

We won't show leniency to anyone running belt shops. Violators would face heavy fines and possible licence cancellation. Our main aim is to safeguard public health. This liquor policy focuses on community welfare, and we are determined to eliminate belt shops.

- Kollu Ravindra, Minister for Mines, Geology, and Excise

P3

I'm not anti-business, but anti-monopoly:
Rahul



EAM JAISHANKAR
 MEETS CEOS, BUSINESS LEADERS IN AUSTRALIA



I was never comfortable as an actor:
VENKY ATLURI



DON'T MISS...
Ration card holders eligible for free...

Joint Collector Rahul Meena clarified that all LPG connection holders with white ration cards are eligible for three free gas cylinders under the Deepam-2 scheme. During a review meeting with civil supplies officials at the Collectorate on Thursday, he stated that eligible gas beneficiaries should link their active LPG connection to their rice card and complete the eKYC process before booking a free cylinder. He assured that those who have not received a confirmation message need not worry. Beneficiaries can call the helpline at 1967...

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Effects of premature birth...

Effects of being born prematurely could continue to affect an individual till they turn nearly 30 years of age - 17 per cent could be less likely to enroll in a university, while 16 per cent less likely to graduate with a university degree, a new study has found. Premature or preterm birth is said to affect about 10 per cent of all births globally and could account for one in every five child deaths. The researchers, including those at The Hospital for Sick Children, Canada, looked at all live births in the country between...

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ED searches 19 premises of...

The Enforcement Directorate Thursday conducted searches against some of the 'main vendors' operating on platforms of e-commerce giants Amazon and Flipkart as part of a foreign investment 'violation' investigation, official sources said. A total of 19 premises of these 'preferred' vendors located in Delhi, Gurugram and Panchkula (Haryana), Hyderabad (Telangana) and Bengaluru (Karnataka) were covered as part of the action, the sources said. It is learnt that the ED inspected documents...

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India's second line stars look for a...

As India firmly embraces a transition phase, a clutch of second line stars such as Sanju Samson and Abhishek Sharma will be hoping for a breakthrough series in the four T20Is against South Africa, starting with the first contest here Friday. It is imperative for them to shed the tag of sidekicks and establish themselves as the first-choice players in this format. The recent home T20I series against Bangladesh was a precursor. Samson received a chance to open consistently against...

-SPORTS

Adityanath, Acharya get SC relief

The bench referred to Section 197(1) of the CrPC (corresponding to Section 218 of the Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023) dealing with prosecution of judges and public servants. Section 197 (1) says, "When any person who is or was a judge or magistrate or a public servant not removable from his office save by or with the sanction of the government, is accused of any offence alleged to have been committed by him while acting or purporting to act in the discharge of his official duty, no court shall take cognisance of such offence except with the previous sanction." The bench said the object of Section 197 (1) of the CrPC was to protect public servants from prosecutions and it ensured they were not prosecuted for anything they did in the discharge of their duties.

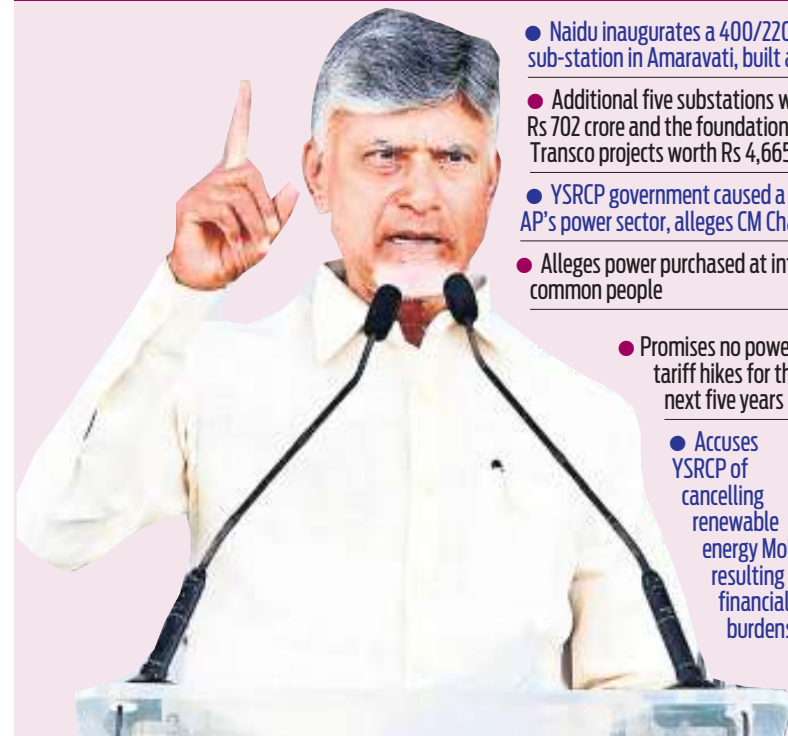
Continued on Page 2

YSRCP govt ruined power sector

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday accused the YSRCP government of destroying Andhra Pradesh's power sector, leading to a massive Rs 1,29,503 crore loss and imposing a heavy financial burden on consumers. Speaking at the inauguration of a 400/220 KV gas-insulated power sub-station built with Rs 505 crore at Tallayapalem in Thullur mandal, Amaravati, Naidu expressed optimism about reviving the sector, which he alleged had been mismanaged over the past five years. "Power that should have been bought at Rs 4.70 per unit was procured at Rs 7.61 per unit, and this burden was passed on to the common people," he said. Naidu also inaugurated five additional substations on the same premises, constructed at a cost of Rs 702 crore, and laid the foundation virtually for 14 other AP Transco projects worth Rs 4,665 crore across the state. He criticised the previous government for securing loans against various state assets, cancelling solar and wind power MoUs, and allegedly harassing companies involved in these sectors. Reassuring the public, Naidu stated that there would be no power tariff hikes for the next five years and reminisced about reforms introduced in 1998 that led to the formation of the Power Regulatory Commission. He pointed out that the previous government failed to utilise solar power as per agreements, result-

CM inaugurates 6 sub-stations & lays stone for another 14



- Naidu inaugurates a 400/220 KV gas-insulated sub-station in Amaravati, built at Rs 505 crore
- Additional five substations were constructed at Rs 702 crore and the foundation was laid for 14 AP Transco projects worth Rs 4,665 crore
- YSRCP government caused a massive Rs 1,29,503 cr loss to AP's power sector, alleges CM Chandrababu Naidu
- Alleges power purchased at inflated rates, burdening common people
- Promises no power tariff hikes for the next five years
- Accuses YSRCP of cancelling renewable energy MoUs, resulting in financial burdens
- Recalls AP's previous power shortage, resolved within four months in 2014
- Claims Amaravati and Polavaram projects suffered under YSRCP governance
- Condemns derogatory social media comments against public figures, urges police action

ing in Rs 9,000 crore paid to companies without using the energy generated, and similarly, Rs 500 crore was paid to wind power companies and Rs 1,235 crore to the Hinduja Group. Reflecting on challenges faced in 2014, Naidu said Andhra Pradesh was dealing with a 22.5 million unit

power deficit, which was resolved within four months. He alleged that Amaravati and the Polavaram project were neglected and damaged under the YSRCP. Addressing recent concerns over social media, Naidu condemned derogatory remarks against women,

including his wife, Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan, and Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha. He urged police officials to take strict action against those making objectionable comments, stating, "We have to protect the dignity of the state against evildoers."

Naidu firm on SC classification

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday met with Dalit MLAs from coalition parties at the Secretariat to discuss measures regarding the classification of Scheduled Castes (SCs). The CM emphasised the need to provide equal opportunities for all sub-castes within the Dalit community through the implementation of SC classification. This discussion follows the Supreme Court's recent verdict and the election guarantee associated with the classification issue. The CM explained that the clas-

sification would be based on the population ratio within districts. He reminded the MLAs that classification had been implemented during the undivided state but was later

Categorisation to be based on population ratio of Dalit sub-castes within districts

halted due to legal challenges. With the recent Supreme Court verdict, several states are now ready to implement classification, and they are considering doing so in a way that ensures justice for all. The CM

reiterated that the Telugu Desam Party has consistently supported the Dalit community and highlighted that since 2014, funds for Dalit welfare have been allocated based on proportionate ratios through GO No. 25. Now, with the Supreme Court's clarification on classification, necessary actions are being taken, including the formation of a commission to oversee its implementation. The CM stressed that the comprehensive development of the Dalit community would be achieved through education, employment, skill development, and business opportunities.

Continued on Page 2

Jagan to skip Assembly session

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP supremo and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy accused the Chandrababu Naidu-led NDA government of failing on all fronts, plunging the State into a 'dark age'. He warned the police to adhere strictly to the rule of law and not succumb to political pressure from the ruling party. Speaking to the media on Thursday, Jagan highlighted the deteriorating law and order situation, claiming that social media activists are being harassed and detained without fol-

lowing due procedure. He also alleged that the safety of women and minor girls had been severely compromised over the past five months. Jagan questioned the purpose of attending the Assembly when the government was not prepared to recognise the Opposition. He added that he would utilise his time as Leader of Opposition to raise people's issues through the media. The YSRCP leader cautioned the police to protect the dignity of their uniforms, asserting that political power is not permanent.



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Rs 750 cr for AP panchayats soon: Dy CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, Pawan Kalyan, reiterated the coalition government's commitment to strengthening the rural system. He assured that, unlike the previous administration, Panchayat funds would not be diverted and would be used solely for rural development. In a meeting with Panchayat Raj representatives, Pawan Kalyan announced that monthly meetings will be held to address panchayat issues. He also disclosed that around Rs 750 crore from the 15th Finance Commission will soon be credited to panchayat accounts, boosting resources for rural development. He highlighted govern-

Pawan Kalyan pledged to end the practice of freezing panchayat accounts and assured that funds would be used for intended purposes.

ment initiatives to generate revenue through bamboo and bio-diesel plant cultivation and shared the goal of providing a 24-hour drinking water supply to every household under the Jal Jeevan Mission. Pawan Kalyan emphasised rural empowerment, pledging that the government would fulfil election promis-

es and address the main demands of sarpanches. Noting Kerala's strong Panchayat Raj system, he said that IAS officer Krishna Teja has been appointed to strengthen Andhra Pradesh's rural infrastructure. Kalyan also introduced the 'Village Forests' programme, aimed at planting trees on vacant village lands to make villages more self-sufficient in wood production. The Dy CM stressed that the quality of work under the Grama Panduga (village festival) programme needs close monitoring by Sarpanches. He assured that the current government listens to the people, unlike the previous administration, which he criticised for ignoring the Panchayat Raj Act and hindering self-governance.

Lokesh holds talks with Suzlon Energy CEO on jobs

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Education Minister Nara Lokesh, who has been named the Chairman of a Group of Ministers (GoM) on job creation, has got cracking on the job, meeting potential investors in the state. He met clean energy giant Suzlon Energy Ltd's representatives, led by Group CEO JP Chalasani, to discuss their forthcoming investment and plans for job creation in Andhra Pradesh, official sources said. In the meeting, Chalasani expressed their keen intent to expand their wind turbine manufacturing facility, develop large wind power plants, and develop a skill development programme to help Andhra achieve its goal of 7.5 lakh jobs in the renewable energy sector. Lokesh was recently appointed as the Chairman of a group of minis-

ters to create 20 lakh jobs by 2029. In this role, in recent days, Nara Lokesh has worked on bringing leading corporations to create jobs across various sectors such as IT, steel, and renewable energy. Tata Consultancy Services is



developing a 10,000-seater campus in Visakhapatnam, ArcelorMittal/Nippon Steel has committed to invest Rs 1.4 lakh crore in setting up a 17.8 million tonnes greenfield steel plant that will generate about 40,000 jobs in

The GoM has been tasked to "suggest various measures to achieve the objective of providing employment by bringing best policies and best interventions and across various line departments".

Nakkapalli, and Vedanta Group firm Serentica Global has committed to develop 10 GW of renewable energy capacity that would result in about Rs 60,000 crore investment and 40,000 jobs. The minister last week visited the US and engaged with leading corporates to sell the Andhra story to them and engage on new investments that can result in job creation, sources said, adding that the big names he met included Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, Ross Perot Group Chairman Ross Perot Jr, Apple Vice President and Head of Supply Chain Priya Balasubramaniam, and Tesla CFO Vaibhav Taneja. The state government in an October 26 order set up a six-member GoM with Minister for Human Resources Development, IT Electronics and Communications and Skill Development Lokesh as the

chairman. Other members on the panel include Industries and Commerce Minister T G Bharath, Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh, Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development Ponguru Narayana, and MSME Minister Kondapalli Srinivas. The GoM has been tasked to "suggest various measures to achieve the objective of providing employment by bringing best policies and best interventions and across various line departments". It will also "review periodically and suggest necessary corrective measures/remedies". Also, it will "suggest suitable institutional mechanisms to monitor and regularly update the employment provided in the public and private sector", according to the October 26 order.

'Stern action against abusive social media posts on women'

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Minister for Home Vangalapudi Anitha warned that stringent action would be taken against those who abuse women on social media. Addressing a press conference at the Secretariat in Amaravati on Thursday, she announced that a law would be enacted specifically to punish those responsible for such abuses. "The YSRCP rowdies, goondas, and psychos, under the direction of Jagan Mohan Reddy and disguised as political actors, have been abusing women in a vile manner on social media. Despite these abusive posts targeting mothers and sisters, Jagan Reddy has remained silent," the Home Minister said, strongly criticising the opposition leader.

Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha announced that a law would be enacted specifically to punish those responsible for such abuses.

The Home Minister became emotional while recounting the personal abuse directed at her on social media. She urged former chief minister Jagan Mohan Reddy to stop making false allegations about the law and order situation in the State. "The people have not forgotten the anarchy that occurred during his regime," she added. She recalled the incident when Amaravati women farmers, during their protest, were physically assaulted by the police, including being kicked with shoes, and noted that false cases were registered against many protesters. The Home Minister claimed that crime rates had reduced by 28% under the Naidu-led government. She also questioned Jagan Reddy's soft stance on YSRCP social media activist Varra Ravindra Reddy and his concern over his arrest.

Friends again: Anitha, Pawan discuss crime

The Home Minister met Deputy Chief Minister K Pawan Kalyan on Thursday at the Chief Minister's Office. They discussed various issues, including the uploading of abusive posts on social media. She informed Pawan Kalyan about the measures taken by the Home Ministry to curb crimes and added that police officials had been instructed to take stringent action

against those who commit crimes against women and girls. The Home Minister also shared that she had been a victim of such abusive social media posts. Pawan Kalyan, in turn, told her that his daughter had been moved to tears by a social media post, which is why he had reacted strongly during a public meeting in Pithapuram.



Slowdown: A cause of concern in real estate sector

The real estate business in Telangana has slowed down much over the past six or seven months, causing concern among the stakeholders. The developers, builders, investors, workers, buyers and all the other groups that depend on the industry are in disarray. Investments made involving thousands of crores of rupees are hanging in balance. Hundreds of projects, under construction, in around Hyderabad are staring down the barrel. Real estate boom in Hyderabad and adjoining areas began in the 1980s and it had never waned until recently. The statistics of registration of sales deeds in around Hyderabad would lay bare the prevailing situation. In the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority region, the number of deeds being registered was 2.44 lakhs and income received by the government was Rs 2,228 crore in 2016-17. In 2017-18, the number of documents registered was 2.95 lakhs and income to govern-

ment was Rs 30,002 crore. The number of documents registered in 2018-19 was 4.13 lakhs and the income to government was Rs 3,786 crore. The government got Rs 3,944 crore as income through the registration of 3.90 lakh documents during 2019-20. Registration of 2.24 lakh documents fetched an income of Rs 2,825 crore to the government in 2020-21. During 2021-22 about 4.07 lakh documents were registered and the government mopped up an income of Rs 6,759 crore. The income rose to Rs 6,854 crore in 2022-23 with the registration of 2.83 lakh documents. The revenue to government reached Rs 7,476 crore during 2023-24 with the registration of 2.68 lakh documents. However, the situation deteriorated right from the beginning of the present financial year -- 2024-25. For instance, the income through registrations in October 2023 was Rs 803 crore and it was Rs 665 crore in October, 2024. If the

Although the sector bucked the trend of less business during the elections period, i.e. from December, 2023 to April, June, 2024, it could not do so upon completion of the elections. The real estate people expected the business to soar after the elections period. But their hopes have been dashed with many of the buyers going back.

trend continues, the government may not reach its targeted revenues. Although the sector bucked the trend of less business during the elections period, i.e. from December, 2023 to April, June, 2024, it could not do so upon completion of the elections. The real estate people expected the business to soar after the elections period. But their hopes have been dashed with many of the buyers going back. According to PropEquity, Hyderabad experienced a 54% decline in new housing launches and a 42% drop in sales from July to September, marking the highest decreases

among major metropolitan areas in India. As per KV Raman Ayyala, founder & CEO of PCM Proptech India Pvt Ltd, Hyderabad's real estate and infrastructure development have hit a significant pause. Builders and agents are referring to this as the worst downturn since the pre-2014 Telangana State formation period. Currently, around 2.8 lakh apartments are ready for sale, but buyers are hesitant to invest in residential properties, whether land or houses. He says that the change of government has impacted sales in the market. People had high expectations from the new govern-



GUDUR NARAYANA REDDY

ment on launching new projects and infrastructure plans. However, these expectations were not met. Existing infrastructure plans were altered, and no new projects were initiated. For instance, the relocation of Pharma City has added to the market's instability. Furthermore, LRS and BRS regulation confusions and the increase in registration prices from August 31 have further impacted the market negatively.

Despite Chief Minister Revanth Reddy having a real estate background, his administration is struggling to make decisive moves toward new developments or attract foreign investments confidently. The lack of clarity in investment strategies and the influence of the All India Congress Committee on state decisions have exacerbated the downturn. If this trend continues, foreign investors may perceive Hyderabad as an unfavorable investment destination. Apart from this the Musi Rejuvenation Project, establishment of the Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency (HYDRAA), delay in taking up the marking of full tank levels of tanks and lakes in Hyderabad and in its surroundings, delay in issuing permissions to the builders and others are the reasons for the slump in the market. The demolition drives being taken up by the HYDRAA has instilled fear among the people of Hyderabad.

I feel that the present Master Plan 2031 would not help in the development of Hyderabad in any way. The related zonal regulations would not work in the present scenario of Hyderabad region. The HMDA did not take any interest in this regard. The previous BRS government did not bother to relook into the plan. The Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India, Hyderabad (CREDAI) has pointed out that there were no grid roads in the growth corridors. In the peri-urban zone only 25 per cent has been allowed for making layouts. This has resulted in no layout development in these areas. The rule that layouts must have a 60 ft approach road has been impeding the layout development activities. All told, the government needs to focus on key areas like establishing the best committees and marketing teams to attract new investments in various sectors. It must make committed efforts to secure investments in IT and Pharma

industries. The government may have to hire good consultants to market Telangana on a global scale. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy must prioritize Hyderabad's urban development. The government has been attributing the slump in the market to slowdown of the economy in the country at large and in the real estate sector in particular. This is partially true. While other cities are doing well, Hyderabad has been lagging behind. The Chief Minister himself must look into these issues and come up with policies that would boost the investor sentiment. The government should hold meeting with the stakeholders on a large scale and identify the impediments in the real estate sector development. The government must come up with real estate friendly policies.

(The writer is BJP Telangana unit executive council member)

Lokesh vows to make AP leader in edu sector

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Education, IT, and Electronics Minister Nara Lokesh on Thursday pledged to elevate Andhra Pradesh to the top position in India's education sector. Speaking at the inauguration of the International Higher Education Fair (IHEF) at the Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) campus, organised by VIT and the State Government, Lokesh encouraged youth to become job creators rather than job seekers. The Minister also unveiled a driverless van, a drone, and a robot at the event. In his address, Lokesh urged young people to establish start-up companies, leveraging support from the AP Innovation Society, which has created a seed fund of Rs 250 crore to support new entrepreneurs. He highlighted the need for students to pursue broad, forward-thinking goals, noting that the State Government aims to foster an education system rooted in moral values. Lokesh called on institutions like VIT to prioritise meaningful outcomes over mere outputs.



Lokesh also stressed the importance of innovation, urging students to stay updated on global trends. Reflecting on his own journey, he shared his experiences working with the World Bank after completing an MBA from Stanford University, and the challenges he faced along the way. The Minister spoke about his defeat in the 2019 Mangalagiri Assembly election by a narrow margin of 5,300 votes and how he stayed committed to the people of

Mangalagiri, which ultimately resulted in a strong mandate in his favour in the recent elections. He encouraged the youth to view him as an example of resilience and dedication. He further mentioned the rapid progress of development work in Amaravati, creating ample job opportunities in the state. Expressing appreciation for representatives from renowned global universities attending the event, Lokesh said he looks forward to the success of students inspired by Thursday's

programme. He thanked the participating universities, educational institutions, teachers, students, and parents for their involvement. VIT (AP) Chancellor Dr. G. Viswanathan emphasised the need to increase the education budget in India. VIT Vice Chancellor Dr. S.V. Kota Reddy, Registrar Jagadeesh Chandra Murugan, International Relations Coordinator Goswamy, Professor Reethu, and others also attended the programme.



Set up more MSMEs to offer jobs to youth: Minister

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Scale Industries, Rural Poverty Alleviation, and NRI Empowerment, Kondapalli Srinivas, stressed the need for swift action to increase the establishment of new MSMEs in the State and enhance field-level monitoring. The Minister chaired a review meeting on the performance of the MSME Department at the Secretariat in Velapadu, Amaravati, on Thursday. He emphasised simplifying government policies to make the state more investment-friendly and to create job opportunities for youth by boosting MSMEs. During the meeting, Minister Srinivas suggested that government policies should be streamlined and additional steps taken to establish more institutions. He directed officials to focus on utilising all available Central Government schemes for MSMEs.

3 cricket academies to be set up in AP: MP Kesineni Sivanath

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Cricket Association (ACA) president and Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath announced that three cricket academies will be established across the state: one for women in Anantapur, one for men in Vizianagaram, and one for senior men at the Mulapadu stadium in Vijayawada. He mentioned that these academies will be developed similarly to the Centre of Excellence set up by the BCCI in Bangalore. The announcement came after a meeting of the Andhra Cricket Association (ACA) Apex Council, which was held on Thursday at the Mangalagiri International Cricket Stadium office. The meeting, chaired by MP Kesineni Sivanath, discussed the development of the Mangalagiri Cricket Stadium along with 16 other issues related to the growth of cricket in the state. To address issues in the Mangalagiri Stadium's construction, suggestions were sought from Populous, the architects of the Narendra Modi International Stadium in Ahmedabad, and NV Associates, a Chennai-based architectural firm. Speaking to the media after the meeting, ACA president MP Kesineni Sivanath outlined the discussions held, including



strategies to promote cricket in rural areas and steps to advance the ACA. He emphasised plans to establish academies that will offer better facilities for training players. The MP assured that the academy will focus on providing high-quality accommodation and training to produce top-tier players capable of being selected for the IPL and the Indian cricket team from Andhra Pradesh. He added that efforts are underway to bring international cricket players for training, to have 20 players from Andhra Pradesh in upcoming IPL matches. Sivanath also revealed that preparations are underway for the Vizag Stadium, with the expectation that IPL matches will be hosted in the state in the coming season. He highlighted plans to increase the number of cricket tournaments in the state, including under-19 competitions. The MP is in talks with South Indian state cricket asso-

ciations to facilitate these tournaments, which are planned to be held at stadiums in Vizianagaram, Vizag, Vijayawada, Mangalagiri, Anantapur, and Kadapa. Regarding the Mangalagiri Cricket Stadium, Sivanath pointed out flaws in its construction, which was designed 12 years ago. He noted the lack of parking facilities, stressing that BCCI regulations require 14 acres for parking at international cricket stadiums. He further mentioned that a sports centre of international standards is necessary to host such events. He revealed that the government and the CRDA have been requested to provide the required 35 acres of land, and they are ready to offer it. The meeting was attended by ACA Vice President P. Venkata Rama Prashanth, Secretary Sana Satish, Treasurer Dandamudi Srinivas, and Councilor Dantugauru Vishnu Tej.

YSRCP to boycott...

Continued from Page 1

He also highlighted that YSRCP's social media activists were facing baseless cases and arbitrary arrests for questioning the government. The leaders further stated that the coalition's influence over the police has turned law enforcement into a private force for TDP leaders, allowing their misconduct to go unchecked. They cited cases where YSRCP workers were unfairly targeted, leading to harassment and arrests.

Continued from Page 1

"This provision is for the protection of honest and sincere officers. However, the protection is not unqualified. They can be prosecuted with a previous sanction from the appropriate government," it said. It said, "Considering the object of Section 197(1) of the CrPC, its applicability cannot be excluded unless there is any provision in the PMLA which is inconsistent with Section 197(1). No such provision has been pointed out to us." The bench, therefore, held the provisions of the section were applicable to a complaint filed under Section 44(1)(b) of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) while rejecting the ED contention that Section 71 of the PMLA had an overriding effect over the provisions of the other statutes. The agency had contended that considering the object of the PMLA, the requirement of obtaining a sanction under Section 197(1) of CrPC will be inconsistent with Section 71 of the PMLA. The bench, however, pointed out that Section 65 of the PMLA made the provisions of the CrPC applicable to all proceedings under the PMLA, provided the same were not inconsistent with the anti-money laundering law. "Section 65 is a prior section which specifically makes the provisions of the CrPC applicable to PMLA, subject to the condition that only those provisions of the CrPC will apply which are not inconsistent with the provisions of the PMLA. Therefore, when a particular provision of CrPC applies to proceedings under the PMLA by virtue of Section 65 of the PMLA, Section 71(1) cannot override the provision of CrPC which applies to the PMLA," it held. The ED had challenged the high court order on the plea of Bibhu Prasad Acharya and Adityanath Das, who were civil servants, and therefore, satisfied the first condition of Section 197(1) according to the top court. The apex court noted that ED's alle-

Adityanath, Acharya get..

gation that Acharya conspired with former Andhra chief minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy and allotted 250 acre land meant for a SEZ project to a private company by violating the existing norms. It also noted that Das, at the relevant time, was the principal secretary in the state government and he too conspired with Reddy and extended favours to another firm by allotting additional 10 lakh litre of water from River Kagna without referring the matter to the Interstate Water Resources Authority in violation of the existing norms. "In the case of both respondents (Acharya and Das), the acts alleged against them are related to the discharge of the duties entrusted to them. It is not even the allegation in the complaints that the two respondents were not empowered to do the acts they have done. There is a connection between their duties and the acts complained of," the bench said, noting the second condition for the applicability of Section 197(1) also stood satisfied. The top court upheld the high court order outlining the latter's correct view as the cognisance of the chargesheet was taken without obtaining a previous sanction under Section 197(1) of CrPC. "We must clarify that the effect of the impugned judgment is that the orders of the special court taking cognisance only as against the accused B P Acharya and Adityanath Das stand set aside," said the bench. The top court, however, said that ED may move against the two senior IAS officer after obtaining a prior sanction for the prosecution. The bench said the object of Section 197(1) of the CrPC was to protect public servants from prosecutions and it ensured they were not prosecuted for anything they did in the discharge of their duties. "This provision is for the protection

of honest and sincere officers. However, the protection is not unqualified. They can be prosecuted with a previous sanction from the appropriate government," it said. "Considering the object of Section 197(1) of the CrPC, its applicability cannot be excluded unless there is any provision in the PMLA which is inconsistent with Section 197(1). No such provision has been pointed out to us." The bench, therefore, held the provisions of the section were applicable to a complaint filed under Section 44(1)(b) of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) while rejecting the ED contention that Section 71 of the PMLA had an overriding effect over the provisions of the other statutes. The agency had contended that considering the object of the PMLA, the requirement of obtaining a sanction under Section 197(1) of CrPC will be inconsistent with Section 71 of the PMLA. The bench, however, pointed out that Section 65 of the PMLA made the provisions of the CrPC applicable to all proceedings under the PMLA, provided the same were not inconsistent with the anti-money laundering law. "Section 65 is a prior section which specifically makes the provisions of the CrPC applicable to PMLA, subject to the condition that only those provisions of the CrPC will apply which are not inconsistent with the provisions of the PMLA. Therefore, when a particular provision of CrPC applies to proceedings under the PMLA by virtue of Section 65 of the PMLA, Section 71(1) cannot override the provision of CrPC which applies to the PMLA," it held. The ED had challenged the high court order on the plea of Bibhu Prasad Acharya and Adityanath Das,

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Naidu firm on...

Continued from Page 1

The Dalit MLAs recalled that several initiatives, such as the Best Available Schools, were implemented in 2014, and cement roads were constructed in Dalit villages under the Chandranna Bata scheme. However, they expressed concerns that in the past five years, no new roads or toilets had been built in Dalit villages. They also highlighted that significant progress had been made in building toilets for Dalit families, thereby upholding the dignity of women. The MLAs shared their concerns with the CM, stating that the Dalit community had faced severe oppression and discrimination over the past five years, leading to a decline in their living standards due to the anti-Dalit policies of the previous government. The CM assured the MLAs that they are considering measures for the sustainable development of the Dalit community over the next five years. He outlined plans to implement policies that would ensure their comprehensive growth. The CM also noted that the people had supported the party's candidates in 27 out of 29 SC constituencies in the last election and assured the MLAs that he would ensure their victory again in 2029. He advised the MLAs to continue working diligently for the welfare of the people.

Jagan to skip Assembly...

Continued from Page 1

He warned that the party's legal cell would take action against erring police officers once they return to power. "Illegal detentions have become the norm, and the police have no right to bring family members to the police station," he stated. He cited several locations, including Tenali, Chilakaluripeta, Tadepalle, and Guntur, where such detentions had taken place, adding that 101 cases had been filed in defiance of Supreme Court rulings. Jagan also criticised the police for their inaction on fake news spread by the TDP, pointing to a case where false claims were made about his mother. He questioned why the police had not taken action against those responsible for character assassination. He urged the police and the DGP to act according to the law and not yield to political pressure. Highlighting the government's failure to maintain law and order, Jagan pointed to 91 cases of atrocities against women and minors in the last five months, many of which allegedly involved ruling party supporters.

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Saptami: Nov 08 12:35 AM to Nov 08 11:56 PM
Ashtami: Nov 08 11:56 PM to Nov 09 10:45 PM
Nakshatram: Uttara Ashadha: Nov 07 11:47 AM to Nov 08 12:03 PM
Shravana: Nov 08 12:03 PM to Nov 09 11:47 AM
Rahukalam: 10:35 AM to 11:59 AM
Yamagandam: 2:49 PM to 4:13 PM
Varjyam: 04:00 PM to 05:35 PM
Gulika: 7:46 AM to 9:10 AM
Ambritakalam: 01:30 AM to 03:05 AM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:37 AM to 12:22 PM
VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: Mostly Sunny
Temp: 33°
Humidity: 64%
Sunrise: 6:08 AM
Sunset: 5:34 PM
Updated: November 7, 2024 5:00 PM

Suspect in Cambodia cybercrime recruitment case arrested

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a major development, Visakhapatnam police arrested another suspect linked to the trafficking of local youth to Cambodia under the pretext of overseas jobs. Dasari Venkata Raghava Parthasaradhi, a resident of Malkapuram, was arrested on Thursday for recruiting unsuspecting job seekers and sending them into the control of the notorious "China" cybercrime gang. Parthasaradhi, previously a welder with overseas experience, returned to Visakhapatnam and got involved in a cybercrime recruitment network. His connection to the case surfaced through links with Chukka Rajesh, another suspect already in custody.

"Rajesh exploited the aspirations of young people seeking better opportunities abroad, offering Parthasaradhi a high commission for each referral," revealed a source. Parthasaradhi initially sent three people to Cambodia, later moving there himself and working as a cook while recruiting 12 more individuals. These recruits were reportedly forced to work for the "China" gang, a criminal group run by Chinese nationals.

"We are seeing an alarming rise in young people being misled into cybercrime work under false job promises," said Cybercrime Inspector Bhavani



Prasad. "This case reveals the vast reach of this network, and we are dedicated to breaking it down."

The investigation began after families reported that their loved ones were trapped in Cambodia, forced into cybercrime. Based on these complaints, a Lookout Circular (LOC) was issued for Parthasaradhi, who was intercepted by immigration officials at Bhubaneswar Airport upon his return from Bangkok and brought to Visakhapatnam.

"Parthasaradhi's arrest is a significant step in our fight against this exploitation network," said Police Commissioner Dr. Shankhabrata Bagchi, leading the investigation. "Our focus now is to capture the main operators based in Cambodia." Police urge anyone with information on these recruitment activities to contact the cybercrime helpline at 0891-2565454 or the CP WhatsApp number at 9493336633.



Walk highlights need to bridge generational gap

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

An awareness walk on Beach Road on Thursday highlighted the growing disconnect between generations and the concerns surrounding the well-being of the elderly in today's fast-paced society. KR Gangadharan, Chairman of Heritage Foundation India, stressed the importance of rebuilding bonds between the young and the elderly and ensuring that seniors receive the support and respect they deserve.

"The elderly are living archives of knowledge and tradition," said Gangadharan, emphasising seniors' unique contributions to society. The Heritage Foundation Regional Resource and Training Centre organised the event in collaboration with Andhra University's Department of Social Work and the NSS Cell, with support from the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government

of India. The event focused on the challenges faced by the elderly, especially with changing family structures and societal shifts. Gangadharan underscored income security, accessible healthcare, and strong social support systems as essential to the well-being of older adults. He noted that urbanisation, migration, and changes in traditional caregiving roles have left many elderly people without family support. "This is a crisis that affects us all. The elderly deserve not just respect but also a secure and fulfilling life," he stated.

S. Harnath, Coordinator of the AU National Service Scheme (NSS), also spoke about the decline of joint families in India. "There was a time when elders had respect, security, and a valued place in the family. But today, in our busy lives, these values are fading," he remarked.

Manohar inspects 7 rice mills, finds 1,000 MT PDS rice

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Civil Supplies Minister Nadendra Manohar, accompanied by officials, conducted surprise inspections of seven rice mills and discovered 1,000 metric tonnes of rice meant for the Public Distribution System (PDS) on Thursday.

The Minister, along with the Joint Collector, inspected three rice mills in Perecherla, Medikonda mandal. He ordered the seizure of a vehicle that had transported PDS rice to one of the mills.

During the inspection, the management of Venkateswara Rice Mill in Perecherla was found to have burnt the tags from CMR rice bags after receiving information about the Minister's surprise visit. Nadendra Manohar expressed strong displeasure over



Civil Supplies Minister Nadendra Manohar took swift action, ordering the seizure of vehicles involved in rice diversion and directing police to arrest those responsible for burning CMR rice bag tags to cover up the illicit storage.

this and instructed the police to take the responsible parties into custody. Later, he also inspected Vigneswara Rice Mill in Guntur district by torchlight.

Speaking to the media, the Minister shared that under the Deepam 2 free gas cylinder scheme, over 23 lakh people had registered for a gas cylinder,

and 16 lakh cylinders had already been delivered. He confirmed that the government has spent Rs 84 crore on the implementation of the free gas cylinder scheme.

Pawan lacks 'courage' to question Naidu: Jagan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP chief Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy alleged on Thursday that Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan lacks the "boldness" to question Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on the state's deteriorating law and order situation, choosing instead to target a woman Dalit minister over the issue.

Reddy's comments were in response to Kalyan's recent criticism of Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha regarding the decline in law and order and the increase in crimes against women, five months after the TDP, BJP, and Jana



Sena alliance government took office.

Kalyan, speaking at a recent public meeting, stated that if he were the home minister, the situation would be different, urging Anitha to take her responsibilities seriously to uphold law and order in the state.

"Whose responsibility is law and order? Isn't it directly under the Chief Minister? Whom should you (Kalyan) question when law and order fails? Not Chandrababu Naidu? He (Kalyan) doesn't have the boldness to question Chandrababu Naidu," Reddy remarked at a press conference held at his residence in Tadepalli.

Expressing surprise at the deputy chief minister highlighting the failure of law and order in the state, the opposition leader noted that Kalyan does not hesitate to target a woman Dalit minister, yet "she will take it" without a complaint.

SRM AP 'Generation Green' campaign to tackle e-waste

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

SRM University-AP, in collaboration with OPPO India and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), has partnered with the national-level initiative "Generation Green." This campaign aims to empower youth to become advocates of sustainability through green skills and actionable commitments. With this, SRM AP becomes an 'Eco-Conscious Champion Institute' under the programme.

The first phase of the campaign saw AICTE and OPPO India joining forces with IMIB to promote sustainable practices among youth by offering green internships to students across India. Launched on July 8, 2024, by AICTE Chairperson Prof. T G Sitharam, in the presence of Dr. Buddha Chandrasekar, CCO of AICTE, the initiative attracted over 9,000 students from more than 1,400 institutions. In the second phase of the



'Generation Green' campaign, SRM AP has joined hands with OPPO and AICTE to educate young people about the importance of responsible electronic waste management. As part of this initiative, the university conducted the E-Waste Quest 2024, which raised awareness about the management of discarded electronic items such as mobile phones, chargers, batteries, and wires.

The campaign aims to engage one million youth by the end of 2024, creating a lasting impact on e-waste management and environmental preservation.

Nagalakshmi Selvarajan, District Collector of Guntur, lauded the initiative, saying, "It is a commendable step by SRM University and OPPO India to raise awareness about electronic waste and its significant impact on society and the environment. Voluntary organizations and women's groups in rural areas should also participate to ensure broader outreach, fostering a community-based approach to e-waste management."

Kollu vows strict action on liquor MRP violations and belt shops

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Mines, Geology, and Excise, Kollu Ravindra, has warned that any violation of Maximum Retail Price (MRP) rules or the operation of illegal "belt shops" selling alcohol will face strict action. In a review meeting at the Excise Commissioner's office in Mangalagiri, the minister directed officials to crack down on these unlawful activities. Minister Ravindra praised officials for transparently implementing the new liquor policy, including the allocation of licenses for 3,396 liquor shops without any disputes. While appreciating the progress, he stressed that recent reports of MRP violations and belt shops must be dealt with firmly.

He cautioned officials against showing leniency to anyone running belt shops and said that violators would face heavy fines



and possible license cancellation. "Our main aim is to safeguard public health. This liquor policy focuses on community welfare, and we are determined to eliminate belt shops," he stated. The minister highlighted the government's focus on tackling spurious liquor, noting that consumer health is a top priority. Currently, extra-neutral alcohol is tested on six parameters, but this will soon increase to thirteen for more transparency and safety. Testing will involve gas chromatography in line with BIS and FSSAI standards.

Sharmila protests 'high' power tariff in AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president Y S Sharmila on Thursday protested against the ruling NDA government in the State for allegedly hiking power tariffs under the guise of adjustment charges.

The APCC president held a lantern rally from the party office in Vijayawada to Indira Gandhi circle and questioned if people had to live in darkness due to the inflated charges.

"The NDA accused of burdening the YSRCP government of burden-



ing people with Rs 35,000 crore but they are also following the same model by imposing a burden Rs 17,000 crore," Sharmila said in a release.

Observing that there was no difference between the first-

while YSRCP government and the present NDA government in the state, she questioned why should people bear the brunt of alleged mistakes committed by Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy and purchase power at an exorbitant price.

Sharmila alleged that the government is collecting 40 per cent more in the name of adjustment charges.

She said people rejected YSRCP and voted the NDA to power and it is an injustice that they (NDA government) are also burdening people with the hike in power charges.



PV Sindhu lays stone for badminton centre in Vizag

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

India's badminton icon and Olympic medalist, PV Sindhu, laid the foundation stone for the PV Sindhu Centre for Badminton and Sports Excellence in Visakhapatnam on Thursday. This ambitious facility aims to become a premier destination for nurturing and empowering athletes across various sports disciplines. The centre is set to be built on a two-acre plot in Arilova, allocated by the State government in June 2021 under the tenure of former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

During the ceremony, Sindhu, joined by her parents, expressed her gratitude for the support extended by the State government. "The support of the State government has been crucial in

reaching this milestone, helping to realize my dream of a facility that champions the aspirations of athletes across India," she said. Sindhu envisions the center as a space where athletes of all levels and backgrounds can receive world-class training and mentorship.

Pavilion Infra and Kartheek have been entrusted with overseeing the project's execution, ensuring it aligns with Sindhu's vision of a state-of-the-art training ground for aspiring athletes. "I'm truly grateful to be building this centre for the incredible people of Vizag. In choosing a location, I couldn't imagine a better place than this wonderful city," she added. "This centre will be a space where athletes of all levels and from any discipline can find a home — and a mentor — dedicated to guiding the next generation to the top."

TTD Chairman inspects Tirumala dumping yard



PNS ■ TIRUMALA

TTD Chairman BR Naidu inspected the dumping yard at Kakulamuru Dibba in Tirumala on Thursday morning. He reviewed the garbage collection process, segregation of wet and dry waste, and overall waste management with the concerned officials. TTD Vigilance and Security Officer Surendra was also present during the inspection.

3 NEW TTD MEMBERS TAKE OATH

Three new members were sworn in as members of the TTD Trust Board on Thursday morning. The members include Bhanu Prakash Reddy, Muni Koteswara Rao, and Suchitra Ella. TTD Additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chowdary administered the oath in the presence of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala Temple.

TDP-led NDA govt reclaims prime land 'grabbed' by YSRCP

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a bold move to curb alleged land corruption, the newly formed coalition government has successfully reclaimed 15 acres of prime land previously granted to the Visakha Sri Sarada Peetham by the YSRCP administration. Located in the scenic Rishikonda near Kothavalasa in Bheemili Mandal, the land was originally transferred for a mere one lakh rupees, despite an estimated market value of a staggering 15 crore rupees per acre. Following a thorough investigation ordered by the coalition government, the Revenue Department has now taken possession of the land.

A senior government official expressed deep disappointment over the previous government's decision, stating, "This was an extraordinary loss to the state, with land valued at 225 crore rupees effectively leased for only 15 lakh rupees." Revenue officials confirmed that Special Chief



Secretary RP Sisodia had been informed of the panchama conducted yesterday, leading to the swift seizure today. "We acted promptly on the orders we received. This land rightfully belongs to the people, and it's our duty to ensure state resources are valued appropriately," a Revenue Department spokesperson commented.

The controversy surrounding the land allocation dates back to the YCP government's decision to grant the land to Swami Swaroopanand, the head of Visakha Sri Sarada Peetham, at a fraction of its actual value. Despite recom-

mendations to set a fair price based on registration values, the land was ultimately granted at a drastically reduced rate, sparking significant public outrage. "It was baffling to see valuable land granted at just one lakh per acre," a senior government official noted.

After assuming office, the coalition government initiated an inquiry into the transaction and concluded that procedural rules were blatantly violated. A senior official familiar with the investigation remarked, "Our review revealed serious lapses in how this land was allotted.

PNS ■ PADERU

Kothapalli Waterfalls, which lies in the picturesque scenic Alluri Sitarama Raju (ASR) district, is in for a much-needed change. 13 km away from Paderu and over 120 km from Visakhapatnam, this tranquil retreat in the Eastern Ghats has been an abode for quite a while for tourists seeking solace amidst nature. Now, with new development works going on, the waterfall will attract even more.

This comprises, among the many improvement projects undertaken by the Paderu ITDA to provide a better visitor experience. Major upgrades include the construction of a BT road covering the last half-kilometre leading to the entrance of the waterfalls is estimated at Rs 80 lakh. The Kothapalli Waterfalls redevelopment project is estimated to cost Rs 1.3 crore and it goes to show the amount of invest-

FILLIP TO TOURISM IN ASR DIST

Kothapalli Waterfalls set for facelift



ments made in the local tourism structure.

Speaking of the project, Paderu ITDA Project Officer (PO) V Abishek outlined the changes to be incorporated soon: "We are setting up separate parking areas, ticket counters and also an entrance arch. We are also redeveloping about 500 meters of staircases and the metal bridges now there along the waterfalls. We are also installing about 600 meters of

pole-mounted warm lighting to illuminate the area at night."

A 30-member crew had been working continuously under rainfall since the work started on June 1, which makes the efforts to push on with construction

more trying. "We are looking to complete this project within 45 days. We want it completed before the peak tourist season gets underway," said the PO.

This is not the first time the ITDA has undertaken such a project. The highly successful redevelopment of the Chaparai water cascade in Araku Valley is being taken as a model for the Kothapalli project. Under the plan, ITDA would use local materials and native plants to ensure that the area remains scintillating. "We are planning horticulture with native species to upgrade the area further. Besides, we are exploring the possibility of using MPLAD funds for the project," said Abishek.

In future, it could attract more tourists to the ASR district who can contribute to the local economy and at the same time preserve the natural charm of the place, as the waterfalls at Kothapalli has been given a facelift.

Foundation laid for two power substations in Krishna

PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu virtually laid the foundation stone on Thursday for two new 132 KV electrical substations, aiming to strengthen power supply in the region. The substation at Pedana, with a project cost of Rs 48.64 crore, and another 11/132 KV substation at Thotamala village, costing Rs 30.65 crore, are expected to improve power distribution, especially benefiting Gannavaram Airport.

Local MLA K. Krishna Prasad, RTC Chairman K. Narayana, and Krishna District Collector D.K. Balaji attended the event. Collector Balaji informed the Chief Minister that these substations would help resolve voltage fluctuations in the area, ensuring a stable power supply for nearly 54,000 households and supporting 4,000 aqua farmers in Pedana, who currently face issues due to low voltage.

"The long-distance Machilipatnam-Pamarru transmission line has led to voltage issues in Pedana, affecting farmers' equipment. With the new 132 KV Pedana substation, low voltage problems will be resolved, delivering



quality power to households and industries," said Collector Balaji. He added that the substation would also support Machilipatnam Port's future power needs.

The Gannavaram 132 KV substation will benefit 3.5 lakh consumers across three mandals, with a dedicated feeder for the airport, ensuring an uninter-

rupted power supply. Additionally, the substations will facilitate a nine-hour electricity supply for agriculture.

Speaking to the media, APSRTC Chairman Konakalla Narayana Rao noted that the government's priority is providing reliable power to consumers, and these substations are a step in that direction. The substations will also serve

Local MLA K. Krishna Prasad, RTC Chairman K. Narayana, and Krishna District Collector D.K. Balaji attended the event. Collector Balaji informed the Chief Minister that these substations would help resolve voltage fluctuations in the area, ensuring a stable power supply for nearly 54,000 households and supporting 4,000 aqua farmers in Pedana, who currently face issues due to low voltage.

Gannavaram Airport, the railways, and the upcoming Machilipatnam Sea Port. Senior officials from APCPDCL and AP Transco were also present at the event.

Ration card holders eligible for free gas cylinders: JC

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Joint Collector Rahul Meena clarified that all LPG connection holders with white ration cards are eligible for three free gas cylinders under the Deepam-2 scheme.

During a review meeting with civil supplies officials at the Collectorate on Thursday, he stated that eligible gas beneficiaries should link their active LPG connection to their rice card and complete the eKYC process before booking a free cylinder. He assured that those who have not received a confirmation message need not worry. Beneficiaries can call the helpline at 1967, contact the nearest gas agency or civil supplies office, or lodge a complaint online through PGRS services.

All rice card holders with LPG connections qualify for three free gas cylinders per year under the scheme.



Collector asks employees to provide better services to people

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector Chadalavada Nagarani has directed the government employees to provide better services to the people and warned that corruption would not be tolerated. The Collector conducted a surprise inspection of the revenue section in the Collectorate here on Thursday.

She inspected the files and records in various sections thoroughly. She asked the department heads how many grievances they receive every day and inquired whether they take steps to resolve them. She also examined whether the records were maintained properly and whether disbursing of bills was being made in time.

The Collector warned the employees not to indulge in corrupt practices. "It is up to you whether you consider my orders as a warning or an instruction. From now on, if any matter comes to my attention, strict action will be taken. Caste, religion or region do not come into mind while discharging duties," Collector Nagarani told them.

She ordered them to dispose of files as per the prescribed time and instructed them not to make people run pillar to post to get their work done. She also directed them to strictly follow punctuality. DRO M Venkateswarlu and Collectorate Administrative in-charge officer Sekhar were among those who accompanied the Collector.



Prakasam Collector flags off cancer awareness rally

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam District Collector A Thameem Ansariya flagged off a cancer awareness rally at Prakasam Bhavan here on Thursday.

The rally was held on the occasion of National Cancer Awareness Day. Addressing the gathering, Collector Thameem Ansariya said that the main objective of this rally is to create awareness among the people about cancer and to make people aware that they should be protected from cancer by conducting screening tests at

the initial state itself. Screening tests for this are conducted by Ayushman Arogya Mandir. For these screening tests, all the staff working in urban and primary health centres were given training on screening tests, she added. District Medical Health Officer Dr D Suresh Kumar said that in the household survey on the prevention of oral cancer, general cancer and breast cancer from the 14th of this month, all men and women above the age of 18 years should undergo cancer screening tests to make people aware.



TGA surgery saves 2 infants

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Transposition of the Great Arteries (TGA) is a rare and complex congenital heart condition in newborns where the aorta and pulmonary artery are incorrectly positioned, resulting in poor blood circulation. This condition prevents oxygenated blood from reaching the body properly, and if not treated within the first three to four weeks, it can lead to severe health complications. Surgery is highly challenging in such cases.

Two infants from Ganjam district, Odisha – the babies of Mamata Nayak and Pooja Raval – were brought to the Ramesh Hospitals Outreach Centre, where pediatric cardiologist Dr. Vasudev conducted heart scans. The tests confirmed TGA, with abnormal positioning of the arteries causing oxygen saturation levels as low as 55-65%, compared to the normal range of 95-100%.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF RADIOLOGY TODAY

AP's progress in field gains global recognition

Leading radiologists from Andhra Pradesh, including Dr VN Varaprasad and Dr GV Mohan Prasad, who serve as president and vice president of the Indian Radiological and Imaging Association (IRIA), reflect the State's strong presence in the national radiology community. The IRIA, representing around 25,000 radiologists across the country, acknowledges Andhra Pradesh's growing impact on the field.

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As the world marks the 2024 International Day of Radiology (IDoR) on November 8, Andhra Pradesh has emerged as a prominent centre for radiological advancements in India. This year's IDoR theme commemorates Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen's discovery of X-rays in 1895 and celebrates the vital role of radiology in modern medicine and patient care. Leading

radiologists from Andhra Pradesh, including Dr VN Varaprasad and Dr GV Mohan Prasad, who serve as president and vice president of the Indian Radiological and Imaging Association (IRIA), reflect the State's strong presence in the national radiology community. The IRIA, representing around 25,000 radiologists across the country, acknowledges Andhra Pradesh's growing impact on the field.

In recent years, Andhra Pradesh has advanced significantly in radiology education and infrastructure. The state's government and private medical colleges now offer robust MD programmes, making it a preferred destination for aspiring radiologists. This educational growth aligns with investments in advanced diagnostic equipment, such as 3 Tesla MRI and 256-slice CT scanners, ensuring that patients receive high-quality,

accurate diagnostic services. A national radiology conference held recently in Amaravati drew over 3,500 radiologists, underscoring Andhra Pradesh's role in shaping the future of radiology in India. The integration of artificial intelligence and cutting-edge imaging technology promises to further elevate healthcare standards in the state, positioning Andhra Pradesh as a leader in quality healthcare in India and beyond.



Naidu congratulates US Vice President-elect JD Vance

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has congratulated JD Vance on being elected as the Vice President of the United States.

Taking to social media platform 'X', the Chief Minister stated, "I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Mr. JD Vance on becoming the US Vice President-elect. This is a historic moment as Ms. Usha Vance, who has roots in Andhra Pradesh, will become the first woman of Telugu heritage to serve as the Second Lady of the US. This is a proud moment for the global Telugu community."

Collector outlines vision for Vizag's development

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad assured industrialists of comprehensive support from the district administration in advancing Visakhapatnam's development. "A road map for growth is in place, and the state government is fully backing our efforts," he stated during the CII 4th zonal-level meeting at the collectorate. Operations will begin soon with coordination from VMRDA and GVMC, Prasad noted, emphasizing the need for cross-sector support.

The Collector outlined infrastructure upgrades, including connecting key roads, establishing express corridors, and widening routes to ease traffic flow.

Bharat Scouts and Guides Foundation Day celebrated

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The 75th Foundation Day and Flag Day of the Bharat Scouts and Guides was celebrated at Raj Bhavan on Thursday, with Andhra Pradesh Governor and Bharat Scouts and Guides President S. Abdul Nazeer presiding as the Chief Guest.

Governor Nazeer emphasised that the Foundation Day and Flag Day celebrations aim to seek the support of prominent citizens, government officials, philanthropists, well-wishers, parents, and the general public to promote the



Scouts and Guides movement. Director of School Education V. Vijaya Rama Raju, and State Chief Commissioner

of the Bharat Scouts & Guides Andhra Pradesh Association, presented a scarf and flag to the Governor. Following this, Governor Abdul Nazeer awarded Rajya Puraskar certificates to students S. Srinivasulu, G. Tarunkumar Reddy, G. Tarun Sanjay, D. Jaswanth Surya, U. Mahesh, P. Chinna Iyappa Reddy, A. Durga Rao, A. Swami, G. Dhanush, and R.D. Someswara Rao from various schools. He congratulated the awardees and encouraged them to aspire for national-level success.

HARASSMENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVISTS

YSRCP warns of legal action

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP Legal Cell President Manohar Reddy expressed serious concern over the harassment and midnight arrests of social media workers who had questioned government corruption and demanded the fulfilment of election promises.

Speaking to the media at the party's central office here on Thursday, he warned that legal cases under contempt of court

would be filed against officials who violate democratic principles. He added that, if necessary, the matter would be taken to the Supreme Court.

Manohar Reddy criticised the police for threatening and intimidating the families of social media activists. He also objected to the DGP acting politically in media briefings and warned against the government's threats to transfer SPs who do not comply with its directives.

Former MLA TGR Sudhakar Babu condemned these arrests, calling them a violation of the right to freedom of expression. He assured the party's support to YSRCP social media workers facing unjust cases and urged them to report any harassment. He also demanded that the DGP address abusive posts by TDP members targeting YSRCP leaders and warned that ignoring such complaints would have consequences.

Collector asks revenue staff to provide services swiftly

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector K Vetri Selvi has asked the revenue officials and employees to provide services to the people diligently and swiftly.

The Collector held a review meeting with the revenue officials, flanked by Joint Collector P Dhatri Reddy here on Thursday. Collector Vetri Selvi reviewed the system of redressal of public grievances, land acquisition, purchase of paddy, resurvey, distribution of voters' list, relating to the graduate and teacher constituency elections, water board elections, court cases and other issues with the revenue officials.

Speaking on the occasion, she appreciated the revenue officials and the staff for working efficiently with collective coordination during the floods and heavy rains. The Collector announced that the Tahsildars, who were performing well, would be ranked and the best Tahsildars would be felicitated.

She directed them to respond quickly to any problem and take action according to the law. "Speed, quality and



transparency are important in revenue services. Redressal of public grievances and land acquisition should be given top priority. The complaints received in the public grievance redressal system should be resolved with utmost priority," she told the officials.

Complaints received in the PGRS should be resolved without any pending, she said. She made it clear that it is not possible to stay beyond the SLA. At the mandal and division level, they should work carefully towards resolving the complaints satisfactorily, she said adding that as soon as the complaint is received, they should understand whether it is within our jurisdiction or at a higher level and investigate the complaint at the field level.

mandal should be identified and kept in the land bank. Water tax collection should be conducted transparently," the Collector directed them. Collector Vetri Selvi also reviewed the land acquisitions and alienation proposals and advised the officials on the matters.

Joint Collector P Dhatri Reddy directed the revenue officials to focus on paddy procurement of kharff from the farmers. She ordered the officials who were appointed especially to monitor the paddy purchase to work efficiently. She instructed the officials concerned to hold a review meeting on the PDS at mandal level and invite MDU operators to the meeting.

She instructed the officials to ensure that essential commodities should be delivered every month by 10 th under the PDS and conduct inspections to the PDS stores. The JC also reviewed the issues of land resurvey, assigned lands, alienation cases, court cases, mutations, ROR appeals and revision petitions. DRO V Visweswara Rao and a host of revenue officials were among those who attended the meeting.

DGP inspects Octopus' land in Eluru

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Director General of Police (DGP) Ch. Dwaraka Tirumala Rao visited the 81.71-acre land in Nugondapalli village, Agiripalli Mandal, Eluru District, allocated for the Octopus (Organisation for Counter-Terrorist Operations) unit by the State Government. This land, which was originally allotted in 2017 for the establishment of a training centre and other facilities, has seen no development to date.

During the visit, the DGP conducted a thorough inspection of the site, assessing the security arrangements and emphasising the need for high safety standards if the area is to be developed into a fully functional camp or facility. He held discussions with officials on the key infrastructure to be set up, including a training centre, administrative building, and firing range.

The DGP also reviewed two other important land allotments. He sought updates on the progress of land designated for the Andhra Pradesh



Police Academy in Thotapalli village and the Special Task Reserve Force (STRF) in Madalavari Gudem village, both in Agiripalli Mandal. He instructed officials to take necessary steps to protect these lands and ensure that detailed construction plans are prepared.

In his address, Dwaraka Tirumala Rao urged officials to collaborate with revenue officers to expedite permissions and facilitate the start of construction activities. The discussions aimed to ensure timely and secure development of these key facilities, which are

critical to strengthening police operations and training capabilities in the region.

The inspection and review meeting were attended by Vijayawada Police Commissioner Rajasekhara Babu, Law & Order IG CH Srikanth, Eluru Range IG G.V.G. Ashok Kumar, Octopus DIG Senthil Kumar, Eluru District SP Pratap Shiva Kishore, Octopus SP Ravi Chandra, and Nuzvid Sub-Collector, among other senior officials. Local police officers, Octopus personnel, and revenue officials also participated in the meeting.

ACROSS THE STATES



SC expresses 'shock' over meagre pension of ex-judges

The Supreme Court on Thursday expressed "shock" over some retired high court judges receiving meagre pensions of Rs 6,000 and Rs 15,000. A bench of Justices B R Gavai, P K Mishra and K V Viswanathan was hearing a petition filed by a retired high court judge who said he was receiving a mere Rs 15,000 pension. The petitioner, who was elevated as a judge of the Allahabad High Court after serving as a judicial officer in the district court for 13 years, claimed that the authorities had refused to consider his judicial service while computing the pension. "If there are retired high court judges before us who are getting Rs 6,000 and Rs 15,000 as pension, it is shocking. How can that be?" the bench remarked. Justice Gavai said the post-retirement facilities for judges differed in each high court and some states provided much better benefits. The apex court thereafter posted the hearing on November 27. While hearing a separate plea in March, the apex court had said there cannot be any discrimination in computing the pensionary benefits of retired judges of high courts based on whether they were elevated from the bar or the district judiciary.



No. of farm fires reduced considerably: Punjab

The Punjab Pollution Control Board (PPCB) has informed the National Green Tribunal (NGT) that the number of stubble-burning incidents in the state has "considerably reduced" between September and November. The NGT had sought a report from the board regarding the rising number of stubble-burning incidents in Punjab causing air pollution in the National Capital Region (NCR) and other areas. The report dated November 5 and uploaded on the tribunal's website on Thursday, said, "With the unceasing efforts of various departments of the Punjab government, the stubble-burning incidents have considerably reduced for the period from September 15 to November 4 in 2024 as compared to the same period of the years 2023 and 2022." The report said 26,583 stubble-burning incidents were reported in 2022, followed by 14,173 incidents the next year and the number has reduced to 4,145 this year.



Cop, two wives arrested with heroin in Jammu

Police arrested a constable posted in the Crime Branch and his two wives during a raid on their house here on Thursday, and seized 33 grams of heroin and more than 2.5 lakh cash from their possession. The raid, conducted at constable Parwaiz Khan's residence in Janipur, also led to the recovery of 22 mobile phones, a weighing machine, and materials used for packaging the narcotic, known locally as 'chitta', a police spokesperson said. Khan, along with his two wives Margis Bhat and Parveen Akhtar, were allegedly preparing and selling small packets of heroin, targeting local youths, when they were held during the raid, the spokesperson said. A case has been registered under various sections of the NDPS Act, and further investigation is underway. Khan, who was posted in the Crime Branch, has been suspended following the arrest, the spokesperson said. Janipur police are also investigating Khan's finances, as he reportedly owns two houses in Janipur and has accumulated substantial properties.

'Canada blocked media outlet for reporting EAM presser'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday said Canada blocked an Australian media outlet hours after it broadcast the press conference of External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar and his Australian counterpart Penny Wong. External Affairs Ministry spokesman Randhir Jaiswal said the Canadian action of blocking the social media handles and certain pages of Australia Today smacked of hypocrisy towards freedom of speech.



"We understand that the social media handles, pages of this particular outlet, which are important diaspora outlets, have been blocked and are not available for viewers in Canada. This happened just an hour or few hours after this particular handle carried the press conference of EAM Dr S Jaishankar with Penny Wong," Jaiswal said in response to a question at the weekly media briefing.

"We were surprised. It looks strange to us. But nonetheless, what I say is that these are actions which yet again highlight the hypocrisy of Canada towards freedom of speech," the external affairs ministry spokesman said.

He said Jaishankar, in his media interactions in Australia, had spoken about the allegations levelled against India by Canada without sharing any specific evidence.

"You would have seen that the External Affairs Minister, in his media engagements, spoke about three things. One was Canada making allegations and a pattern has developed without any specific evidence," he said.

The spokesperson said the second thing he highlighted was surveillance of Indian diplomats happening in Canada, which he termed as unacceptable.

"The third thing which he highlighted was the political space which has been given in Canada to anti-India elements. So you can draw your conclusions from that, why the Australia Today channel was blocked by Canada," Jaiswal said.



I'm not anti-business, but anti-monopoly: Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi asserted on Thursday that he is not "anti-business" as being projected by the BJP but "anti-monopoly" and "anti-creating oligopolies".

Gandhi also claimed that after an article written by him was published in a newspaper, many play-fair businesses have told him that a senior minister has been calling and forcing them to say good things on social media about Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the government's programmes.

The Congress leader's remarks came a day after he wrote an opinion piece in "The Indian Express". The article said the original East India Company wound up its operations more than 150 years ago but the raw fear it used to generate then is back now, with a new breed of monopolists having taken its place.

Gandhi, however, had also asserted that a "new deal for progressive Indian business is an idea whose time has come".

In a video posted on X on Thursday, Gandhi said, "I want to make something absolutely clear, I have been projected by my opponents in the BJP to be anti-business. I am not anti-business in the least, I am anti-monopoly, I am anti-creating oligopolies, I am anti-domination of business by one or two or five people."

Gandhi also claimed that after an article written by him was published in a newspaper, many play-fair businesses have told him that a senior minister has been calling and forcing them to say good things on social media about Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the government's programmes

"I started my career as a management consultant and I understand the type of things that are required for a business to succeed. So I just want to repeat, I am not anti-business, I am anti-monopoly," the former Congress chief said.

In a post accompanying the video, Gandhi said, "I am pro-Jobs, pro-Business, pro-Innovation, pro-Competition. I am anti-Monopoly."

"Our economy will thrive when there is free and fair space for all businesses," he asserted.

In another post on the microblogging platform, Gandhi said, "After my article, many play-fair businesses are telling me that a senior minister has been calling and forcing them to say good things on social media about PM Modi and the gov't programmes. Proves my point exactly!"

Mahayuti govt has failed, says Sharad

PNS ■ NAGPUR

NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar on Thursday hit out at the Mahayuti government in Maharashtra, saying it has failed to safeguard the interests of farmers, protect women and provide jobs, and urged people not to allow them to continue in power.

He also targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing him of working in the interest of a particular state.

Pawar was addressing a campaign rally for NCP (SP)'s Nagpur East candidate Duneswar Pethe here. Assembly elections are scheduled to be held on November 20.

"Nagpur has a deep relationship with the Congress and its ideology, with leaders from Vidarbha, including Vasantrao Naik and Sudhakarrao Naik,

Urges people to overthrow it



serving as the chief minister of Maharashtra and empowering the state," he said.

But those who are in power today have failed to solve the problems faced by farmers and the number suicides by farmers in Vidarbha is very big. Farmers had to take the path of suicide because the government not

solve their issues, the former Union agriculture minister said.

A few days back, a report on the standard of living of people came out, he said.

"There was a time when Maharashtra was at number one position in the country in terms of standard of living. However, it slid down to the sixth position after the BJP came to power," Pawar said.

On the law and order situation in Maharashtra, he said around 630 females, including girls, have gone missing from Nagpur and nearby areas in the last six months.

"The state government has the responsibility of protecting women and it has failed to carry

out this responsibility," he alleged.

Pawar further said, "Those leaders in power who cannot protect the interest of the farmers, cannot provide protection to women and cannot give jobs to the youth should not be given power again. People have to take a decision to snatch away the power from these people."

Political leaders were expected to carry out the industrial development of Vidarbha. When the Congress and allies were in power, they brought industries in Butibori and other areas of Nagpur, according to him.

"But today, we can see that no industries are coming to Vidarbha and even if they come, they are shifted out of the state," he said, and cited the example of Vedanta-Foxconn semiconductor plant that was shifted to Gujarat from Maharashtra.

'Recruitment criteria for govt jobs can't be changed midway'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a significant verdict, the Supreme Court on Thursday held the "rules of the game" for appointment in government jobs cannot be changed midway unless the procedure so permits.

The top court said the ultimate object of any process of selection for entry into a public service was to secure the best and the most suitable person for the job, avoiding patronage and favouritism.

Observing candidates in a recruitment process had a legitimate expectation of the selection process being fair and non-arbitrary, a five-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud unanimously ruled that placement in the select list gives no indefeasible right to a candidate for appointment to a government job.

"Eligibility criteria for being placed in the select list, notified at the commencement of the recruitment process, cannot be changed midway through the recruitment process unless the extant rules so permit, or the advertisement, which is not contrary to the extant rules, so permit," the bench held.

The bench, also comprising Justices Hrishikesh Roy, P S



Narasimha, Pankaj Mithal and Manoj Misra, said even if the change in eligibility criteria was permissible under the extant rules or the advertisement, the change would have to meet the requirement of Article 14 (right to equality) of the Constitution and satisfy the test of non-arbitrariness.

It said the doctrine proscribing change of rules midway through the game, or after the game was played, was predicated on the rule against arbitrariness enshrined in Article 14.

"What is suitable for one post may not be for the other. Thus, a degree of discretion is necessary to be left to the employer to devise its method/procedure to select a candidate most suitable for the post albeit subject to the overarching principles enshrined in Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution as also the rules/statute governing service and reservation," the bench said.

It pointed out that the recruitment process commenced from the issuance of advertisement calling for applications and ended with filling up of vacancies and the recruiting bodies could adopt an appropriate procedure.

"Recruiting bodies, subject to the extant rules, may devise appropriate procedure for bringing the recruitment process to its logical end provided the procedure so adopted is transparent, non-discriminatory/non arbitrary and has a rational nexus to the object sought to be achieved," it said.

Penning a 44-page verdict for the bench, Justice Misra said extant rules having statutory force were binding on the recruiting body, both in terms of procedure and eligibility.

However, where the rules were non-existent or silent, administrative instructions may fill in the gaps, he said.

The bench said placement in the select list gave no indefeasible right to the appointment and the state or its instrumentality for bona fide reasons may choose not to fill up the vacancies.

BJP works for welfare of people, asserts Chouhan

PNS ■ BUDHNI

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday said his party BJP works for the welfare of people by framing schemes for them, while the Congress has nothing to do with development and treats citizens just as a "vote bank".

Citing an example, Chouhan said "The Madhya Pradesh government sends every month Rs 1,250 into bank accounts of nearly 1.25 crore women covered under the Ladli Behna Yojana."

"The BJP works by framing schemes for the welfare of people, while the Congress has nothing to do with development and treats people merely as a vote bank," the former CM noted while addressing a rally in the bypoll-bound Budhni assembly constituency in Sehore district, his home turf.

He said under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the central government is working on the 'Lakhpati Didi' scheme to ensure that every woman earns at least Rs 10,000 per month.

Chouhan said under the PM Awas Yojana, the BJP-led government is giving guarantee to people to provide pucca



(concrete) houses and appealed to voters to ensure the saffron party's landslide victory in the November 13 bypoll.

The BJP has fielded former Lok Sabha MP Ramakant Bhargava from the Budhni seat and his main rival is Congress candidate Rajkumar Patel.

Praising the BJP, Chouhan said it is a wonderful party which made an ordinary worker like him chief minister of Madhya Pradesh for several years.

Now, the party has given him a chance to serve the farmers of the country as the Union Agriculture Minister, he told the gathering.

The BJP stalwart said he has ensured development of Budhni, his former assembly seat, in all fronts including

roads, power, water, schools and colleges.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, addressing the rally, slammed the Congress for not doing anything for the country while in power for 55 years post-Independence, but on the other hand the BJP government has opened its coffers for the welfare of poor, youths, women and farmers.

Yadav said development started taking place in the state after 2003, when the BJP came to power, and Madhya Pradesh is now counted among leading states in the country.

The chief minister criticised the Congress for not taking part in the consecration ceremony of Ram Lalla at the grand temple in Ayodhya in January this year.

Effects of premature birth could persist into adulthood: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Effects of being born prematurely could continue to affect an individual till they turn nearly 30 years of age -- 17 per cent could be less likely to enroll in a university, while 16 per cent less likely to graduate with a university degree, a new study has found.

Premature or preterm birth is said to affect about 10 per cent of all births globally and could account for one in every five child deaths.

The researchers, including those at The Hospital for Sick Children, Canada, looked at all live births in the country between 1990 and 1996, and fol-

lowed the children for over two decades. About seven per cent of the births were preterm. Data on 24 lakh individuals was analysed.

On an average, people born before 37 weeks of gestation -- preterm infants -- were found to have lower levels of education and earn lower incomes through 28 years of age. The researchers found that the average yearly income of prematurely born individuals at age 18-28 years was six per cent lower compared to those born at term.

"Preterm-born individuals, on average, had CAD 958 less employment income per year, 6 per cent lower income per year, than term-born individuals, and



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were 2.13 per cent less likely to be employed," the authors wrote in the study published in the journal PLoS ONE.

"Preterm birth was negatively associated with college or university enrollment (17 per cent less likely to enroll in a university program). Preterm-born individuals were also 16 per cent less likely to graduate with a university degree," they wrote.

Further, among those born between 24-27 weeks of gestation, which was "extremely preterm", yearly incomes were found to be 17 per cent lower and university enrollment and graduation rates decreased by 45 per cent, the authors found.

"While clinical care during the

neonatal period is critical, our findings suggest that the development of long-term supports (including psychological, education and vocational resources) that go beyond clinical care may help mitigate the longer-term effects of preterm birth," said author Petros Pechlivanoglou, The Hospital for Sick Children.

"Policymakers and society as a whole must recognize that the socioeconomic impact of preterm birth may extend into early adulthood and that considerations for ongoing support could be vital to ensuring this population has equal opportunity to thrive," Pechlivanoglou said.

Oppn MPs to boycott five-state tour of Parl panel on Waqf Bill

PNS ■ KOLKATA/NEW DELHI

Opposition members have decided to boycott the five-day tour of the Joint Committee on Waqf Amendment Bill starting Saturday to hear views of diverse stakeholders on the matter.

All the opposition members of the JPC have decided to boycott the tour and its meetings as the chairman is working in an arbitrary and high-handed manner, Trinamool Congress (TMC) member Kalyan Banerjee told reporters at a press conference jointly

addressed with party MP Nadimul Haque at the Press Club in Kolkata.

Opposition members accused Committee chairman Jagdambika Pal of taking unilateral actions and visiting Karnataka to look into some "local matter".

"The Committee does not have investigation powers, its job is to look into the Bill alone. Moreover the Chairman cannot act unilaterally and the Committee has to act collectively," AIMIM Lok Sabha member Asaduddin Owaisi said in a post on X.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

A turning point

While the US-India relationship is poised to deepen in defence and trade, there will also be hurdles in some areas

Donald Trump's return to the presidency brings a new chapter in US foreign policy that holds considerable implications for India. The outgoing Biden administration though not averse to India had reservations about the way domestic politics was shaping in India. But with Trump at the helm of affairs that reservation may quietly go and the Trump administration may go an extra mile to accommodate New Delhi. Trump's victory could reshape strategic alliances, redefine trade relations and impact key regional dynamics that matter to New Delhi. The US-India defence relationship saw considerable progress during Trump's previous tenure. He promoted India as a key strategic partner in the Indo-Pacific to counterbalance China's rising influence, leading to initiatives such as increased military sales and the signing of defence agreements, including BECA (Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement). Trump's victory may reinforce these policies, as he is likely to continue focusing on Indo-Pacific security. A renewed



push for defence cooperation, joint military exercises, and arms deals could bolster India's military capabilities in the region.

However, not all his policies may be to India's liking. In his earlier tenure, Trump prioritised American industry, his trade policies often led to increased tariffs and renegotiations that impacted India. His "America First" approach pressured India into trade reforms to reduce the US trade deficit. This time, India might face similar pressures, particularly in the technology and pharmaceutical sectors, but could also see openings to negotiate more favourable terms, especially if Trump seeks to reduce dependency on Chinese goods. There

is potential for renewed trade deals, but both sides will likely need to balance protectionism with mutual growth. Trump's previous immigration policies, which included tighter visa regulations, impacted the Indian IT workforce, particularly regarding H-1B visas. If his administration continues down this path, it could further restrict Indian tech talent. However, there may be room for negotiation to secure beneficial terms for skilled Indian workers, especially if Trump seeks closer ties with India on other fronts. Both Trump and India share a common concern over China's assertive actions in Asia. Trump's firm stance against China aligns with India's interests, especially in light of the India-China border standoff. Trump's support for a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" and his scepticism towards Chinese trade practices resonate well with India's own strategic goals. Under Trump, the US could be a more vocal supporter of India's position on regional issues, potentially even playing a bigger role in multilateral forums like the QUAD. Trump's stance on energy independence for the US could be beneficial for India's energy security goals. Trump's victory offers both opportunities and challenges for India. For India, the priority will likely be to build on common ground, particularly in areas where interests align, and work diplomatically to address any points of contention.

PICTALK



A trader with his camel at the annual Camel Fair at Pushkar, in Ajmer

Donald Trump's historic comeback



KALYANI SHANKAR

With a Republican majority in the Senate, Trump re-enters the White House with renewed authority, poised to reshape both American politics and global dynamics



The much-awaited US presidential election ended on November 5, and former President 78-year-old Donald Trump triumphed by winning the White House. This would be his second inning and an extraordinary comeback for Trump. He will be the 47th president of the US. Reactions to Trump's election performance started coming in even before the final votes were counted in the US some leaders, like Israel's, showed enthusiasm as they dealt with an ongoing multi-front war. Others like Ukraine President Zelenskyy expressed anxiety. In contrast, some of America's long-standing European allies expressed anxiety about the election results. It was a nail-biting wait. Vice President Kamala Harris and Donald Trump were virtually tied in the polls, adding to the suspense. The odds that the race comes down to a few swing states are high, further prolonging the anticipation. Trump vowed to remove Democrats from the White House by defeating Kamala Harris. Kamala lost to Trump, just like Hillary Clinton lost in 2016. Clinton was the first woman nominated for president by her party. Trump built

a diverse group of voters, more than any Republican nominee in the last 20 years, even though he ran a campaign that was racially charged and attacked immigrants. Trump's election is not just a national event, but a global one. Its impact will be felt not only in American politics but also in global affairs, particularly in the ongoing Middle East and Ukrainian conflicts. The historic polls have denied a chance for a woman to preside over the White House. Vice President-elect JD Vance has an Indian connection as his wife, Usha, is an Indian. In the last 20 years, the most recent Republican presidential candidate to win the nationwide popular vote was George W Bush in 2004. This historical context is crucial as it underscores the unique nature of the US election process. In 2000, he won the Electoral College and the presidency but lost the popular vote to Al Gore. Donald Trump became president in 2016 by securing more than 270 votes in the Electoral College, a system where each state is assigned a certain number of votes based on its population. Despite losing the popular



ITS IMPACT WILL BE FELT NOT ONLY IN AMERICAN POLITICS BUT ALSO IN GLOBAL AFFAIRS, PARTICULARLY IN THE ONGOING MIDDLE EAST AND UKRAINIAN CONFLICTS

vote to Hillary Clinton by more than 2.8 million votes, Trump's victory in key states gave him the necessary Electoral College votes. In 2020, Trump lost the Electoral College and the popular vote to Joe Biden by over 7 million. The final results of the 2020 election hinged on the meticulous absentee ballot procedures in four crucial swing states - Arizona, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. These procedures, which can take days to conclude, hold the key to the outcome as they determine the validity of votes cast by mail. It was these battleground states and their absentee ballots that ultimately decided Trump's win. Donald Trump won the presidency in 2016 by getting more than 270 votes in the Electoral College. However, he lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton by over 2.8 million votes. In 2020, Trump lost the Electoral College and the popular vote to Joe Biden by more than 7 million votes. With Trump's victory, the fears of potential violence have been allayed. The predicted disturbances during the oath-taking ceremony of President Biden in

January 2021 are less likely to occur. The power transition is expected to be peaceful, bringing a sense of reassurance to the nation. Trump was not willing for a smooth transition in 2021 claiming the results were not correct and he was cheated by becoming the victim. Trump's victory can be attributed to the diverse issues he addressed, such as immigration and the economy. In this election, Trump not only secured the White votes but also a diverse group of voters, a testament to the complexity and diversity of the American electorate. Exit polls show that nearly 20 per cent of Trump voters were people of colour. In his first election in 2016, only about 13 per cent of his voters were people of colour. Simultaneously, Republicans have snatched control of the Senate, propelled by wins in West Virginia and Ohio. Democrats previously held a narrow majority in the Senate. It will make Trump's job easy. (The writer is a popular columnist currently travelling the US; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TRUMP WINS AGAIN

Madam — It's Trump again in America and the Americans cast their votes for reclaiming the presidency for Trump over Kamala Harris, and probably the voters were colourblind by giving an edge over to Trump to lead again. The last few weeks were certainly a grinding one for Trump and Harris and it was an evenly poised battle till the end. When Biden opted himself to bring in Kamala Harris into the fray, it was appreciable on the part of Harris to put up a brave fight to win over the hearts of voters in a closely contested election in America. The voters' keenness was visible even on election day while the voters continued to queue, adding to the record-breaking 84 million early ballots already submitted. Though the economy, immigration, and the preservation of democracy were among the pressing issues driving the voters to the polls, Trump gained momentum in his campaign after the attempt of assassination and was probably lucky enough to escape for a rebirth as the President again by winning the Presidency. By his victory, the Americans may have to wait for some more time to elect their first female president, which has been eluding the country for a long time.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

ARTICLE 370 CONTROVERSY

Madam—The present NC-Congress Govt in J and K is posing a grave danger to the parliamentary democracy and the constitution and thus be sacked forthwith for taking up and passing a resolution for restoration of Article 370, which was abrogated by the Parliament of Bharat. As everybody knows the problems it created in the way of integration of Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of Bharat and ultimate elimination of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley with continuing Jihadi Terror till date. The Supreme Court unnecessarily interrupted into the matter and forced premature election in the state,

Canada must take action



propos to "Cowardly attack" published on November 6. The violence at Hindu Sabha Mandir in Brampton is reprehensible, and it has once again exposed Canada's inept handling of a sensitive situation. The

Trudeau government has been burning bridges with India after Nijjar's murder last year. On one side, he says that every Canadian has the right to practice his or her faith freely, but sadly, he cannot protect them and provide safety.

When the Canadian government can appoint India-designate terrorists like Pannun, Sandeep Singh Sidhu, and Sgt Harinder Sohi in the government or government agencies, then nothing better can be expected out of the Trudeau government. Canada, which otherwise proudly claims to be a peace-loving nation, has to deal strictly with all those elements who are destroying communal harmony and public order. Trudeau cannot allow to spew venom against India in the name of freedom, and he will have to salvage India-Canada ties before it is too late.

Bal Govind | Noida

which was limping back to normal steadily under the central rule. Muslims in the valley are still against Bharat and Hindus while expecting everything to be free from the state and are still intolerant against the return of Pandits in the valley. The regiment that supports the restoration of Art. 370 cannot be allowed to run the affairs of the state. The Supreme Court should be told in no uncertain terms not to interrupt J&K affairs any more.

Jai Prakash Gupta | Ambala Cantt

INDIA BIDS FOR OLYMPICS

Madam — India has taken a concrete step towards hosting the Olympics and Paralympics by formally expressing interest in hosting the big ticket events. The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) officially submitted a Letter of Intent to the Future Host Commission of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), formally expressing India's interest in hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2036, officially known as the Games of the XXXVI

Olympiad. India's top sports administrators, including IOA President PT Usha, were at the Paris Olympics earlier in the year to lobby for the country's selection. There have been reports that India would push for the inclusion of indigenous disciplines like yoga, kho kho and kabaddi if the bid is successful.

IOC President Thomas Bach had also supported India's case, claiming that there was a "strong case" for India to host the Olympic Games. In the process, India joined nine other countries that have expressed interest in hosting the 2036 Games. The 10 countries that have shown initial interest in hosting the 2036 Games include Mexico (Mexico City, Guadalajara-Monterrey-Tijuana), Indonesia (Nusantara), Turkey (Istanbul), India (Ahmedabad), Poland (Warsaw, Krakow), Egypt (New Administrative Capital), and South Korea (Seoul Incheon).

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Gen Z: Hyper-connected yet shallow relations

In an age where friendships are as easy as a "follow" or a "like," Gen Z finds itself paradoxically more isolated than ever

In a world where friendships are just a tap away, Gen Z is paradoxically more connected and yet more alone than ever. With countless social media networks, endless group chats, and online "friends," you'd think they'd feel fulfilled. But under the endless likes, comments, and selfies, there's a haunting emptiness. I often meet young people who, despite their vast online networks, feel utterly isolated. They are connected to everyone, yet truly close to no one. Take Rhea, a 22-year-old with a picture-perfect online life. Her feed is filled with smiling photos, exotic vacations, and witty captions. But behind this flawless facade lies a young woman scarred by painful experiences. She lost her father at five, faced years of abuse, and carries a deep, invisible wound. Rhea carefully hides this pain, crafting an online persona that feels safe and acceptable. "I keep thinking if I post the right picture, maybe I'll finally feel like I belong," she admitted once, her voice breaking. Yet the emptiness doesn't fade. Her online "friends" see



the bright exterior, but none see the broken girl within. Another story is of Arjun, a young man shaped by a chaotic home and constant content bombardment. Now 20, he spends hours scrolling through his feed, comparing himself to others who appear effortlessly perfect. "Everyone seems so complete," he said, "but I feel like I'm failing." In a crisis, Arjun realises he has no one to truly rely on. His friendships, based on memes and brief exchanges, feel hollow when life gets tough. The endless scrolling only deepens his loneliness, as he sees everyone's best

moments while silently suffering through his worst. Rhea and Arjun's stories echo a painful truth for many in Gen Z. Friendships today are often shallow, based on convenience rather than commitment. They form and dissolve easily, leaving young people adrift in a sea of acquaintances who vanish when things get real. This generation's friendships are filtered through screens, built on quick likes and superficial messages. The traditional bonds of trust and time are slipping away, leaving behind connections that feel fleeting and, ultimately, empty.

What's missing here is depth — the kind of friendship that stands the test of hardship, that offers warmth and understanding beyond a screen.

For Rhea, there's a wounded inner child who craves a friend who will listen and care beyond the "perfect" image she shows online. For Arjun, there's a desperate need to find a friend who sees his struggles, not just his shared posts. As a society, we need to understand that true friendship isn't about quick exchanges or temporary validation.

It's about sharing real moments, both joyful and painful. It's about listening, being there, and caring without conditions. Perhaps, as Felice Buscaglia once said, "It's not enough to have lived." True living means creating joy, sharing love, and holding each other through life's storms. Until Gen Z learns to build friendships beyond the screen, they'll remain in search of bonds that can truly make them feel seen, safe, and understood. (The writer is a psychologist and mindset coach; views are personal)



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Aligning our actions with divine wisdom can only steer us through life's hardships



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

We want to live a nice life, but we do not know how. Individually, we all try but come up short except for a few, who seriously take shelter of God. Because God only can make a difference. A big percentage of us, if not all humans, are aware of God but are unable to become serious about making a proper attempt to link with God – the Creator. I will try in this article to get you interested in getting started in this noble act. I am using similes and contrasts – the usual ways to compare. And I have chosen an example of a businessman for this purpose. God is the Creator; we are aware of this fact. A businessman is a prime mover for a business venture. God creates the entire solar system. In the case of a businessman, he starts small and tries to grow it into a vast business empire. A businessman is intrinsically small, i.e., will always remain small, no matter how big his business empire may become. God is incomprehensibly big and will always be. Our problem is to think of God to be a person like us, just as He incarnates to teach us what is proper for us. Our ignorance is not limited to this fact only but extends to what we know. A businessman falsely assumes that what he knows about a business is sufficient. What happens? Many businesses fail. What he could have done? He could have prayed to God for guidance. God would have given him instructions through mediums, those around him. And the business would have succeeded, because God is omniscient, i.e., He



knows past, present and future also; God always knows what will work. God is also omnipresent, i.e. present everywhere all the time. A businessman tries to replicate and over-stress himself frequently. God can help if one remains in His shelter. Then, it becomes God's business, literally so. The businessman will get a partner, who owns everything in the first place. All businesses face challenges of many kinds because this earth's planet is a place of misery. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 8.15) Smooth sailing is out of the question. When God – the Controller gets involved, then, success is guaranteed, no matter what challenges come. The Omnipotent God takes care of them. A businessman is limited to what his 'karmaphalas' (fruits of past 'karmas') ordain. We can understand this by the fact that the extent of success of a business is widely varied. All work hard but destiny rules. With God in the picture, He becomes the 'Karta' (doer). My business survived even in the extreme conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. We even paid bonuses to our employees in this period, because God is involved. Where do many businesses falter? They don't follow 'dharma' (the highest religious/moral principles). And God is all for upholding dharma. So there is no help from God. You cross 'maryada' (acceptable limits) and face the music. Failed businessmen blame their luck for it. It is true because that was ordained. Bad luck could have been nullified if one had pleased God by staying within the dharma. The conclusion is to start with accepting that God is one and incomprehensibly big, and we are small parts of Him. We should take shelter from God and remain there. Then, we will be best served in whatever proper, i.e. according to dharma we do. God will guide help, and even micromanage our lives.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher; views are personal)

Trump 2.0: What lies ahead in his second term



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

For ardent supporters, it's a long-anticipated victory, a "Make America Great Again" revival, while critics recoil at the reality of his return



He's back. Brace yourselves: Donald Trump is set to reclaim the White House as the 47th President of the United States. He would become the first president since Grover Cleveland in 1892 to serve two terms that were not consecutive. Love him or loathe him, this moment is nothing short of historic. For his supporters, it's a long-awaited reckoning; for his critics, it's a nightmare realised. Hollywood elites—George Clooney, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Oprah Winfrey among them—are likely stewing in disbelief, unable to reconcile with the stark message that America is prepared to usher in another Trump era. Meanwhile, personalities like Megyn Kelly and Tucker Carlson bask in the triumph of what they perceive as the return of their "Messiah," the man who vowed to Make America Great Again. This is democracy in action, like it or not. In his first victory speech, Trump wasted no time hammering home his agenda: "I will not let my supporters down," he declared. "America's future will be bigger, better, bolder, richer, safer, and stronger than it has ever been." Bold words, indeed. Yet the question hangs—what will the cost of 'greatness' be in a nation this divided? This time, he returns stronger, fortified by allies like Elon Musk, while other titans—Jeff Bezos, for one—strive to remain neutral. Yet the fallout is profound. Influential voices such as Robert Kagan, a staunch advocate of liberal internationalism and husband of the American diplomat Victoria Nuland, have resigned, signalling that the ground is shifting. For mainstream media—outlets like The New York Times, NBC, and CNN—the election results are a rebuke they cannot ignore. These media powerhouses, which for years wielded narratives against Trump, now face a public that feels increasingly alienated from the polished, elitist stories they've been fed. The trust gap widens as citizens see the chasm



THIS IS DEMOCRACY IN ACTION, LIKE IT OR NOT IN HIS FIRST VICTORY SPEECH, TRUMP WASTED NO TIME HAMMERING HOME HIS AGENDA: "I WILL NOT LET MY SUPPORTERS DOWN," HE DECLARED

between elite narratives and their lived realities. Trump's second term will likely turn a blind eye to the domestic affairs of other nations, signalling potential cuts in funding to so-called civil society organisations and other international interests maintained by the US State Department and its clandestine bodies. Immigration policy, too, could see a harsher edge, as tensions over border security and the influx of immigrants under Biden intensify. This stricter stance could stoke the fires of domestic unrest as Americans grapple with yet another transformation of national priorities. The war in Ukraine may come to an end sooner rather than later, potentially through a bitter compromise with Russia, as many countries in Europe may not align with Trump as they did under the Biden administration. However, if Ukrainian President Zelenskyy has a different understanding of the situation, it may be time for him to seriously consider pursuing the Chinese peace proposal. Meanwhile, the conflict in West Asia is likely to pause, but tensions could rise, possibly leading to new forms of attacks on Iran. The relationship between Iran and the Trump administration will be crucial in determining the future scenario in West Asia, as decisions made in this context could significantly alter the region's geopolitical dynamics. One should not forget that it was during Trump's first administration that Qasem Soleimani, an Iranian military officer who served in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, was assassinated in Baghdad, Iraq, using a reaper drone (Predator B).

Soleimani was a key enabler of Iranian actions, and even now, he is widely regarded as a major influence in Iran and its alliances. On the home front, the controversial Project 2025 blueprint stands as a bold bid to remodel US government institutions in line with a nationalist, ultra-conservative vision. Critics warn of an authoritarian slide. Trump himself claimed he had "no hand in the policy," even as his campaign speeches echoed its themes. Dismantling regulatory agencies, installing ideologically driven personnel, and consolidating executive power—such moves could test the very checks and balances that underpin the American system. The potential cost? A dramatic weakening of civil liberties, environmental protections, and democratic norms, is likely to spark deep political divisions and civil unrest. If realised, this vision would also redefine America's role on the global stage. The "America First" doctrine, which shaped Trump's prior foreign policy, may once again destabilise multilateral efforts on urgent issues like climate change, nuclear disarmament, and trade. Trump's rhetoric could erode US alliances, and as Washington retreats from the mantle of democracy promotion, a vacuum forms—one that China, no doubt, is eager to fill. Worth noting is Trump's first note during his visit to the CIA headquarters, right after becoming the 45th president. Mainstream narratives often painted him as dismissive of the intelligence apparatus, but Trump's note challenged that view, acknowledging the agency's

importance. Now, as political winds shift, Trump is rumoured to be eyeing Kash Patel, an Indian-American with roots in counterterrorism and intelligence reform, as his new CIA head. Patel's controversial stance on challenging the so-called "deep state" marks a radical shift in US intelligence policy—likely a step towards Trump's broader agenda of power consolidation within the federal government. Patel, known for his book Government Gangsters: The Deep State, the Truth, and the Battle for Our Democracy, is expected to tackle intelligence reform head-on, aligning with Trump's vision of shaking up entrenched power structures. A second Trump administration would also stoke tensions with China, particularly in the Indo-Pacific, where US-China rivalry is reaching new heights. Trump's hawkish stance on Taiwan and the South China Sea could signal increased military presence, arms deals, and strengthened alliances with Japan, South Korea and India. The administration is likely to challenge China's Belt and Road Initiative and impose sanctions on Chinese firms, aiming to limit Beijing's influence. Smaller nations in the region, meanwhile, could find themselves stuck in a high-stakes dilemma—aligning with the US risks Beijing's wrath while leaning towards China risks Washington's ire. With Trump redefining US foreign policy, these nations may face an impossible choice in a tightening geopolitical vice. (The writer is a journalist and author; Views are personal)

PM-Vidyalaxmi: A yet another 'Modi Kee Guarantee' for learners

The Government has initiated this financial aid programme to harness the potential of the youth from the weaker sections

India has the largest number of millennials and Gen Zs in the world. This population constitutes a critical mass for increasing GER in higher education from the current 28 per cent to 50 per cent by 2035 as envisaged in NEP-2020. Moreover, India's working population in the age bracket of 15-64 is nearly 68 per cent. The current demographic dividend will not be available for a longer period as the youth population will turn old and thus will become non-productive. Precisely for this reason, PM Modi called the current time window in the lifespan of Bharat the 'Amrit Kaal' and has given a clarion call for making it 'Viksit' by 2047 through self-reliant measures. Skilled youth are in high



RAGHAVENDRA P TIWARI

demand the world over and this trend will always remain as skilling, upskilling and reskilling will always be required to cope with ever-evolving job profiles in the workplace. However, owing to the economic transformation that the nation has witnessed over the last decade, living standards have greatly improved leading to an enhanced cost of living. And, education is no exception.

The Central Government has taken several initiatives to ensure hassle-free access to quality higher education, especially regarding NEP-2020 implementation. These include multidisciplinary and learning outcome-based curriculum for holistic learning; innovative pedagogy (experiential learning, internship, field immersion, etc); evaluation to test the learning outcomes; Academic Bank of Credits; Multiple Entry-Exit; Dual degree, joint degree and twin degree programmes; emphasis on Indian Knowledge System and Universal Human Values, etc. The latest edition to the long list is the PM-Vidyalaxmi scheme to provide collateral-free, guarantor-free financial loans to needy meritorious students covering all categories to ease them from financial constraints for pursuing quality higher education. Approved by the Cabinet on November 5, 2024, as a Deepawali Gift to the nation, PM-Vidyalaxmi is a mission mode, simple, transparent, student-friendly and fully digital mechanism to facilitate easy access to loans to meritorious students admitted in, to begin with, top 860 quality higher education institutions. This initiative provides a single-window integrated platform for students seeking educational loans to apply for it and to track their applications. PM Vidyalaxmi will add to the scope and reach of earlier initiatives of the current government for maximising access to quality higher education for socially deprived sections



of society. Under this scheme, students will be eligible to obtain collateral-free, guarantor-free loans from banks and financial institutions to cover the full amount of tuition fees and other expenses to be incurred for pursuing academic programs. Under PM Vidyalaxmi, the government will also provide a 75 per cent credit guarantee of outstanding default for loan amounts up to 7.5 lakhs to support banks to

expand coverage. The scheme will also provide for 3 per cent interest subvention on loans up to Rs 10 lakh during the moratorium period for those students having an annual family income of Rs 8.00 lakhs and are not covered under any government scholarship of interest subvention. This will be in addition to full interest subvention already offered to students with up to Rs 4.5 lakhs annual family income. Interest subvention will be paid through E-vouchers and Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) wallets. An outlay of Rs 3,600 Crore has been made available for the period from 2024-25 to 2030-31, and 7 lakh fresh students are expected to get the benefit of this interest subvention during the above timeslot. PM-Vidyalaxmi will supple-

ment the two components of the scheme of Pradhan Mantri Uchchar Shiksha Protsahan (PM-USP), namely, the Central Sector Interest Subsidy (CSIS) and Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme (CGFS) for education loans, already offered by the Ministry of Education. Under the PM-USP-CSIS, students pursuing technical/professional courses from approved institutions. PM Vidyalaxmi, in a nutshell, is an entirely new scheme launched for empowering youth, especially of the middle class, with necessary financial support for pursuing the education of their choice. The scheme will operate in tandem with PM-USP to provide financial support to all deserving students to pursue quality higher education and techni-

cal/professional education in select quality Higher Education Institutions in India. The newly launched scheme, apart from making quality higher education available to meritorious students, will ease the impounding stress of students opting for loans and will enable them to fully concentrate on learning. Kudos to PM Narendra Modi and Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan for launching a new learner-centric scheme for spearheading the implementation of NEP-2020. PM Vidyalaxmi is in fact, a confluence of Vidya, the Goddess of Knowledge, and Laxmi, the Goddess of Wealth! (The writer is Vice Chancellor, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



TCS bags multi-year deal from Air France-KLM

India's largest IT services company Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has bagged a multi-year deal to assist Air France-KLM in transitioning to an advanced, AI-ready, and cloud-native data landscape, according to a release. The deal will help Air France-KLM - a Europe-based global aviation leader in passenger transport, cargo transport and aeronautical maintenance - "become the most data-centric airline group in the world", the release added. It will facilitate Air France-KLM's transition to an advanced, AI-ready, and cloud-native data landscape. "Over the next three years, TCS will modernise the airline group's data by moving it to cloud, promoting the next generation of data-driven aviation," it said without disclosing the financial details of the contract. This shift will help Air France-KLM exit data centres and harness the strength of the cloud, supporting the sustainable and adaptive aviation industry.



Irdai proposes to amend regulatory sandbox norms

Regulator Irdai has proposed to amend the norms related to 'regulatory sandbox' by incorporating principle-based approach and further facilitate adoption of innovative ideas and new concepts across the insurance value chain. Regulatory sandbox usually refers to live testing of new products or services in a controlled/test regulatory environment for which regulators may or may not permit certain relaxations. Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) had constituted an internal committee to review the Irdai (Regulatory Sandbox) Regulations. Based on the recommendations of the committee, it has proposed amendments to the regulatory sandbox regulations and seeks comments from the public at large on the proposed amendments. Issuing an exposure draft on regulatory sandbox regulations, Irdai said the amendment seeks adoption of principle based approach over rule based approach.



'Bengal to announce policies on GCC, semiconductor'

The West Bengal government plans to announce policies on global capability centres (GCC) and semiconductor in the coming months to position the state as the next IT destination in the country, IT and Electronics department minister Babul Supriyo said on Thursday. Speaking at an interactive session organised by CII here, the minister said that West Bengal aspires to be the next IT hub in India. "By facilitating a conducive environment to technological companies like 100 per cent electric duty waiver, 100 per cent waiver of stamp duty and 50 per cent waiver of property tax, the state will become a favourite destination for the firms", he said. The government is in the process of coming up with policies on GCC and semiconductor with the view to create digital infrastructure in the state. GCCs are offshore units of multinational companies that operate across the globe and generate substantial employment opportunities.

CII pitches for further reform in taxation system, sustaining capex

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Industry chamber CII on Thursday pitched for further reforms in the tax system, including through simplification of taxes, as well as sustaining the capital investment momentum in the Budget for 2025-26. In a meeting with Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra, CII urged the government to increase the capex by 25 per cent over 2024-25 (BE) with a sharp focus on infrastructure related to rural areas, agriculture, and the social sector.



The Budget for the 2025-26 fiscal year is set to be presented on February 1, 2025.

CII President Sanjiv Puri said given the intrinsic strength of the economy and with growth aspirations of the people, this is an opportune time for India to design a blueprint and a template outlining the next phase of reforms.

"India has emerged as the beacon of stability and growth in a fraught world, in the last decade. We are looking at the Union Budget to further consolidate this position and create a competitive India, that is pro-

perous, inclusive, equitable, environmentally advanced," Puri said.

CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee said the Budget comes at a time when the world is going through some period of geopolitical and economic uncertainty.

"With the kind of progressive budgets that we have seen in the last few years, we are very

hopeful that the trend would continue and we shall see a strongly growth oriented budget. Especially important would be to see how the budget gives a boost to consumption and

also gets private sector investments to kick start again," Banerjee said. CII called for sustaining the cycle of capital investment in areas such as infrastructure to provide a further fillip to growth through a boost to employment and consumption.

CII also made a strong pitch for further reforms in the tax system, including through simplification of taxes, increasing India's tax competitiveness, broadening of tax base and reducing tax litigation to build a globally competitive Indian economy.

EAM Jaishankar meets CEOs, business leaders in Australia

PNS ■ SYDNEY

The world would be moving to a much more integrated global workplace prompting many countries, including the US, to make a distinction in immigration and mobility, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said here on Thursday.

It will be the Corporates that will decide whether the talent goes to the business or the business goes to the talent, Jaishankar said as he harped on mobility of talent and skills during a meeting with the CEOs and business leaders in Australia.

"Even as there is a re-globalisation, or reworking of the current architecture, apart from the technological changes, I think, the demographic unevenness of the world is beginning to bite us," Jaishankar, who is on a five-day official visit to Australia, said.

Pointing out that there would be economies where the demand would be high, the talents may not be plentiful, may be different in other places, he said, "We will be moving, perhaps in the next few years, to a much more integrated global workplace that many countries, including even the United States, will make a distinction in immigration and



Economically justified mobility will have to be fostered by those where the economic value is less or negative (and) will have to be managed, he said. He also spoke about priorities for India -- how do you create and manage and optimise a global workplace? "And now the global workplace doesn't mean that the talent alone has to move. Businesses can move as well

mobility."

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already seen that happening in the last few years, the Minister said, "At the last count, we have about 1,800 global capability centres in India, which, between them, generate about USD 150 billion worth of experts." India sees this trend as intensifying, because the more technology driven, more digital era is going to require a certain concentration and access to skills and talent, he pointed out. "So, whether the talent goes to the business or the business goes to the talent,

that's a decision which Corporates will be making."

Among the possibilities arising after the Republican Donald Trump winning the presidential election in the US on Wednesday, Jaishankar said, there will be in a way, "more geopolitical hedging that what will inevitably happen as a consequence of policies which we can safely predict -- many more of us would be seeking more relationships to keep life steady."

The election result in the US would help accelerate the reordering of supply chains which is already taking place in India, he said.

Jaishankar was also optimistic about how, politics notwithstanding, the world will be greener even if the pace of the greening of the economy may vary.

India is certainly taking "a big bet on green hydrogen, on green ammonia and thinking of green shipping corridors, electric mobility is already on us and we are looking at biodiesel," the minister said, adding, India is also very strongly pushing sustainable aviation fuel.

Earlier, Jaishankar listed India's achievements, especially over the last decade in various fields.

IMPORTS OF SOLAR GLASS FROM CHINA, VIETNAM

DGTR for anti-dumping duty

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The commerce ministry has recommended imposition of an anti-dumping duty of up to USD 677 per tonne on imports of a certain type of solar glass from China and Vietnam, with an aim to guard domestic producers.

In its preliminary findings, the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR), a wing of the ministry, has concluded that "Textured Toughened (Tempered) Coated and Uncoated Glass" have been exported to India at a price below the normal value, resulting in dumping.

The notification of the directorate said that the imports from these countries have caused material injury to the domestic industry.

"The authority recommends

imposition of provisional anti-dumping duty on the imports," it has said.

It added that the domestic industry has made significant investments to manufacture the glass and make India self-reliant. The impact of the duties on the downstream industry is only 2.52 per cent and is insignificant.

The recommended duty ranges between USD 565 per tonne and USD 677 per tonne.

The finance ministry takes the final decision to impose duties. The DGTR conducted the probe following applications regarding the same from Borosil Renewables Ltd on behalf of the domestic industry. Anti-dumping probes are conducted by countries to determine whether domestic industries have been hurt because of a surge in cheap imports.

Sensex, Nifty tank more than 1% after 2-day rally

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Snapping its two-day winning run, benchmark Sensex tanked 836 points due to profit-taking in banking and auto shares as investors turned cautious ahead of the US Federal Reserve policy decision and unabated foreign fund outflows.

As the optimism over Donald Trump's win in the US presidential polls waned, the BSE Sensex dropped by 836.34 points, or 1.04 per cent, to settle at 79,541.79. During the day, it slumped 958.79 points or 1.19 per cent to 79,419.34.

The NSE Nifty declined 284.70 points or 1.16 per cent to finish at 24,199.35.

From the 30-share Sensex pack, Tata Motors, Tech



Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, JSW Steel, Sun Pharma, Asian Paints, IndusInd Bank and ICICI Bank were the major losers.

State Bank of India emerged as the only gainer from the pack.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 4,445.59 crore on Wednesday, according to

exchange data.

"The domestic market ended with a deeper cut while eroding the previous day's gains. Disappointing Q2 and persistent selling by FIIs continue to dampen market sentiment.

"The broader market saw a widespread sell-off as optimism over Trump's election victory waned. However, investors are now shifting their attention to the upcoming Fed policy meeting and domestic public outlay, which are anticipated to offer more insight into the future trade path," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

The BSE midcap gauge declined 0.67 per cent and smallcap index went lower by 0.44 per cent.

Brazil can be major source for India's urad, tur imports: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday said Brazil has the potential to become a major source for the import of black gram (urad) and pigeon peas (tur) for the country.

The issue was discussed by a Brazilian delegation led by senior Agriculture Ministry official Julio Cesar Ramos during a courtesy call to Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare here.

"Brazil has emerged as a supplier of urad in recent years and has the potential to become a major source of India's urad and tur imports," the consumer affairs ministry said in a statement after the meeting.

Gold slides Rs 1,650 to Rs 79,500 per 10 grams

Silver plunges Rs 2,900

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold and silver prices slumped in the national capital on Thursday, with the precious metal declining Rs 1,650 and slipping below the Rs 80,000-mark, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Trepid demand by local jewellers amid weak trend overseas as the primary reason behind the fall in prices, traders said.

The precious metal slipped Rs 1,650 to Rs 79,500 per 10 grams against the previous close of Rs 81,150 per 10 grams on Wednesday.

Silver, too followed suit, plunging Rs 2,900 to Rs 93,800 per kg on reduced offtake by industrial units and coin makers. It had traded flat at Rs

96,700 per kg on Wednesday. Prices of gold of 99.5 per cent purity also slipped Rs 1,650 to Rs 79,100 per 10 grams. In the previous session, it had settled at Rs 80,750 per 10 grams.

Sentiment weakened on the back of subdued global trend, and the fall in demand in local jewellers put pressure on prices of gold, traders said.

Meanwhile, in futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for December delivery is traded flat at Rs 76,655 per 10 grams.

"Gold traded in a flat to range-bound manner as market participants awaited the outcome of the Federal Reserve's (Fed) meeting tonight, with expectations



leaning toward a 0.25 per cent rate cut," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said.

However, silver contracts for December delivery fell Rs 9, or 0.01 per cent, to trade at Rs 90,811 per kg.

Comex gold futures fell USD 1.90 per ounce, or 0.07 per cent, at USD 2,674.40 per ounce in the Asian market hours.

INOX India to supply cryogenic tanks to UK

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

INOX India on Thursday said it will supply five specialised cryogenic tanks to UK-based Highview Power for their Liquid Air Energy Storage (LAES) project. The tanks will be supplied from its facility in Gujarat to the LAES project coming up at Manchester in the UK.

In a statement, INOX India said this is the company's first order for a liquid air energy storage project. Siddharth Jain, Promoter & Non-Executive Director, INOX India said "By leveraging our expertise in large-scale cryogenic equipment, we aim to contribute substantially to the UK's energy storage."

I-T dept searches Truecaller India offices in tax evasion case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Income-Tax Department Thursday carried out searches at offices of global caller ID platform Truecaller on charges of tax evasion, official sources said.

The Stockholm-headquartered company said it was cooperating with the investigators. Tax officials said the searches were aimed to gather detailed information and check documents in connection with certain charges of tax evasion including those pertaining to transfer pricing (TP) issues.

According to the company's website, Truecaller has offices in Bengaluru, Mumbai and Gurugram in India.

The company said in a public statement that "On Thursday 7 November 2024, Truecaller's India offices were visited by Indian Tax officials."

"Truecaller are currently assisting the authorities to the full extent at our offices. This came without prior notice and Truecaller are currently awaiting official confirmation and communication from the tax departments," it said.

This is not an uncommon

practice and Truecaller will cooperate fully with the relevant authorities, the company said.

With regards to taxation, the Swedish company added, as a publicly-listed company, our practices are entirely transparent.

"Truecaller would like to reiterate that Truecaller is not subject to any tax investigation in India outside the routine tax audits.

"Truecaller's group financial statements have always received an unqualified audit opinion. Truecaller has always paid all taxes due in India and all regions where it operates," it said.

The company said its transfer pricing policy for its intra-group transactions is consistent with the internationally accepted arm's length standard, as has been informed earlier.

"The purpose is to ensure that Truecaller pays tax in a way that is correct from the perspective of both the Swedish and the Indian tax authorities.

"The policy is continuously independently reviewed to ensure that it meets the tax law requirements of both countries," the company said.



FEMA PROBE

ED searches 19 premises of Amazon, Flipkart vendors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate Thursday conducted searches against some of the "main vendors" operating on platforms of e-commerce giant Amazon and Flipkart as part of a foreign investment "violation" investigation, official sources said.

A total of 19 premises of these "preferred" vendors located in Delhi, Gurugram and Panchkula (Haryana),

Hyderabad (Telangana) and Bengaluru (Karnataka) were covered as part of the action, the sources said.

It is learnt that the ED inspected documents and took copies of some from the premises of about six such vendors who were not named.

The sources said a probe has been initiated by the federal agency under the provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) after it received several com-



plaints against the two large e-commerce companies where it is alleged that they were "violating India's FDI (foreign direct investment) rules by directly or indirectly influ-

encing the sale price of goods or services and not providing level playing field for all the vendors".

There was no immediate response from the two e-commerce companies. Meanwhile, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) welcomed the ED action. "The CAIT, along with several other trade bodies, has been raising these issues for the past few years. I welcome the Enforcement Directorate's actions as a step

in the right direction," CAIT secretary general and BJP MP from Delhi Praveen Khandelwal said in a statement.

He claimed that the the Competition Commission of India (CCI) had also issued "penalty notices" to Amazon and Flipkart, and their "preferred" sellers, for "engaging" in anti-competitive practices that have adversely affected small traders and 'kirana' (grocery) stores.

UNREQUITED LOVE AND REVENGE UNFOLD IN THUKRA KE MERA PYAAR



Thukra Ke Mera Pyaar, the latest Disney+ Hotstar series produced by Bombay Show Studios LLP and directed by Shraddha Pasi Jairath, promises a deep dive into love, betrayal and the unbreakable grip of fate. Streaming from November 22, 2024, this series follows the story of Kuldeep (Dhaval Thakur) and Shanvika (Sanchita Basu), two young lovers from Uttar Pradesh, torn apart by caste and class divides. The intense narrative showcases a mix of college romance, heartbreak and the pursuit of revenge.

Director Shraddha Pasi Jairath shares, "This series goes beyond romance, exploring themes of prejudice and human emotion. Working with talented newcomers like Dhaval and Sanchita made the storytelling experience truly unique."

Dhaval Thakur, who stars as Kuldeep, reflects on his role: "Bringing Kuldeep to life was a powerful journey, from trusting the script to collaborating closely with the team. I'm excited to see how the audience connects with our work." Sanchita Basu, who plays Shanvika, adds, "Playing Shanvika's free-spirited character was a liberating experience and a beautiful homage to the timeless tales of love I grew up admiring."

Experience a stirring blend of classic romance and modern emotion with *Thukra Ke Mera Pyaar* on Disney+ Hotstar.



UORFI JAVED SPARKS ROMANCE RUMOURS WITH MYSTERY MAN!

Uorfi Javed, famed for her bold fashion and unapologetic style, recently turned heads and stirred rumours of romance when spotted with a mysterious companion at a chic Mumbai restaurant. Known for her solo outings, Uorfi seemed to be basking in a softer, glowing vibe as she shared warm smiles and easy laughter with her well-dressed, enigmatic companion. Fans were quick to notice the chemistry between the two, sparking a wave of social media speculation about this intriguing new figure in Uorfi's life. Observers couldn't help but note the undeniable "love is in the air" atmosphere. Could this be the beginning of a fresh, romantic chapter for Uorfi Javed? Known for her fierce independence, Uorfi's latest appearance has captivated fans, who are eager to learn more about the man who seems to have captured her attention. For now, her radiant, refreshed look has followers excited about this potential love story in the making.

B'WOOD ON HIGH ALERT: SHAH RUKH KHAN FACES FRESH DEATH THREAT!

After Salman Khan, Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan has received a chilling death threat, sparking heightened security measures. An FIR has been lodged at Bandra Police Station in Mumbai, and reports link the call to a man in Raipur, Chhattisgarh, identified as Faizan. The Mumbai Police have dispatched a team to investigate further.

This isn't the first time the "King of Bollywood" has faced such risks. Following the blockbuster releases of *Pathaan* and *Jawan* in 2023, Shah Rukh revealed ongoing threats to his life, leading authorities to assign him Y+ security. He's since been heavily guarded, with caution heightened, especially after refraining from stepping outside on his birthday. The Bollywood superstar is not alone in facing such threats; Salman Khan has also been targeted by what are believed to be threats from Lawrence Bishnoi's gang, known for its criminal activities. Salman, too, has been granted Y+ security in response. The recent assassination of political figure Baba Siddique, allegedly claimed by a Bishnoi gang member, has amplified fears for high-profile individuals in Mumbai. Shah Rukh Khan's team has yet to comment on the recent threat, but his fans remain concerned, and both stars are reported to be adjusting routines in response. The Mumbai Police, meanwhile, continue to monitor the situation closely, committed to protecting the two titans of Bollywood.

Tamannaah Bhatia's Sikandar Ka Muqaddar to release on November 29, 2024

Tamannaah Bhatia's much-anticipated heist drama *Sikandar Ka Muqaddar* is set to release on November 29, 2024, and fans are already buzzing with excitement. The official announcement came from Netflix, which revealed the release date alongside a gripping poster for the film. The caption teased, "Teen aaropi, lekin kaun apradhi? Case jald hi khulega. Watch *Sikandar Ka Muqaddar*, out 29 November, only on Netflix!" This has only fueled the intrigue around the movie, which promises to be a thrilling ride full of twists and suspense.



In *Sikandar Ka Muqaddar*, Tamannaah Bhatia steps into a completely different avatar, showcasing her versatility in an adventurous and action-packed role. Her character is said to be dynamic and enigmatic, adding an exciting layer to the narrative. Alongside her, the film stars Jimmy Shergill and Avinash Tiwary, with the trio promising an engaging performance that will keep audiences on the edge of their seats. Fans have been eagerly following the film's updates, particularly after Netflix shared behind-the-scenes footage that showed Tamannaah executing intense action sequences, heightening the anticipation.

Tamannaah has been on a roll this year, with a number of high-profile projects under her belt. She recently wrapped filming for *Odela 2*, her much-awaited Telugu film and had an impactful start to 2024

with the Tamil hit *Aranmanai 4*, which grossed over 100 crore at the box office. She also made waves with her appearance in the viral track *Aaj Ki Raat from Stree 2*, which sparked conversations around body positivity and the celebration of the hourglass figure. With *Sikandar Ka Muqaddar* on the horizon, as well as other projects like *Daring Partners* produced by

Karan Johar, Tamannaah continues to captivate audiences with her diverse and evolving talent.

With just a few weeks to go before the release, the excitement around *Sikandar Ka Muqaddar* continues to build, and fans can't wait to see Tamannaah in this bold new role on November 29, 2024, only on Netflix.

Shekhar Kapur to begin shooting Masoom: The Next Generation in February 2025

Legendary filmmaker Shekhar Kapur is set to revisit the world of his iconic 1983 film *Masoom* with a sequel, tentatively titled *Masoom: The Next Generation*. Slated to begin filming in February 2025, this project has sparked immense excitement among fans who hold the original dear for its moving portrayal of family bonds and forgiveness. The original *Masoom*, featuring Naseeruddin Shah, Shabana Azmi and a young Jugad Hansraj, became a classic for its deep emotional storytelling and Kapur's sensitive direction, leaving audiences profoundly touched. While details about the new cast and plot are closely guarded, sources reveal that the sequel will explore the intricacies of modern-day family relationships through a fresh lens, reflecting shifts in contemporary society.

Kapur's decision to bring *Masoom* back is generating buzz, with the director reportedly aiming to adapt the themes to resonate with today's audience, creating a blend of nostalgia and modern relevance. Fans eagerly await more updates, including the cast, storyline and release details, as *Masoom: The Next Generation* gears up to capture hearts once again.



FUN

ARCHIE



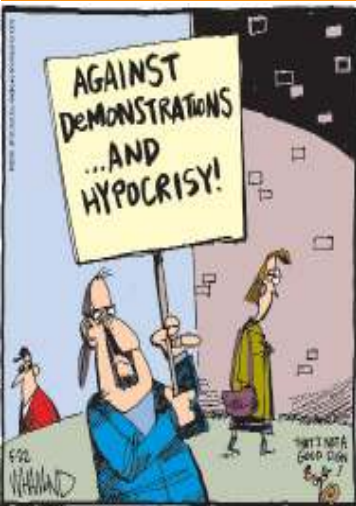
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GARFIELD



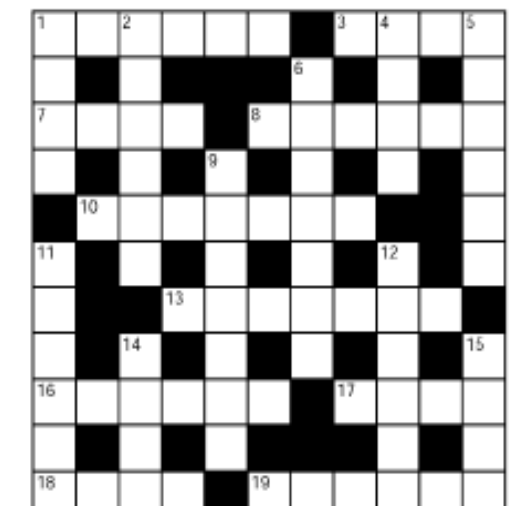
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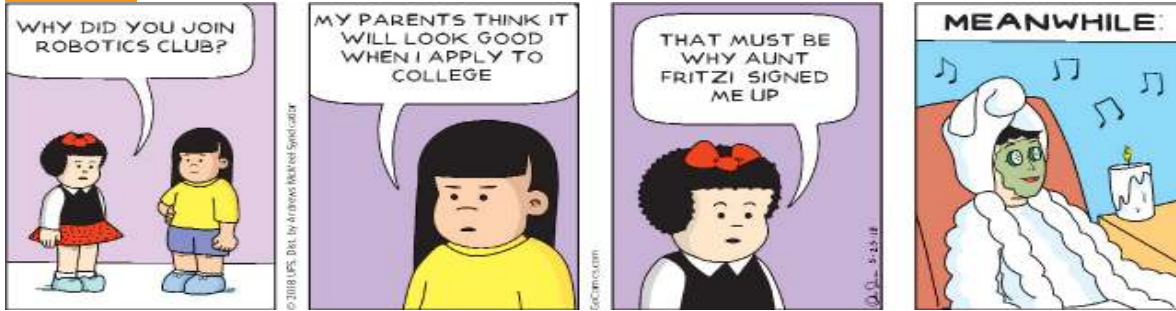
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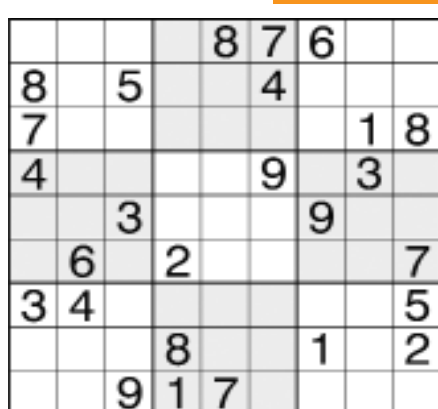
CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- Bleeding injuries
- Counts up
- This heavy metal is used for making fishing sinkers
- Took part in a game
- Write this on an envelope
- A two-wheeled ride-on you push along with a foot
- Of greater height
- Young female
- Gritty stuff on beaches
- A small river
- Australia's largest city
- A flower on a fruit tree
- A game with bats and wickets
- A prickly desert plant
- Make up your mind
- A map of a building
- This fruit has a stone

DOWN

- Go on foot
- Ugandans live here
- Parts of a week



GINGER MEGGS



TRAVELOGUE



TEJAL SINHA
 tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

'SIDDHARTH AND I JUST LOVE TO HIT THE TRAIL IN A NEW CITY'

For Aditi Rao Hydari, travel is more than just a getaway—it's an ongoing journey of exploration and connection. In an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer*, she reveals how her wanderlust goes hand-in-hand with her belief in inclusivity and understanding

Where the spotlight fades, a new script unfolds. For Aditi Rao Hydari, an acclaimed actress and wanderlust enthusiast, the world is a cinematic canvas waiting to be explored. Beyond the silver screen, Aditi's true blockbuster is the uncharted territory of travel—a journey that weaves together culture, creativity and self-discovery. With an ancestral heritage rooted in Hyderabad's rich history and a heart that beats for the unknown, she traverses the globe with an insatiable curiosity. Her travels are a sensory exploration of the world's diverse landscapes, cuisines, art forms and human stories. From the majestic forts of Rajasthan to the tranquil beaches of the Maldives and from the vibrant streets of Europe to the mystical monasteries of the Himalayas, the *Hey Sinamika* fame's adventures are an attestation to her zest for life. As she navigates the intersection of tradition and modernity, her travels inspire her craft, nourish her soul and broaden her perspective. Through her experiences, she uncovers hidden gems, forges meaningful connections and celebrates the beauty of our world—one frame, one story and one journey at a time. As a self-proclaimed wanderlust, her love for travel stems from her curiosity about different cultures and her belief in inclusivity.

"I love travelling because I'm one of those wanderlusts," says the *Ajeeb Daastaans* fame as her enthusiasm was pretty evident in this chat with *The Pioneer*.

Her love for travel goes far beyond sightseeing; it is deeply rooted in her curiosity for different cultures and her belief in the power of human connection. The *Maha Samudaram* fame views travel as an opportunity to immerse herself in the stories of people and places rather than just observe them from a distance.

"I love it! I'm curious about different cultures. I never look at anybody as the other. I believe in inclusivity." Travelling for her isn't just about exploring new landscapes but about understanding the diverse ways in which people live, think and express themselves. "It's really about human beings," she gushes as she adds, "It doesn't matter where they're from, where you are from, or what food they eat. It's just about the connection of hearts and you do that when you travel." The *Murder 3* actress' love for travel extends to the way she experiences new places. She is not one for rigid itineraries or



packed schedules. "I am a traveller with a vivid imagination. When I travel to a place, I prefer for the day to happen smoothly. I dislike busy schedules. I favour genuine and engaging experiences," she enthuses. The *Sammoohanam* leading lady firmly believes that the best way to truly experience a city is with the guidance of a local. "The most effective way to discover a city is with the guidance of a resident. This enhances the overall experience," she affirms. For Aditi, travel is about connecting with the heartbeat of a place and this is something she learned early in life. She recalls her favourite travel moments, particularly with her partner, Siddharth, who shares her passion for spontaneous exploration. "We love to just get lost in a new city," she says with warm love for her hubby. "I think that's the fun of travelling with him." Their last adventure together took them to Milan and Florence, where Aditi had the added joy of

connecting with family, as her cousin lives in Milan. "It was a lot of fun," she reflects with a warm tone.

India, with its vibrant diversity, is another source of inspiration for her travels. "India is so rich and diverse. I can't say one place because there are so many places in India and that's what makes us special," she shares. For her, celebrating India's cultural diversity and unique stories is essential and she hopes the country will continue to embrace and celebrate these differences. While she has travelled extensively, she expresses a particular longing to explore parts of India she hasn't yet discovered, especially the Northeast and parts of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. "At this point, my bucket list is the North East," she says with excitement.

Reflecting on an early travel experience, our dearest Bibbojan recalls her trip to Udaipur at the age of 19, where she went with her teacher and friends to attend a dance concert. "I recall visiting the Shrinathji Temple in Nathdwara at four o'clock in the morning," she says, her voice softening at the memory. "The simple beauty of the temple left me in awe. Additionally, being there on January 1 added to the uniqueness of the morning." These moments of spiritual connection remain etched in her mind as some of the most powerful experiences of her life.

Growing up in Hyderabad, Aditi was surrounded by warmth and hospitality, which, in her view, is a hallmark of Indian culture. "I hail from Hyderabad, where the locals are extremely generous and welcoming towards visitors," she explains. "I believe Rajasthan reflects similar feelings—the locals are welcoming and amiable, they go out of their way to ensure visitors feel comfortable and the cuisine is outstanding." She admires how Rajasthan's local culture, with its deserts, lakes, mountains, art forms and music, creates an enchanting atmosphere. "There is a vast array of things to discover, ranging from deserts, lakes and the Aravalli mountain range to various traditional art forms, music, delicious food and handicrafts. Rajasthan possesses a lively essence that gives daily life a sense of enchantment."

Of course, known for its rich culture and stunning architecture, as a child, the 11 Aditi was captivated by the traditional arts of Rajasthan. "My mother would bring me to see puppet shows and *Kalbeliya* dance performances. I was captivated by every performance in the past," she recalls. The music of the *Manganiyars* and *Langas* also holds a special place in her heart. "Their songs evoke strong emotions in me, making me feel overwhelmed by their hauntingly beautiful melodies." "During my childhood, I was taught to embrace a wider array of individuals, customs, societies and languages," the *Bhoomi* fame says. "When you immerse yourself in the local lifestyle, you gain a deeper insight into the heartbeat of the location—sociologically, historically and culturally." For Aditi, travel isn't just about seeing new places—it's about truly understanding and connecting with them on a profound, human level.

Her approach to travel is deeply personal and profoundly enriching. It's not just about visiting new places, but about forming lasting connections and gaining a deeper understanding of the world through the eyes of its people. As she continues to explore the uncharted corners of India and beyond, her journey is a reminder that travel is not just about destinations—it's about the stories we gather, the experiences we cherish and the hearts we touch along the way.

I HAVE MY FAVOURITE TRAVEL PARTNER WITH ME, SIDDHARTH, WHO IS VERY MUCH LIKE ME AND WE LOVE TO JUST GET LOST IN A NEW CITY. I THINK THAT'S THE FUN PART OF TRAVELLING WITH HIM

INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO ELECTRONIC MUSIC

SHIKHA DUGGAL
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The dynamic House/Techno identity of Faraz Ehsan, '8-Bit Culprit', comes from the colourful streets of India. Known for pushing the envelope, this creative artist creates captivating soundscapes and lights up dance floors with performances that are unforgettable. Thus, this artist electrified us with an exclusive interview as well as by bursting into the scene and elevating India's flourishing electronic music culture! "Incorporating new components and methods into my fundamental styles while maintaining their emotional resonance and core energy has always been a challenge for me," in his distinctive manner, he says.

At the age of 15, Faraz began DJing and in 2008, he got his first residency at a nearby nightclub. He is greatly influenced by musicians that led his early forays into avant-garde electronic music, including *Sphongle*, *Perfect Stranger* and *Trentemoller*. Today, when the electronic music scene is brought up, he says, "Over the past ten years, India's electronic music industry has grown significantly, thanks to societal changes and a growing underground movement. I've actively worked on honing my skills over the years by concentrating on performance dynamics, modifying my sets as needed to fit the space and producing immersive experiences."

Soon after, production became involved as Faraz wanted to compose music to give his performances more depth and hypnotism. In 2016, he released his debut single, *Sluggo*. "My approach to music production has been greatly influenced by my knowledge of how to operate a room as a DJ. In order to keep things interesting during breakdowns, I've naturally tended to create tracks that reflect my DJ approach, with surprising switches or shifts. Every piece of music I write aims

to disrupt monotony and infuse it with new vitality."

Then he remembers, "The creative process may be both very individualised and group-based. For me, a song usually begins with an idea or feeling I wish to express. I might write down a melody or rhythm that encapsulates that concept and let it develop naturally. I occasionally use field recordings or samples as inspiration, incorporating textures that speak to my experiences. Whether it's through complex beats, atmospheric layers, or sudden changes that keep the dance floor moving, the aim is to create a sound experience that captivates listeners. It's a combination of exploration and intuition, with each component adding to the track's overall story."

His nickname, '8-Bit Culprit', conjures nostalgia with a twist of the future! "For me, the name has a particular meaning. I can remain true to myself since it reflects my upbringing and worldview, which are based on traditional values. A key component of my music and brand is nostalgia. I grew up playing video games a lot, thus the name '8-Bit' reminds me of that bygone age. I was always a little bit of a threat as a naughty child and I was caught for both things I did and things I didn't do, which is how I got the moniker 'culprit'. I still have that naughty child inside of me that is ready to release the dirtiest and funniest songs to make the dance floor lively." Faraz has a very straightforward approach to music and follows the maxim "less is more" when creating his compositions. His idea for clever underground music is to communicate a tale without regard to genre. Every performance set or song he creates is in tune with his current mood, making music the primary means of communicating his feelings to his audience. "Beyond any particular style or genre, my music is a genuine reflection of who I am. I enjoy writing music of all genres, incorporating elements from my life while always trying to

maintain authenticity and originality. I strive to create a unique vibe within the well-known frameworks of house music, jungle/breaks, etc., by primarily merging textures and rhythms that represent my particular interests from other musical genres. I want to keep my songs trending while being distinctively my by subtly pushing the boundaries of sound design and groove," he adds.

He is adamant that progression is essential and that his music should have a beginning and a finish. His setups typically aim to take viewers on a memorable journey while compromising a somber, dark and melancholic atmosphere. "I think the EDM world is taking notice of the enormous talent and uniqueness of Indian DJs and producers. India will soon emerge as a significant player in the global electronic music scene thanks to its distinctive fusion of many influences and expanding fan base. By automating difficult production procedures and facilitating more dynamic, immersive live performances, AI and machine learning can open up new creative possibilities. My imprint will begin in early 2025 and I have a number of exciting releases and partnerships planned. I'm excited to collaborate with *We Do We* campaign to create a collective moment, strengthening bonds and community ties with my listeners." His next professional step will be to transition to a full live presentation featuring just his own musical compositions! He has been performing a semi-live set lately, receiving some humble criticism from Indian music fans and influential figures. Undoubtedly a little-known gem, 8-bit-culprit contributes significantly to the expanding Indian electronic music scene.

In an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*, electronic music artist Faraz Ehsan, better known as '8-Bit Culprit', delves into his journey of redefining India's underground House and techno scene. With his innovative soundscapes and evocative performances, Faraz has become a key figure in shaping the nation's electronic music culture, leaving audiences captivated on dance floors across the country



Demystifying Alzheimer's: Who needs genetic testing and what it reveals?

Alzheimer's, one of the most progressive neurodegenerative diseases, impacts millions across the globe. Lifestyle factors and other environmental elements contribute to this disease, but genetics play a significant role. Genetic testing can give people insight into their inherent dispositions and risk profiles for developing Alzheimer's, especially in those with a family history. WHO reports that Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia and may contribute to 60-70% of cases worldwide.

Who should consider genetic testing?

Genetic testing is also recommended for individuals with a family history of Alzheimer's disease, especially if those affected were diagnosed before the age of 65. Genetic Alzheimer's tends to begin early in life; however, a test may allow a level of assessment of the degree of risk. This can be very useful if diagnosed within the first line of relatives. APOE-ε4 is the most common gene associated with Alzheimer's, but it does not guarantee the development of the disease. Approximately 20%-25% of those suffering from Alzheimer's have this genetic disposition. In India, there are about 8.8 million citizens over 60 who are diagnosed with dementia, which gives some indication that genetic clues can contribute to future planning and prevention strategies. The rising incidence of dementia, including Alzheimer's, necessitates a dedicated focus on spreading awareness and early intervention.

What does genetic testing reveal?

GENETIC TESTING TYPICALLY IDENTIFIES TWO TYPES OF GENES:

APOE-ε4: The most common gene implicated in Alzheimer's is best described as APOE. There is a proven association between a copy or two of the APOE-ε4 gene and the prevalence of risk, but again, it does not guarantee the development of Alzheimer's. People can possess one or two copies of this gene; the risk of developing the disease is directly proportional to the number of copies. Many people inherit the gene but never develop Alzheimer's, while others without the gene may still develop the disease or other forms of dementia later in life.

PSEN1, PSEN2 and APP: These are associated with familial Alzheimer's disease (FAD), accounting for early-onset Alzheimer's in only a few percent of all cases. Mutations in these genes ensure that Alzheimer's will be expressed if the genes are inherited, often under the age of 65. Though these mutations occur infrequently, they have a near 100% chance of resulting in the disease if passed down.

Benefits and limitations of genetic testing

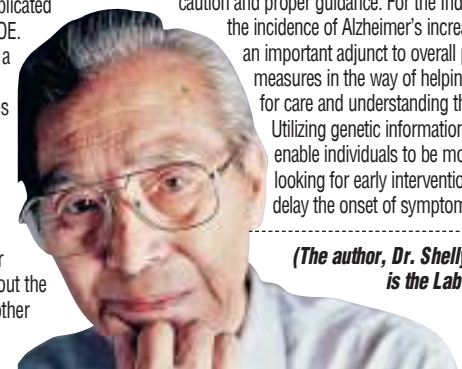
Genetic testing can give valuable insight into the absence or presence of an inherent disposition for Alzheimer's. A positive result may promote a change in lifestyle towards improving cardiovascular health and cognitive activities that would hold off the onset of the disease. Additionally, it helps in preparing, emotionally and financially, for what's to come. However, genetic testing has its limits: a positive result, such as for the APOE-ε4 gene, doesn't guarantee the development of the disease, and a negative result does not rule out the risk of developing it. Apart from this, a positive result may also cause considerable emotional stress; thus, genetic counselling is required to aid and assist the individuals in understanding and managing the results. In India, generally, the disorder's prevalence is higher in rural areas and among women; hence, genetic testing needs serious consideration with regard to available care and support systems.

Takeaway

Genetic testing is necessary for those who have a family history of Alzheimer's, but it should be approached with due caution and proper guidance. For the Indian population, as the incidence of Alzheimer's increases, it will become an important adjunct to overall preventive health measures in the way of helping families prepare for care and understanding their risks better.

Utilizing genetic information responsibly will enable individuals to be more prepared while looking for early interventions that will possibly delay the onset of symptoms.

(The author, Dr. Shelly (Mittal) Mahajan, is the Lab Director & Clinical Lead at Mahajan Imaging Labs.)



INDIA'S SECOND LINE STARS LOOK FOR A BREAKAWAY SERIES AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA

PTI ■ DURBAN

As India firmly embraces a transition phase, a clutch of second line stars such as Sanju Samson and Abhishek Sharma will be hoping for a breakaway series in the four T20Is against South Africa, starting with the first contest here Friday. It is imperative for them to shed the tag of sidekicks and establish themselves as the first-choice players in this format.

The recent home T20I series against Bangladesh was a precursor. Samson received a chance to open consistently against the neighbours, and he made most of it slamming a 47-ball 111.

In the post-Rohit Sharma era in T20Is, Samson would like to further buttress his claim for a regular opening slot with a few fruitful outings against the Proteas.

This is an important series for Abhishek as well. The dashing left-hander showed his impressive skills while hammering a 47-ball hundred against Zimbabwe at Harare in July, but his other six international innings have produced -0, 10, 14, 16, 15, 4. Abhishek will be keen to be more consistent to safeguard his place, and he will also be looking to be more penetrative with his left-arm spin. Tilak Varma offers a similar case. The left-hander has somewhat fallen off the radar after making a solid beginning to his T20I career against the West Indies in August 2023.



Since then, his 12 outings in the shortest format have produced just one fifty and has not featured in the blue jersey after appearing against Afghanistan earlier this January. So, the Hyderabad will be keen to impress the selectors with some meaningful efforts against the Africans, and he has also started using his off-spin more regularly.

This series also offers an excellent opportunity for wicketkeeper batter Jitesh Sharma, who has slipped a few rungs below in the pecking order, and spinner Varun Chakravarthy, who impressed against Bangladesh taking five wickets, to keep themselves afloat over the competition. The selectors will also closely monitor how a new-look pace bowling unit

- Arshdeep Singh, Avesh Khan, Vyshak Vijaykumar and Yash Dayal - fare against South Africa. While Arshdeep and Avesh have their moments at the top-level, Vyshak and Dayal will look to carry their success in domestic circuit and in the IPL to international cricket. Ramandeep Singh, who was retained by Kolkata Knight Riders after a productive IPL

2024, will be eager to replicate his success here. Ramandeep brings to the table exciting multiple skillsets - a daring batter down the order, useful medium pacer and a gun outfielder. The seniors in the side like skipper Suryakumar Yadav and Axar Patel, the only member from the Test side

here, will be hoping for a strong outing so that India can apply some balm over the wounds from their recent home series defeat against New Zealand.

On a personal level, four players - Arshdeep, Avesh, Jitesh and Vyshak - will want impact outings here after not getting retained by their respective franchises ahead of the IPL mega auction November 24 and 25.

All other 11 players in the side have managed to get a retention from their IPL teams.

South Africa will be looking to add a touch of revenge to the series after losing to India in the T20 World Cup final in June, the last time these two sides met.

Teams (from)

India: Suryakumar Yadav (C), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (WK), Rinku Singh, Tilak Varma, Jitesh Sharma (WK), Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, Ramandeep Singh, Varun Chakravarthy, Ravi Bishnoi, Arshdeep Singh, Vijaykumar Vyshak, Avesh Khan, Yash Dayal.

South Africa: Aiden Markram (c), Otneil Baartman, Gerald Coetzee, Donovan Ferreira, Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen, Patrick Kruger, Keshav Maharaj, David Miller, Mhlahi Mpongwana, Nqaba Peter, Ryan Rickelton, Andile Simelane, Lutho Sipamla (3rd and 4th T20Is), and Tristan Stubbs.

Jurel shines, Rahul fails as India A flounder bounce test



PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Dhruv Jurel showcased his sound technique and cool temperament while wickets fell like ninepins at the other end in another shoddy batting display by India A on the opening day of the second unofficial Test against Australia A at the iconic MCG on Thursday. Jurel (80 off 186 balls), who came to bat in the third over scored nearly half of India A's paltry first innings total of 161 in 57.1 overs with only other batter to cross 20-run mark was Devdutt Padikkal (26). Veteran KL Rahul (4), opening the batting, done in by a peach of a delivery from Scott Boland (1/51 in 15 overs). Michael Neser (4/27 in 12.2 overs), one of the finest and unluckiest among contemporary Australian pacers, dealt a telling blow in the opening over from which India A couldn't recover. At stumps, Australia A were 53 for 2 in reply with Mukesh Kumar again looking best among Indian bowlers. What stood out during the day was Jurel's composure and ability to play late, using soft hands. When there was extra bounce, he would quickly loosen his bottom hand grip to ensure that the ball didn't go to slip or gully region. He judged the length perfectly and the flicked six off Boland was a

treat to watch. While Rishabh Pant is the first-choice wicketkeeper batter, Jurel's ability to leave deliveries on length should put him in a better position than Sarfaraz Khan in the middle-order batter role. It was also the day when one got an indication that India senior team might bank on Rahul's experience of opening the innings if Rohit Sharma skips a match. However, Boland got him with a perfectly pitched delivery that straightened to take his outside edge. But Rahul would be any day better than Abhimanyu Easwaran (0) who is increasingly looking out of sorts at this level. This was after Neser bowled a hostile opening over with Easwaran left in a complete tangle to a well-disguised short ball that ballooned to gully. In-form Sai Sudharsan (0) then got a Neser delivery that was aimed at his midriff and he tried to fend it, resulting in a regulation catch in the slips. Skipper Rituraj Gaikwad's suspect technique got exposed when he jabbed with hard hands at a delivery that bounced a tad extra from length to be caught at slips. Nitish Reddy (16) played the most indiscreet shot as he tried to dance down the track to counter the steep bounce, getting ousted by Beau Webster.

Sinner and Alcaraz headline the ATP Finals with Djokovic out

AP ■ TURIN (ITALY)

Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz are poised to add another entry into their rapidly developing rivalry when the ATP Finals open Sunday without any members of the Big Three for the first time in nearly a quarter century. The top-ranked Sinner and No. 3 Alcaraz evenly split the year's Grand Slam titles between them with two apiece and it would be fitting if the pair meet again in Turin.

And since Alcaraz was overtaken by Alexander Zverev in the rankings this week, the Spaniard could be placed in the same round-robin group as Sinner. The draw for the eight-man event is scheduled for later Thursday.

After the round-robin stage, the top two finishers in each group advance to the semifinals. The other qualifiers are: Zverev, Daniil Medvedev, Taylor Fritz, Casper Ruud, Alex de Minaur and Andrey Rublev. The big name missing is that of defending champion Novak Djokovic, who withdrew on Tuesday due to an unspecified injury.



23 years since Djokovic, Federer and Nadal missed the finals. Not since 2001 has the finals been held without at least one of Djokovic, Roger Federer or Rafael Nadal. This season also was the first since 2002 without at least one Grand Slam title for a member of that trio. Djokovic has won the ATP Finals a record seven times. He beat Sinner for the title last year. Federer, who announced his retirement in 2022, won the event six times after making his debut in 2002; Nadal, who is retiring after

playing in the Davis Cup the week after finals, was the runner-up twice at the finals but never won it. Sinner withdrew from last week's Paris Masters due to a virus and showed up early in Turin for training. "This is for me the main event of the end of the year," Sinner said. A final decision in Sinner's doping case is still pending. As an Italian, Sinner will be the main focus of attention in Turin. It's the first time that Sinner will be playing at home since it was announced before his U.S.

Open title that he had tested positive in two separate drug tests earlier in the year. A decision to clear Sinner of wrongdoing was appealed by the World Anti-Doping Agency in September and the Switzerland-based Court of Arbitration for Sport is expected to make a final ruling on the case early next year. Alcaraz has won all 3 of his official meetings with Sinner this year. Sinner opened this year by winning the Australian Open to become the first Italian man to win a Grand Slam singles title in

nearly a half-century - since Adriano Panatta raised the French Open trophy in 1976. Alcaraz then claimed the French Open and Wimbledon titles to raise his career total to four Grand Slams. Sinner responded by winning the U.S. Open. Alcaraz won all three official meetings with Sinner this year and holds a 6-4 advantage in their career head-to-head rivalry. Last month, Sinner beat Alcaraz in the Six Kings Slam exhibition in Saudi Arabia. Zverev won in Paris last week and looks for a 3rd title at finals. The only two players in the field to have won the finals are Zverev and Medvedev.

Zverev won in London in 2018 and in Turin in 2021; while Medvedev triumphed in 2020 - the final year the event was held in London. Zverev enters in solid form coming off a title at the Paris Masters. Fritz is looking to add another big result after his maiden Grand Slam final at the U.S. Open; Ruud was a finalist in 2022; De Minaur is making his tournament debut; and Rublev is making his fifth straight appearances.

Harmanpreet features in 50-player for WBBL Team of the Decade

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Captain Harmanpreet Kaur is the lone entry from India in the 50-player shortlist for the Women's Big Bash League (WBBL) Team of the Decade, which was released on Thursday.

The shortlist comprises cricketers who have played a minimum of 60 WBBL matches prior to this season. The list will be pruned to 12 by a selection panel of experts after taking into account public voting.

The public voting will be open between November 11-24 on the Big Bash App.

The Team of the Decade will honour the greatest players from across the 10-year history of the WBBL.

The selection panel is being chaired by Cricket Australia Director Clea Smith, and also includes Mel Jones, Lisa Sthalekar, Matthew Mott, Quentin Hull, Laura Jolly and Alistair Dobson.

Public voting will be given equal importance and the panel will then review and combine those votes with their own selections to finalise the 12-player side, to be announced at the WBBL 10 final on December 1. The final XI will have a



maximum of three overseas players in keeping with league's rules.

WBBL Team of the Decade shortlist:

Sarah Aley, Samantha Bates, Suzie Bates (International), Alex Blackwell, Nicole Bolton, Nicola Carey, Lauren Cheatle, Sarah Coyte, Hannah Darlington, Sophie Devine (International), Mignon du Preez (International), Jess Duffin, Rene Farrell, Ashleigh Gardner, Heather Graham, Nicola Hancock, Grace Harris, Laura Harris, Rachael Haynes, Alyssa Healy, Sammy-Jo Johnson, Jess Jonassen, Marizanne Kapp (International), Harmanpreet Kaur (International), Delissa

Kimmince, Alana King, Heather Knight (International), Meg Lanning, Lizelle Lee (International), Katiem Mack, Hayley Matthews (International), Tahliia McGrath, Tegan McPharlin, Sophie Molineux, Beth Mooney, Ellyse Perry, Rachel Priest (International), Georgia Redmayne, Amy Satterthwaite (International), Megan Schutt, Natalie Sciver-Bruno (International), Molly Strano, Annabel Sutherland, Stafanie Taylor (International), Dane van Niekerk (International), Elyse Villani, Georgia Wareham, Amanda-Jade Wellington, Laura Wolvaardt (International), Danni Wyatt-Hodge (International).

Barcelona, Inter and upstart Brest win again in Champions League

AP ■ Paris

Barcelona and Inter Milan won again in the Champions League though both former title holders are looking up in the standings toward upstart newcomer Brest.

Aston Villa started the week atop the 36-team table but its winning run ended on Wednesday after a bizarre penalty was awarded when defender Tyrone Mings picked up the ball in the area at Club Brugge, resulting in a 1-0 loss that sent the English club plummeting to eighth place.

Paris Saint-Germain, in its first season without Kylian Mbappé, trails far behind in 25th after Atletico Madrid scored in stoppage time to seal a 2-1 win for the Spanish team at Parc des Princes. Barcelona's blistering scoring form continued in a 5-2 win at Red Star Belgrade - a seventh straight win since the start of October at a rate of

four goals per game. Robert Lewandowski scored twice and has 21 this season.

Inter Milan stifled Arsenal in a 1-0 win at San Siro sealed by Hakan Çalhanoğlu's penalty in first-half stoppage time. Inter is unbeaten on 10 points and in fifth place, one below Brest which won 2-1 at Sparta Prague. The French debutant looks sure to advance to the knockout phase starting in February. Atalanta won 2-0 at Stuttgart to stay unbeaten on eight points and Salzburg got its first goals and points in a 3-1 win at Feyenoord.

Bayern Munich won 1-0 at home to Benfica in a game that was delayed 15 minutes by crowd congestion and then was played in a muted atmosphere because of a medical incident for a fan. Shakhtar Donetsk playmaker Heorhiy Sudakov had a fine assist and an even better goal in a 2-1 win for the Ukrainian champion against Young Boys. Shakhtar's No. 10 showed why he is expected to



be the club's next big-money sale. Liverpool, which on Tuesday routed Bayer Leverkusen 4-0, leads the standings at the midway point of the eight-round program. Liverpool is the only team with four straight wins, while

five teams have four losses. They are Leipzig, Sturm Graz, Young Boys, Red Star and Slovan Bratislava. Two Italian teams - Inter Milan and Atalanta - have yet to concede a goal in four games. Another Italian side,

Bologna, is the only team with no goals scored.

Villa slides

Villa had led the standings in the new league-phase format after three straight wins without conceding a goal - and it took a bizarre incident

before goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez was eventually beaten.

Mings was punished for picking up the ball when Martinez seemed to restart play with a goal kick passed forward to his teammate.

Mings walked a couple steps to gather the ball with his left hand and returned to place it in the six-yard box.

"It's the biggest mistake I witnessed in my career," Villa coach Unai Emery said. "It has only happened one time in all my life. Today."

Brugge captain Hans Vanaken placed the 52nd-minute spot-kick to Martinez's left as the World Cup-winning Argentina goalkeeper dived to his right.

Bayern and Dinamo

It was the standout result of the inaugural week of the new Champions League in September: Bayern Munich 9, Dinamo Zagreb 2.

It was the first time a team had scored nine times in a game in the 32-year Champions League era, and Dinamo fired its coach two days later.

Since then? Bayern lost twice, including a 4-1 rout at Barcelona, and Dinamo won twice. At the end of play Wednesday, Bayern was 17th

on six points, one place below Dinamo on seven. If those placings hold until January, they meet again twice more in the knockout playoffs round.

Next up

The fifth round in three weeks' time has perhaps the stellar attraction of 144 games in the league phase: Liverpool vs Real Madrid.

That game on November 27 is a rematch of the 2022 and 2018 finals, both won by Madrid, and the 1981 European Cup title match that Liverpool won.

There is another final rematch: Bayern Munich hosts PSG on November 26 in a repeat of the pandemic-season final played in August 2020 without fans in Lisbon.

Also, sixth-place Barcelona hosts Brest, a fixture which might have been overlooked when the draw was made in August yet the French team is currently fourth.

Only the top eight teams in January advance directly to the round of 16 in March.

Krish to marry a city doctor!

According to reports, director Krish is set to remarry. The renowned Tollywood director will wed Dr. Priti, a local doctor, on November 16, according to a source. Krish and Priti have been in a relationship for the past few years and have now decided to marry, the source adds. Krish is known for films like *Gamyam*, *Vedam*, *Kanche* and *Gautamiputra Satakarni*. He is currently directing *Ghaati*, starring Anushka Shetty in the lead role. Krish was previously married to another doctor in 2017, but after four years, the couple divorced in 2021.

Interestingly, Krish is once again marrying a doctor, this time a well-known gynecologist. The source revealed that Krish and this gynecologist have been in a relationship for a few years and are now ready to marry. This gynecologist was previously married, has children from her first marriage, and is now tying the knot with Krish, the source shared.



I WAS NEVER COMFORTABLE AS AN ACTOR: VENKY ATLURI

Director Venky Atluri is now on cloud nine as his latest film, *Lucky Bhaskar*, is doing well at the box office. Malayalam superstar Dulquer Salmaan plays the lead in this film, which was released in multiple languages. "I am very happy to receive a completely positive response, not only from critics but also from the audience," said Venky Atluri. "In my earlier films, there might have been some criticism or a few negative points, but for this film, everyone had only positive things to say," shared the director.

Venky watched the film in Cochin and in Hyderabad with the audience. "I don't watch my films at premieres. I always prefer to see them with a regular audience in a cinema hall," he said. There are reports that Venky had narrated the same story to other actors as well. "Due to their commitments and other reasons, they couldn't do it. But when I narrated the story to Dulquer, he immediately gave the green signal after the first half itself," said Venky.

The director initially wanted to shoot the film in live locations, but the production house made the final call. "Producer Naga Vamsi wanted to

Director Venky Atluri started his career with acting and then writer, settled as director. He talks about his latest film *Lucky Bhaskar* and why he left acting, his inspiration and upcoming projects

make it on a grand scale, so he decided to build large sets for this film, costing nearly Rs. 11 crore," Venky explained. He added that working with Dulquer was a major source of motivation. "Every morning or after the shoot, Dulquer would send me a message praising a dialogue or a scene, which gave me a boost to work with energy. In that way, Dulquer is a big motivator and easy to work with," Venky remarked. The director revealed that some of the dialogues were written on set and turned out beautifully. "I was an 80s kid, so I understand the value of getting something after negotiating with parents for hours or days. I wrote some of the dialogues and scenes with those

experiences in mind," he said.

Venky also mentioned that he is a fan of Trivikram Srinivas and that his influence shows in his dialogue writing. "But as a producer, Trivikram never interferes with my work or suggests anything about the story. Like any other producer, he watches the film and shares his opinion," Venky said about Trivikram. Venky began his career as an actor before transitioning to writing. After writing for a few films, he made his directorial debut with Tholi Prema. "Writing gives me more satisfaction than all three. I used to feel very uncomfortable as an actor. When I put on makeup, it felt like a plastic bag on my face, so I decided to quit acting. When I got an opportunity to direct, I took the plunge and became a director," Venky said. He added that he always enjoys writing, which is why he tends to shoot lengthy films. "But at the editing table, I become a director alongside my editor and cut unnecessary scenes," he said.

Talking about the child artist Rithvik, Venky shared that he first noticed him in the film *Sardar*. "I wanted an experienced child artist, and I saw his performance in *Sardar*. Later, I found out that he's also a popular YouTube star, so I brought him on for this film," Venky said.

As for his upcoming projects, Venky stated that he hasn't decided yet. "But I am going to work with Sithara Entertainments production house," he said.



Thug Life set to hit theaters on June 5 next year

On the occasion of Kamal Haasan's birthday, the makers of *Thug Life* released a teaser from the film. Directed by Mani Ratnam, the project marks his reunion with Kamal Haasan after 37 years; their last collaboration was *Nayakan*, released in 1987. *Nayakan* was a pivotal film in both their careers, earning Kamal a National Award for Best Actor and it was India's official Oscar submission in 1988.

Now, after all these years, the duo returns with *Thug Life*, Kamal Haasan's 234th film. The teaser showcases Kamal Haasan's action-packed scenes, where he steps into the gritty role of Rangraya Sakthivel Nayakar. His performance promises a raw, seasoned portrayal in an intense narrative of underworld survival.

Thug Life is a cinematic collaboration between two legends of Indian cinema—director Mani Ratnam and Kamal Haasan—following their acclaimed work in *Nayakan*. With A R Rahman's electrifying score and Haasan's remarkable screen presence, audiences are in for a thrilling ride filled with high-octane action. Simbu and Trisha play key roles alongside Kamal Haasan. This teaser promises an enthralling mix of tension and high-stakes action, raising the bar for cinematic storytelling. The film's release date is set for June 5, 2025.

Malavika's intense fitness routine for *Sardar 2* revealed

Malavika Mohanan is taking her fitness game to the next level for her highly anticipated action film, *Sardar 2*. Known for her determination to health and fitness, the actress has adopted a rigorous new regimen specifically designed to prepare her for some challenging action scenes.

Insiders from the *Sardar 2* team shared that Malavika, who already maintains an active lifestyle, is now training twice daily to enhance her stamina and strength. According to sources, "Malavika is giving her all for *Sardar 2*. Her mornings are filled with strength and endurance workouts, while evenings are dedicated to flexibility exercises like Pilates and yoga." In addition to her intensified workouts, Malavika has adjusted her diet to support her fitness goals for the film. The actress has reportedly shifted to a high-protein diet, significantly reducing her intake of carbs and completely avoiding junk food. "She's always mindful of her diet, so this adjustment is an extra layer of focus for the film," shared the source.

To ensure her body stays resilient for the demanding scenes, Malavika has also incorporated regular deep-tissue massages into her routine. "She's incredibly committed to delivering her best in the action sequences, and these massages are helping her maintain peak physical condition," the source added. Malavika recently took to social media to offer fans a sneak peek into her action preparation. You can catch a glimpse of her rigorous training here: Instagram link. *Sardar 2*, which also stars Karthi in a dual role, is set to hit theaters in 2025.



Laggam Time promises heartfelt romance

From the banner of 20th Century Entertainments, they unveiled the title and the first look of their inaugural production, titled *Laggam Time*. The film introduces Rajesh Meru and Navya Chityala as its lead pair, alongside Nellore Sudharshan, Preeti Sundar, Praneeth Reddy and others who play significant roles. Prajith K Vennam, a debutant writer and director, collaborated with producer K. Hima Bindu. Pavan Guntuku captured the visuals, while Pavan composed the music. Director of blockbuster movie *Bheemla Nayak*, Saagar K Chandra, launched the poster and expressed best wishes for the entire team of *Laggam Time*, as they embark on this exciting venture. *Laggam Time* promises to be a wholesome family entertainer, weaving a captivating love story amidst the backdrop of a marriage. More details about the film are awaited!

Not Shraddha Kapoor, it's Sreeleela

The special song shoot for *Pushpa 2*, a collaboration between Allu Arjun and director Sukumar, is currently underway at a private studio. Previous reports indicated that Hindi actress Shraddha Kapoor was cast for this special song, but it's now confirmed that Sreeleela has been brought in instead. According to sources, while the makers initially approached Shraddha Kapoor and she was interested in doing the song, her commitments to corporate agencies made it too challenging for the makers to secure her for this project.

Consequently, the team decided to go with Sreeleela, and the shoot began on Wednesday at a private studio. "Two songs are pending, one of which is this special number and the other is a duet. The makers chose to film the special song first and if time permits, they'll shoot the duet," added the source.

The film, slated for release on December 5, stars Rashmika Mandanna as the female lead and is produced by Mythri Movie Makers. As one of the year's most anticipated films, the team is focused on meeting the release deadline. "That's why they opted for Sreeleela—to complete the song on time without waiting for another actress," said the source.



Anushka's look from *Ghaati* unveiled

On the occasion of Anushka Shetty's birthday on Thursday, the makers of her upcoming film *Ghaati* released her look from the film. Krish Jagarlamudi the film maker is working for the second time, the filmmaker and Anushka joined hands for this film after their earlier hit *Vedam*. Rajeev Reddy and Sai Babu Jagarlamudi are the producers. The first look poster is stunningly fierce and showcases a ruthless avatar of the actress. In the poster, Anushka is seen smoking a Banga.

With this first look, *Ghaati* seems to be a film that doesn't shy away from the brutal reality of its protagonist's life. It's clear that the story will delve deep into the murky, dangerous world she inhabits, a place where survival requires not just resilience but a certain ruthless edge. The poster sets the tone for a journey that's bound to be emotionally charged, intense, and perhaps even tragic. With Krish's direction and this intense visual setting the stage, audiences can expect a gripping, visceral experience. The film is currently in its final stages of production. Chintakindi Srinivas Rao provided the story, while Sai Madhav Burra penned the dialogues.

THE CHRONICLES OF AMARAGIRI: TELANGANA'S FIRST-EVER DETECTIVE SERIES

ZEE5, one of India's premier streaming platforms, is bringing audiences a tale steeped in mystery and history with its latest Telugu original series, *Vikkatakavi: The Chronicles of Amaragiri*. Marking a milestone as Telangana's first-ever detective series, the show dives into a suspense-filled narrative that captures the cultural heartbeat of the 1970s. The trailer, unveiled by popular actor Vishwak Sen, sets the stage for a high-stakes thriller that transports viewers to a world of political intrigue, age-old secrets and the mystique of Telangana's landscape. *Vikkatakavi*, produced by Ram Talluri of SRT Entertainments, is directed by Pradeep Maddali and written by Teja Desharaj. The series stars Nareesh Agastya as the determined detective Ramakrishna, alongside Megha Akash as Princess Lakshmi. This marks Agastya's second collaboration with ZEE5 after his success in *Paruvu*.

Set in the soon-to-be-flooded province of Amaragiri, *Vikkatakavi* follows Ramakrishna as he unravels a mystery surrounding villagers who suffer from amnesia after venturing into the Nallamalla Forest at night. The eerie phenomenon is believed to be the curse of a goddess, and as



Ramakrishna delves deeper, he discovers a darker truth. The narrative uncovers the tragic death of a royal heir, a deep-rooted conspiracy and a province on the verge of losing its

history forever as it faces submersion beneath the Krishna River.

Agastya, who brings to life the layered character of Ramakrishna, expressed his excitement: "Ramakrishna's journey is not only about solving a mystery but also dealing with his own past. His resilience and determination will resonate with viewers, who I hope will be captivated by the thrilling twists and profound emotional depth of his character." For producer Ram Talluri, *Vikkatakavi* is more than just a series, it's a tribute to Telangana's heritage. "This project is close to my heart because it beautifully merges the cultural essence of Telangana with an intriguing storyline. We're also thrilled about our growing collaboration, with two more releases, *Matka* and *Mechanic Rocky*, on the horizon. I'm grateful for the opportunity to work with such a dynamic platform that brings these stories to life."

With exceptional sets, atmospheric storytelling and a suspenseful plot that keeps viewers on edge, *Vikkatakavi* promises to captivate audiences from its premiere on November 28 on ZEE5.