high-stakes world of espionage. Samantha and Varun's chemistry adds a compelling layer, especially in moments charged with trust and tension. The overarching plot keeps viewers engaged with its intrigue and suspense, centering on two opposing agencies vying for groundbreaking technology. A young actor playing a significant role impresses with a standout performance.

Drawbacks

The storyline occasionally leans on familiar spy tropes, making certain plot points feel predictable. The character arcs, though strong, could benefit from a deeper exploration of their psychological struggles, particularly Honey's journey as she transitions from aspiring actress to agent.

Technical aspects

The cinematography effectively immerses viewers in the look and feel of the 1990s and 2000s, capturing both the lively atmosphere of Bombay and the intensity of undercover operations. Action scenes are skillfully choreographed with a focus on realism, though the series sometimes suffers from pacing issues, with certain transitions between timelines feeling abrupt.

Verdict

Citadel offers an engaging spy thriller with standout performances by Samantha, Kay Kay Menon and Varun Dhawan. While some aspects of the storyline feel familiar, the series is visually strong and fast-paced, promising plenty of suspense for fans of espionage.

CHETAN ON TREND OF THRILLERS

Why *Dhoom Dhaam* stands out?



SURESH KAVIRAYANI
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Chetan is known for films like *First Rank Raju*, *Beach Road*, *Rojulu Maaray* and *Gulf*. Now, the actor is playing lead in the film *Dhoom Dhaam* which is hitting the screens on November 8. "The movie is complete entertainment and this is going to be a typical commercial film for me," said Chetan.

The actor said writer Gopi Mohan is his father's friend. "Gopi Mohan is known for his kind of comedy films, so we approached him for a story and he provided this *Dhoom Dhaam*," said Chetan. Sai Kishore is the director, while Hebah Patel is the heroine. "Earlier I tried different concept based films and now for the first time I am trying an entertainment film with this," said the actor. He hopes that this film gives the commercial a break!

The actor is talking about the film and why it got delayed. "At Covid time we discussed this subject and the film has a lot of combination actors, so it takes time," said Chetan. He added that he is a fan of Gopi Mohan's scripts because he creates stories that can be enjoyed by the whole family. Talking about this film, he said that it is based on the concept of a father doing anything for his son and vice versa. "This film has all the commercial ingredients into the narrative. I played a rich, spoiled kid," he said about his character. He added that the first half of the film is going smoothly and in the second half the hilarious scenes start. "Especially after Vennela Kishore entered, the film is a laugh-riot," he said. "There are many popular artists in this film and I made sure to prepare thoroughly to match their performance levels. But the real challenge is to match Vennela Kishore's timing. He is not only quick in his dialogues but also adds his inputs to them spontaneously. So, to match his timing is very difficult, but I manage. He also helped me in between the shots and how to prepare for the scenes," said Chetan about the film. The entire second half is filled with the chaos of a wedding.

Chetan said that though Vennela Kishore is the highlight, he too is along with him in all the scenes. "The story progresses with both of us," he said. "We would discuss the scenes before filming them. It was a pleasure to work with Hebah Patel as well. She is hyper active and full of energy, but when it comes to the camera, she is completely normal and gets into her character," said about his co-star.

The actor felt happy that the film is releasing through a big distribution house like Mythri Movie Makers. "This movie was made on a grand scale and in terms of quality; the film stands out in every aspect. We have secured good theaters for our release. There was some concern about small dubbed films getting more screens, but we've managed to get the theaters we need," he said. The actor said that he wanted to do differently from film to film. "The present trend in the industry is thrillers and if I had gone that route, it would have been just another thriller, but in a different way. My main aim is that the audience should enjoy it after watching my film. Once this movie is released, I'll start planning my next project," said Chetan.

SATHYARAJ TO PLAY LEAD IN TRIBANADHARI BARBARIK

A new wave of young and innovative filmmakers has been captivating audiences with fresh and original subjects. The demand for content-driven films is growing, surpassing that for traditional commercial fare. Vijayal Reddy Adidhala is making his debut as producer and his first film titled *Tribanadhari Barbarik*. Mohan Srivatsa is the director.

The makers on Wednesday unveiled the film's title as *Tribanadhari Barbarik* and the motion poster hints at a blend of mythology and contemporary elements. They talk about the legend of Barbarik, the son of Ghatotkacha, to a young listener, emphasising his status as 'a great warrior unnoticed by the world.' Though the makers reveal mythological touch in the past, the film's story is a contemporary one.

The motion poster itself is a testament to the director's grand vision and the producer's dedication to high-quality storytelling. For the first time in Indian cinema history, a Band named Infusion Band provides the music! Sathyaraj is playing an important and main role in this film, according to a source. The film's shooting is completed and at present it is in post-production.



NARA ROHITH UNLEASHES INTENSITY IN BHAIRAVAM FIRST LOOK



Director Vijay Kanakamedala of *Naaandi* fame is now coming up with a multi-starrer titled *Bhairavam*. Bellamkonda Sai Sreenivas, Manchu Manoj and Nara Rohith are playing the lead actors in this film, while KK Radhamohan is the producer. The makers released the ferocious look of Nara Rohith from this film. Earlier they released the first look of Bellamkonda Sai Sreenivas and now they released the look of Nara Rohith. Set against a temple backdrop filled with fire, Rohith appears in an action-packed avatar. According to the makers, this particular action part will be one of the major highlights in the movie.

Bhairavam is billed as a neo-noir action drama, featuring a stellar ensemble cast. Manoj Manchu's first look will be revealed soon; the combination of Bellamkonda Sai Sreenivas, Manoj Manchu and Nara Rohith sharing screen space has already sparked excitement among fans and film enthusiasts. According to a source, the film is a remake of the Tamil hit film *Garudan* that was released this year. RS Durai Senthilkumar is the director of this Tamil film, while Soori, Unni Mukundan and Sasikumar played the lead actors.

Virinchi Varma returns with a bang, 8 years later

After directing films like *Uyyala Jampala* and *Majnu*, director Virinchi Varma is coming up with a biopic, *Jitender Reddy*. The film is releasing this Friday and the director said though it is a biopic, the film is a typical commercial thriller film. "Actually I unexpectedly directed it, but at the same time I felt that it was my luck to direct the film," said director Virinchi Varma.

Cinematographer Gnanasekar actually asked Virinchi Varma to do the direction. "When Gnanasekar told me about this film, I had a doubt in the beginning whether I could be directing it or not, but once I met people who are close to Jitender Reddy, I then decided to work on this film," said Virinchi. He added that he put a condition on Gnanasekar. "If Gnanasekar worked as a cinematographer, then I want to direct this film and he agreed to do it; that's how this film was shaped up," said Varma.

Jitender Reddy was a powerful leader in Jagityal of Telangana and died at a young age. His brother Ravinder Reddy now wanted to make a film on his brother and tell the present generation about him. "Initially, we thought of a small budget film, but once we heard the story, the incidents and the character span became huge. In Jitender Reddy's life there were attacks and



killings, so there are a lot of commercial elements in it. So we decided to make it in a big way," said the director, who is directing after an 8-year gap.

The director praises the producer Ravinder Reddy for encouraging him, though the budget is going high. "This is once for a kind of film, so we decided to make it as a tribute to Jitender Reddy," said the director. Virinchi said after actor Rakesh Varre joined him on board, who played the title role, he gets more boost. "He is simply superb and brought life to the character with his performance," said Virinchi.

In the trailer, it shows the differences between RSS, ABVP and Naxals. "Jitender Reddy has some ideology, which he started from his childhood. He joined ABVP and RSS when he was student and at the same time fought against the Naxals. Those incidents shown in this film are more focused on the person's life," said Virinchi.

The director said his career may be at risk if it is a complete political film. "There are few political agendas in the film, but we projected the heroic journey of Jitender Reddy. We are trying to give a message through the film. I made this film like a typical commercial thriller and if you like the film first, then you definitely like Jitender Reddy," said Virinchi Varma.