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Cong gave 'Garibi Hatao' slogan but looted poor: PM



AROUND THE WORLD WITH BRUISED PASSPORTS!



Even Varun Tej couldn't save MATKA!



QUOTE OF THE DAY
 The age to contest for MP and MLA should reduce to 21 from 25. This would encourage greater youth participation in politics. Empowering the youth could bring fresh perspectives and energy into governance, making politics more accessible to aspiring young leaders. If IAS and IPS can enter service at 21 and if people are eligible to vote at 18, then politics also should be open to youngsters.
 - Revanth Reddy, CM, Telangana

DON'T MISS...
Govt to complete 2 reservoirs: Min
 Minister for Water Resources, Nimmala Ramanaidu, has reaffirmed the commitment of the TDP-led NDA government to complete the construction of the Vedavathi and Gundrevula reservoirs in Kurnool district. He highlighted that the TDP government had allocated the necessary funds for these two projects in 2019. Furthermore, Ramanaidu informed that the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the Gundrevula project has already been sent to the Telangana government through the Krishna River

Steps taken for holy dip at Suryalanka: SP
 In view of the holy dips on the occasion of Karthika Pournima on Friday, elaborate security arrangements are being made at Suryalanka Beach to ensure the safety of the devotees, said Superintendent of Police (SP) Tushar Dudi. Speaking to the media on Thursday, the SP informed that lakhs of devotees are expected to visit Suryalanka beach for the auspicious event, where they will take holy dips. To maintain law and order and ensure smooth proceedings, around 400 police personnel,

Exports up 17.25% in Oct, highest in 2 yrs
 India's merchandise exports in October rose by an impressive 17.25 per cent, highest in over two years, to \$39.2 billion, while the trade deficit widened to \$27.14 billion. According to the government data released on Thursday, imports increased by 3.9 per cent to \$66.34 billion in October compared to \$63.86 billion in the year-ago period. The trade deficit (gap between imports and exports) narrowed as compared to \$30.42 billion recorded in October last year.

India thrash Thailand in women's hockey
 Young striker Deepika slammed five goals as defending champions India thrashed minnows Thailand 13-0 to virtually assure a semifinal berth at the women's Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament here on Thursday. It was a completely one-sided match as the Indians found the net at will, with Thailand failing to take a single shot at the opposition goal. Deepika (3rd, 19th, 43rd 45th, 45th minutes) found the net five times, while Preeti Dubey (9th, 40th), Lalremsiami (12, 56th) and Manisha Chauhan (55th, 58th)

Govt focused on jobs: CM

SAYS AP'S GOAL IS TO BE INDIA'S TOP STATE BY 2047

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has outlined the State government's vision to make the region a global investment hub, focusing on job creation, industrial development, and entrepreneurship. In his address to the Legislative Assembly on Thursday, Naidu emphasised that every policy introduced by the government is aimed at generating employment opportunities for the State's youth.

Highlighting the State's new industrial initiatives, the Chief Minister introduced six new policies aimed at boosting industrial growth in the coming years. These include the AP Industrial Development Policy 4.0, AP MSME & Entrepreneur Development Policy 4.0, AP Food Processing Policy 4.0, AP Electronics Policy 4.0, AP Private Parks Policy 4.0, and AP Integrated Clean Energy 4.0. Naidu described these policies as being designed with a "Think Globally, Act Globally" approach, which is expected to drive the state's economic development.

In his speech, Naidu also criticised the previous government's handling of investments, claiming that the lack of an effective investment climate during the 2014-2019 period led to significant diversion of funds to neighbouring states. He pointed out that while the state attracted sev-

- CM says Andhra Pradesh aims to become a global investment hub.
- 6 new industrial policies unveiled to boost employment, investments
- The new industrial policies target Rs 30 lakh crore investments and 2 million jobs, with \$10 billion in FDI.
- Naidu criticises past investment shortcomings, blaming the previous regime's inefficiencies.
- Plans include establishing industrial parks in all 175 constituencies and offering incentives for quick investments.
- An 'Innovation Hub' named after

eral major investments during the 2014-19 period—such as from Kia Motors, Hero Motors, and Amara Raja—no significant investments exceeding 75,000 crore have been recorded in the 2019-2024 period despite efforts to secure 227 MoUs.

Looking ahead, Naidu set an ambitious target for Andhra Pradesh, aiming to make it the number one state in India by 2047, in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a developed India.

AP's growth rate took a sharp dip: Yanamala
PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 TDP floor leader in the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council, Yanamala Ramakrishnu, has accused the previous YSRCP government of causing a financial collapse in several sectors over the past five years. Speaking during the 46th session of the Assembly's budget debate on Thursday, Ramakrishnu claimed that the state's growth rate had plunged from 10.20% in 2019 to a negative -4.20%. He emphasised that under the leadership of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, the TDP-led NDA government had aimed for a growth rate of 15%.

Ramakrishnu expressed concern over the severe decline in key growth sectors such as agriculture, industries, aquaculture, and services. He lamented that the double-digit growth in 2019 had dropped to single digits and further dipped to -4.20%. "This drastic fall in the growth rate will make it extremely challenging for the current government to revive the state's economy," he said.

The TDP leader particularly highlighted the decline in the aquaculture sector, which has traditionally been a major contributor to the state's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). He noted that the growth rate of the aquaculture sector had

dropped from 35% in 2019 to a mere 20% under the current government. Ramakrishnu also raised concerns about the rising state debt, pointing out that while the state's debt stood at Rs. 2.57 lakh crore in 2019, it had surged to Rs. 5.61 lakh crore by 2024, an increase of over Rs. 3 lakh crore in just five years.

The TDP leader also remarked that the budget recently introduced in the Assembly was effectively the budget of the previous YSRCP government, and the new government's budget would come into effect only in the 2025-26 financial year. He noted that the YSRCP government had presented a budget of Rs. 2.57 lakh crore for the current fiscal, but under the TDP, this had been enhanced to Rs. 2.97 lakh crore to ensure better financial planning.

'Oppn Leader status must be earned, not demanded'
PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday sarcastically said he has "never seen a leader like YSRCP chief Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy", who is demanding the status of Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly to attend its proceedings.

Naidu said the status of leader of the opposition is not granted by leaders, but by the people through their votes. His comments came at a time when the YSRCP has boycotted the ongoing assembly session.

"When people vote, and when a party wins 10 per cent of the seats, that party will get the opposition status. When we have a majority, we will form the government," said Naidu, addressing the House, while congratulating Undi TDP MLA K Raghu Rama Krishna Raju, on his election as deputy speaker of the assembly.

"Dictating terms and demanding positions will not work in democracy," the CM said, emphasising the need to "respect democracy at all times". Naidu said Reddy's 'personality and thinking pattern' must be observed for display of such 'demanding' behaviour.

He once again compared Reddy to slain Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar, alleging similarities between the two.

Raghu Rama elected Dy Speaker
PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 Telugu Desam Party (TDP) MLA K Raghu Rama Krishna Raju was unanimously elected as the Deputy Speaker of the Andhra Pradesh Assembly on Thursday. The announcement was made by Speaker Ch Ayyannapratrudu, who, along with Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan, formally seated Raghu Rama Krishna Raju in the Deputy Speaker's chair. Following the announcement, both Naidu and Pawan Kalyan, along with Ayyannapratrudu, congratulated Raju on his election. TDP, Jana Sena Party (JSP), and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLAs also visited the Speaker's chair to extend their con-

gratulations. As there was only one nomination for the post, Speaker Ayyannapratrudu declared Raju's election as unanimous. With this, both the Speaker and Deputy Speaker positions in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly have been secured by the TDP, which leads the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in the state.

Accept our resignations, three YSRCP MLCs urge Council chief
PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 YSRCP MLCs Pothula Suneetha, Karri Padma Sri, and Balli Kalyana Chakravarthi have formally requested the Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council, Koyye Moshen Raju, to accept their resignations. The three members submitted separate representations to Chairman Raju during the budget session on Thursday, stating that they had tendered their resignations three months ago but questioned the delay in their acceptance.

In an interesting turn of events, despite their resignations having been submitted three months ago, the MLCs appeared in the Council and presented their requests to the Chairman. While the main opposition YSRCP members staged a protest at the Chairman's podium, the three MLCs proceeded to the well of the House to display their representations, urging for the acceptance of their resignations. During this time, they also held discussions with several ministers and ruling TDP members.

High Court brake to MLC by-poll
PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM
 The scheduled MLC by-election for the Vizianagaram local body council seat has been cancelled, as announced by District Election Officer and Collector Dr. BR Ambedkar.

The Collector explained that the Election Commission had issued a notification on November 4 for the by-election to fill the Vizianagaram local bodies MLC seat. However, Indukuri Raghu Raju, the current MLC for the constituency, filed a petition in the High Court challenging the election process. Based on the High Court's ruling, the Election Commission has decided to cancel the notification and stop the by-election proceedings.

Dr Ambedkar clarified that the decision was made to respect the judicial order and ensure a fair and transparent election process. As a result, the by-election has been postponed until further instructions are received from the court or the relevant authorities.

AP govt introduces 5 Bills in Assembly

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 The Andhra Pradesh government, led by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, introduced five key bills in the State's Legislative Assembly on Thursday. The Bills, aimed at addressing various issues in healthcare, land grabbing, and energy, were presented by different ministers.

Health Minister Satya Kumar Yadav introduced three important amendments: the Dr. NTR University of Health Sciences (Amendment) Bill, 2024, the Andhra Pradesh (Andhra Area) Ayurvedic and Homeopathic Medical Practitioners Registration (Amendment) Bill, 2024, and the Andhra Pradesh Medical Registration (Amendment) Bill, 2024. These amendments seek to update provisions by removing outdated terms such as "deaf, mute, or

leper" from the relevant sections, in a move towards modernizing and improving inclusivity in medical practice. In addition, Revenue Minister Anagani Satya Prasad introduced the Andhra Pradesh Land Grabbing (Prohibition) Bill, 2024. This bill seeks to strengthen the state's efforts to combat land grabbing, a growing

Govt committed to addressing pressing issues in healthcare, land rights, and energy, while also ensuring timely legal reforms to meet the state's evolving needs.

issue exacerbated by rapid urbanization and commercialization. Satya Prasad highlighted that despite the enactment of the Andhra Pradesh Land Grabbing (Prohibition) Act, 1982, the rising number of land-grabbing cases remains a significant challenge. The new bill aims to enhance legal safeguards by introducing more severe penalties for

offenders and establishing a Special Court for fast-tracking land-grabbing cases. The bill also extends its provisions to rural areas, where land costs are rising due to urbanization. Meanwhile, Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar presented the Andhra Pradesh Electricity Duty (Second Amendment) Bill, 2024. This amendment revises Sections 3(1) and 7(1) of the Andhra Pradesh Electricity Duty Act, 1939. It introduces a provision specifying that electricity duty will be charged at a rate not less than 6 paise and not more than 100 paise per unit of energy, effective from August 26, 2021.

These proposed bills reflect the government's commitment to addressing pressing issues in healthcare, land rights, and energy, while also ensuring timely legal reforms to meet the state's evolving needs.

ARREST OF SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVISTS

YSRCP stages protest in Council
PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 On the third day of the Budget sessions, the main opposition party in the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council, YSRCP, staged a protest for around 34 minutes, demanding that the Chairman's podium in an attempt to obstruct the proceedings.

During the protest, the YSRCP members raised slogans of "Save Democracy", while also protesting against the government's stance on the arrests of the social media activists. Chairman Raju appealed to the Leader of the Opposition, Botsa Satyanarayana, to convince his party members to end the protest and allow the proceedings to continue, but the request was ignored.

Despite the ongoing protest and slogans raised by YSRCP members, the Chairman proceeded with the Question Hour, completing six questions with the ministers providing answers.

Continued on Page 2

Governor pays tributes to Pandit Nehru

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On the occasion of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's 135th birth anniversary, the Governor of Andhra Pradesh, S. Abdul Nazeer, paid tributes to the first Prime Minister of India by offering flowers to his portrait at a special programme held at Durbar Hall in Raj Bhavan, Vijayawada, on Thursday.



Speaking at the event, Governor Nazeer remembered Pandit Nehru's deep affection for both children and roses. "Pandit Nehru often compared children to buds in a garden, emphasising that they should be lovingly nurtured as they represent the future of the nation," he said.

The Governor also highlighted Nehru's significant contributions to the country's education system, noting that his vision laid the

foundation for India's scientific, industrial, and educational progress. "Pandit Nehru believed in the power of scientific knowledge, reasoning, and rationality as the core of all learning," he added, praising Nehru's enduring legacy in shaping India's modern educational landscape.

Dr. M. Hari Jawaharlal, Secretary to the Governor, along with other officers and staff members of Raj Bhavan, were also present at the ceremony.

Narayana vows to improve pass percentage in govt jr colleges

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister Ponguru Narayana has announced that Narayana Educational Institutions will extend support to improve the pass percentage in government junior colleges across the State. The Minister assured that the Narayana Group would also provide essential study materials to help students prepare for competitive exams.

This decision came in response to a request from Kritika Shukla, Commissioner of the Intermediate Board. Minister Narayana announced a workshop organised by the Intermediate Board at Mary Stella College auditorium in Vijayawada on Thursday. The workshop, which aimed at enhancing teaching strategies for intermediate students, saw the Minister engage with teachers, offering several key suggestions to improve academic performance.

The event was attended by Commissioner Kritika Shukla,



During the workshop, Minister Narayana interacted with the teachers and addressed the reasons behind the declining academic performance of students in government junior colleges compared to previous years.

Regional Joint Directors, RIOs, District Vocational Education Officers, and principals and faculty members from colleges across five regional centres. The focus of the workshop was to discuss strategies for preparing students to achieve top ranks and to equip them with the necessary skills to excel in competitive exams.

During the workshop, Minister Narayana interacted with the teachers and addressed the reasons behind the declining academic performance of students in

government junior colleges compared to previous years. He stressed that with determination, dedication, and proper teaching methods, students could overcome any challenges. He urged teachers to adopt innovative teaching methods that address the needs of students and to ensure regular attendance to improve overall performance.

Additionally, Minister Narayana assured that Narayana Educational Institutions would provide coaching materials for students

appearing for the upcoming EAPCET exam. A renowned mathematics teacher himself, Narayana also took the opportunity to share effective teaching techniques with the participating faculty, demonstrating practical examples of how to make mathematics more accessible and engaging for students. The Minister's initiative is expected to bolster the efforts of government colleges in improving their academic outcomes and preparing students for the challenges of competitive exams.

Naidu heaps praise on Raghu Rama



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On the third day of the Assembly sessions, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu showered praise on Deputy Speaker R. Krishnam Raju, commending his political journey and the significance of his Rachabanda programme.

The Chief Minister likened Raju's initiative to the iconic Natu Natu song from the movie RRR, suggesting that both had captured the public's imagination and become widely popular.

In his speech, CM Naidu recalled the many struggles R. Krishnam Raju faced during his political career. He highlighted the difficult and painful experiences Raju endured, including his arrests and the physical abuse he suffered at the hands of the police.

Naidu detailed the violent tactics used against Raju dur-

ing his detention, particularly the brutal treatment with lathis and rubber belts that targeted his legs.

"When Raju reported this assault in court, he was threatened with death if he spoke about the mistreatment," Naidu said, further pointing out how authorities tried to obstruct Raju's medical examination by manipulating reports and delaying court-ordered procedures.

The Chief Minister also spoke about the political opposition Raju faced, particularly during his tenure as Member of Parliament, when certain political leaders sought to prevent him from visiting his constituency despite his immense popularity among the public.

"They tried to stop you from entering the state, and today, they cannot even step into the Assembly before you. This is a script written by God," CM Naidu concluded, emphasising the dramatic turn of events in Raju's political life.

Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan also congratulated R. Krishnam Raju on his election as Deputy Speaker, acknowledging his unwavering commitment to his political struggles.

YSRCP forms special teams to support social media activists

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Under the leadership of former chief minister and YSRCP president Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, the party has formed special teams to provide support to social media activists who are facing illegal detentions and arrests. The primary aim of these teams is to offer legal assistance, provide reassurance, and help boost the confidence of activists through direct interaction and support. The special teams will coordinate with party leaders, district representatives, and the legal cell in their respective regions to ensure effective action is taken in every case.

The district-wise team details are as follows:

- SRIKAKULAM:** Seediri Appalaraju, Shyam Prasad
- VIZIANAGARAM:** Bellani Chandrasekhar, Jogarao
- VISAKHAPATNAM:** Bhagyalakshmi, KK Raju
- EAST GODAVARI:** Jakkampudi Raja, Vanga Geetha
- WEST GODAVARI:** K. Sunil Kumar Yadav, Jayaprakash (JP)
- KRISHNA:** Monditoka Arun (MLC), Devabhaktuni Chakravarthy
- GUNTUR:** Vidudala Rajini, Diamond Babu
- PRAKASAM:** TJR Sudhakar Babu, Venkataramana Reddy
- NELLORE:** Ramireddy Prathap Reddy, P. Chandrasekhar Reddy (MLC)
- CHITTOOR:** Gurumurthy (MP), Chevereddy Mohith Reddy
- ANANTAPUR:** Kethireddy Venkatarami Reddy, Ramesh Goud
- KADAPA:** Suresh Babu, Ramesh Yadav

Spike in atrocities against women: YSRCP MLA

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP MLA Tatiparthi Chandrasekhar has strongly condemned the TDP-led coalition government's failure to address the rising incidents of violence against women in Andhra Pradesh. Speaking to the media on Thursday, Chandrasekhar questioned the government's commitment to maintaining law and order, highlighting the alarming spike in attacks on women and the lack of sufficient budgetary provisions to address these issues.

Referring to recent data shared in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly, Chandrasekhar pointed out that over 7,393 cases of violence against women had been registered in the past six months alone, drawing attention to the deteriorating law and order situation in the state. "These figures are a clear indication of the government's failure to protect its citizens, particularly women," he said.

The YSRCP MLA also took issue with the contradictory statements made by Deputy Chief Minister Nimmakayala Chinaraajappa, who had earlier criticised the volunteer system. "Now, who will the government hold accountable for the atrocities taking place? The administration seems to be passing

the buck," Chandrasekhar remarked, suggesting that the government was shirking responsibility for its lapses.

Further, Chandrasekhar criticised the government for its heavy-handed approach towards social media activists who have raised concerns about the growing violence against women. He cited the case of Sudha Rani, a social media activist who, according to him, was harassed and had multiple police cases filed against her for speaking out against the rise in atrocities. "While the government is quick to take action against critics, it fails to provide a safe environment for women," he added.

The MLA also targeted the state government's budget for the fiscal year, calling it a "big sham". He pointed out that despite several high-pitched promises made during the election campaign, the government had allocated insufficient funds for crucial welfare schemes. "Of the six major schemes promised, only three have received minimal allocations, and vital programmes like the free bus service for women and unemployment stipends have been completely neglected," he said, accusing the government of failing to deliver on its commitments to the people.

RRR a fearless leader: Lokesh

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Education and IT Minister Nara Lokesh expressed his happiness over Raghurama Krishna Raju's election as the Deputy Speaker of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly. Congratulating Raju on his new role, Lokesh described the moment as a proud achievement for Raju and the state.

Speaking on the occasion, Lokesh said, "Chandrababu Naidu spoke about the movie RRR and you. For me, RRR stands for Real, Responsible, Rebellious, and outspoken," highlighting Raju's bold and fearless approach in his political career.

Lokesh praised Raju for his courageous stance against the previous government, particularly for raising concerns about the state's growing debt and the reper-



cussions of continued borrowing. He acknowledged Raju's vocal criticism of past mistakes, calling him a true leader for challenging the status quo.

The Minister also commended Raju's efforts in attracting funds and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) donations for the development of parks, repairs of government schools, and welfare initiatives. He called Raju an exemplary leader for young legislators, noting how Raju's leadership has made a tan-

gible impact in his constituency. Lokesh recalled the immense challenges Raju faced, including custodial torture at the hands of the previous regime, after he spoke out against corruption and mismanagement. He praised Raju's resilience, saying that despite facing legal battles, stone-pelting, and serious charges, he had never been deterred by fear.

The Minister expressed his disappointment at the absence of opposition members in the Assembly and stressed the importance of healthy debates for the better functioning of democracy. He also called for the digitisation of the legislative process, pointing to the progress made by other states, and urged Deputy Speaker Raju to lead the way in implementing similar reforms in Andhra Pradesh.

Kakani flays Yanamala over Budget claims

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former Minister Kakani Govardhan Reddy has strongly criticized Finance Minister Yanamala Ramakrishnudu's budget speech in the Legislative Council, accusing him of making misleading claims about the state's debt situation.

Speaking to the media in Nellore, Kakani pointed out that TDP's own budget documents from their tenure recorded the state's debt at Rs 6.46 lakh crore. However,



Yanamala falsely claimed that the debt had skyrocketed to Rs 14 lakh crore. Kakani chal-

lenged the TDP to provide evidence to support these exaggerated figures.

He also dismissed allegations of hidden debts under the YSRCP government, stating that the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) had thoroughly verified the state's finances. Kakani questioned why, after being in power for five months, the TDP had failed to uncover any so-called concealed debts if such claims were indeed true.

Addressing further allegations related to guarantees and

Raghu Rama elected...

Continued from Page 1

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), the only opposition party in the Assembly, boycotted the ongoing session in protest against the denial of the Leader of the Opposition status to YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. The TDP alleges that both Speaker Ayyannapatrudu and Raghurama Krishna Raju were subjected to false cases by the YSRCP during its tenure in power.

Raghu Rama Krishna Raju, a former MP from Narsapur constituency, was elected to the Lok Sabha in 2019 on a YSRCP

ticket. However, he later revolted against the YSRCP leadership, accusing the government of corruption and witch-hunting. In May 2021, he was arrested in a sedition case for allegedly speaking against the government and inciting communal unrest. After his arrest, Raju resigned from the YSRCP in February this year and joined the TDP just before the elections. The TDP fielded him from the Undi constituency in West Godavari district, where he won the election in May.

Raju's election as Deputy Speaker marks a significant step in his political journey following his departure from the YSRCP.

Let's us protect children's rights: CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On the occasion of Children's Day, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu extended his warm wishes to children across the country, highlighting their pivotal role as the future of the nation. "Today's children are tomorrow's citizens, and it is our collective duty to protect their rights and nurture them into responsible individuals," he said, emphasising the importance of safeguarding the well-being of young citizens.

In his message, the Chief Minister also paid tribute to India's first Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in whose honour Children's Day is celebrated. He urged all sections of society to renew their commitment to Nehru's legacy of promoting children's welfare. "Guiding children on the right path will ensure our nation's prosperity," Chandrababu Naidu remarked.

The Chief Minister called for a unified effort to create a brighter and more promising future for the children of India.

Govt focused on...

Continued from Page 1

To this end, the government is focusing on creating two million jobs over the next five years, alongside initiatives to improve the "Speed of Doing Business" and promote the "One Family, One Entrepreneur" programme. As part of these efforts, Naidu launched a "Single Desk Portal" for real-time approvals and announced provisions for self-certification for businesses.

A major component of the state's new industrial policy is its target to attract Rs 30 lakh crore in investments over the next five years, with a focus on generating two million jobs. Additionally, Naidu has set a goal of securing \$10 billion in foreign direct investment and creating 500,000 jobs in the manufacturing sector. Plans are in place to establish industrial parks in all 175 constituencies and create global manufacturing hubs. The state government will offer a 30% investment subsidy for those who invest immediately after signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU), along with additional incentives for quick implementation of projects.

In a move to promote entrepreneurship, Naidu announced the establishment of an Innovation Hub in Amaravati, named after industrialist Ratan Tata, which will aim to foster innovation and entrepreneurship in the state. The government will also set up Innovation Hubs in cities such as Visakhapatnam, Rajahmundry, Vijayawada, Tirupati, and Anantapur, with a Rs 500 crore corpus fund over five years to support start-ups and new ventures. To encourage diversity in

entrepreneurship, the government will provide additional incentives of 10% for BC, SC, ST, and women entrepreneurs.

Further supporting the state's economic growth, Naidu revealed plans to develop the food processing industry, targeting Rs 30,000 crore in investments and the creation of 300,000 jobs in the sector over the next five years. The state intends to leverage its agricultural strengths, including horticulture in Rayalaseema, aquaculture along the coast, and organic farming in tribal areas, to boost the food processing industry.

The Chief Minister also detailed plans for the development of Nano, MSME, large, and mega industrial parks, with the government offering land and incentives for private investors. Entrepreneurs establishing parks will benefit from exemptions on stamp duty, registration charges, and layout approval fees. Additionally, the state aims to attract Rs 10 lakh crore in clean energy investments, focusing on solar, wind, and battery energy projects, as well as green hydrogen production and compressed biogas plants.

Among the major upcoming investments, Naidu highlighted ₹84,700 crore in green energy projects from NTPC and APGENCO, along with a ₹65,000 crore investment from Reliance, which is expected to create 250,000 jobs over the next three years. The Chief Minister expressed confidence that these investments, combined with the government's new policies, will transform the state's economy and ensure a prosperous future for its residents.

'Oppn Leader status must be earned...

Continued from Page 1

Additionally, the TDP supremo assured the House that the government would take strict action against anyone involved in the selling or cultivation of marijuana in the state. Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan called for the tabling of a "Social Media Abuse Protection Bill" in the House.

Meanwhile, IT Minister Nara Lokesh, in the Legislative Council, accused YSRCP leaders of insulting his mother, N Bhuvanawari, during their government's tenure (2019-2024). He said neither he nor any TDP members retaliated similarly. "We never spoke about Jagan Mohan Reddy's family. Should I remain silent when they insult my mother in the assembly?" Lokesh

questioned YSRCP MLCs.

Lokesh noted that TDP supremo Chandrababu Naidu stopped attending the Assembly proceedings in 2022 after his mother was insulted. Before that, Chandrababu Naidu had been regularly taking part in the House business. "Naidu attended the House every day, fighting alone like a lion. He couldn't bear the insult to my mother and boycotted the assembly," Lokesh added. He further asked whether he should sit quietly after his mother was insulted. "Are we not human beings?"

Naidu to visit...

Continued from Page 1

These events are seen as significant steps toward advancing the state's infrastructure.

In addition to Central projects, Naidu is scheduled to meet with Home Minister Amit Shah and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to discuss financial matters, focusing on securing necessary funds for ongoing and upcoming projects in the state.

Naidu's visit will also include his participation in the election campaign in Maharashtra, as part of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Reports suggest that the BJP leadership has requested Naidu and Jana Sena Party leader Pawan Kalyan to campaign in constituencies with a large Telugu population in Maharashtra. Pawan Kalyan's schedule for the campaign has already been finalized.

Naidu is expected to arrive in Delhi at 4 PM on Friday, with arrangements for his visit being finalised by his office.

Accept our..

Continued from Page 1

After a 30-minute adjournment, the Council resumed, and Chairman Koyye Moshen Raju allowed discussions on the general budget to proceed. However, Pothula Suneetha, Padma Sri, and Kalyana Chakravarthi reiterated their request for the acceptance of their resignations. In response, Chairman Moshen Raju acknowledged that he had received the three resignations and assured the members that they were under consideration. TDP MLC BT Naidu appointed panel chairman.

In a separate development, TDP MLC BT Naidu was appointed as the new Panel Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council, replacing Panchumarthi Anuradha, who was recently appointed as the Chief Whip in the Council.

YSRCP stages protest...

Continued from Page 1

However, the protest disrupted the ruling party's ability to raise supplementary questions, and TDP members raised their objections over the issue. The Chairman, after several unsuccessful attempts to restore order, adjourned the session for ten minutes. Meanwhile, Ministers Gottipati Ravi Kumar, Savitha, Nimmala Ramanaidu, and others criticised the YSRCP's support for social media activists, accusing them of prioritising the activists over more pressing public issues. They also alleged that the social media activists had engaged in derogatory and objectionable trolling of women. The ruling party members urged Chairman Moshen Raju to restore order in the House.

Despite these requests, the opposition members continued their protest at the podium. Given the disruption to the session, Chairman Moshen Raju adjourned the House for ten minutes. The session resumed 30 minutes later, with the Chairman announcing that all pending questions would be deemed to have been answered.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH PANCHAYAT RAJ DEPARTMENT
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTIFICATION
NIT No. 15 to 17/ATO/2024-25 Date: 12-11-2024
Online tenders are invited for 3 works in R&R (PIP) grant with an estimated cost of Rs. 1895.00 Lakhs Eluru District.
Date of receipt of tender: From 19-11-2024 to 03-12-2024 upto 3.30 PM.
For details: www.appeprocurement.gov.in Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Panchayat Raj Circle, Eluru
E.O. No: 1439/CJAD/11/2024-D, Dt: 14.11.2024

'Govt committed to completion of Vedavathi, Gundrevula reservoirs'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Water Resources, Nimmala Ramanaidu, has reaffirmed the commitment of the TDP-led NDA government to complete the construction of the Vedavathi and Gundrevula reservoirs in Kurnool district. He highlighted that the TDP government had allocated the necessary funds for these two projects in 2019. Furthermore, Ramanaidu informed that the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the Gundrevula project has already been sent to the Telangana government through the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB), as it is an inter-state irrigation project.

Speaking during the Question Hour in the Legislative Council, Ramanaidu responded to queries raised by TDP members BT Naidu, Kancharla Srikanth, and Bhumireddy Ramgopal Reddy regarding the status of the Vedavathi and Gundrevula projects. The Minister explained that the state government granted administrative approval



Similarly, the state government has given in-principle approval for an additional reservoir on the Tungabhadra River under the Kotla Vijayabhaskar Reddy Sunkesula Barrage near Gundrevula in Kurnool district

for the Vedavathi Lift Irrigation Scheme on January 29, 2019, with a sanctioned amount of Rs. 1,942.80 crore. He mentioned that work on the project is currently 7.19% complete, although land acquisition is still in progress.

Similarly, the state government has given in-principle approval for an additional reservoir on the Tungabhadra River under the Kotla Vijayabhaskar Reddy Sunkesula Barrage near Gundrevula in Kurnool district. The Chief

Minister, N. Chandrababu Naidu, allocated Rs. 2,890 crore for the project in February 2019, pending concurrence from the Telangana government through KRMB. Ramanaidu further noted that the DPR for this project has already been submitted.

These two projects, according to the Minister, are crucial for mitigating the drought conditions in the western region of Kurnool district. He criticized the previous YSRCP government for neglecting these projects

RS 39,007 CR BUDGET FOR BC WELFARE: MINISTER SAVITHA

In response to another query, the Minister for BC Welfare, Women & Child Welfare, S. Savitha, stated that the state government has earmarked Rs. 39,007 crore for various programmes and schemes aimed at the welfare of BC communities. She explained that under the National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC), schemes worth Rs. 207.90 crore would be implemented to support 2,227 BC beneficiaries in the state.

Savitha further mentioned that Rs. 896.86 crore has been allocated under



BC Corporations for economic support schemes, which will be matched by an equal amount from banks, bringing the total to Rs. 1,793.72 crore. This fund will be used to provide loans to 89,686 BC beneficiaries.

over the past five years, leading to delays in their completion. Ramanaidu reassured that the TDP-led NDA government

remains committed to finishing both projects to provide much-needed irrigation and drinking water to the region.

Ambati lambasts CM Naidu for degrading decorum of Assembly

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP spokesperson Ambati Rambabu launched a scathing attack on Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and other leaders, accusing them of demeaning the decorum of the Legislative Assembly by resorting to character assassination of former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Speaking to the media on Thursday, Ambati Rambabu criticised the language and conduct of the Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister, and others, particularly during the election of Raghurama Krishna Raju as Deputy Speaker. He claimed that their actions and words were intended to tarnish the dignity of the legislature and were aimed solely at making baseless allegations against YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

"Even after the Supreme Court rejected their plea, the ruling coalition continued to repeatedly raise the issue of Raghurama Krishna Raju's alleged custodial torture, only to sling mud on our leader," Ambati remarked. He accused them of trying to tarnish the image of YS Jagan Mohan Reddy with unfounded allega-



tions.

Ambati further stated that despite the opposition's efforts to defame YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, they were aware of his growing popularity and strong support base, which now accounts for over 40 percent of the vote share. "The likes of Escobar and others put together are no match for the influence of YS Jagan. Chandrababu Naidu, who is the mastermind behind Raghurama Krishna Raju's Rachabanda programme, has been using TDP-friendly media to attack YS Jagan," he said.

He also accused the ruling party of spreading lies in the

Assembly, including claims that YS Jagan had watched videos of Chandrababu Naidu in jail—falsehoods aimed at discrediting their leader. Ambati pointed out that the case against Chandrababu Naidu had been registered when the TDP was in power, and the law had taken its course, culminating in Naidu's arrest, contrary to the propaganda suggesting that Jagan had imprisoned him.

Ambati accused Naidu of resorting to theatrics in the Assembly to deflect attention from the government's failure to allocate proper funds in the budget to fulfil the promises made during the election campaign. "Chandrababu Naidu is scared of YS Jagan, which is reflected in every lie he utters, constantly repeating the story of the 11 seats," he said.

Ambati also criticised the TDP's false propaganda regarding incidents like boats hitting the Prakasam Barrage, calling it a sign of their desperation. "Jagan always speaks the truth, while Chandrababu is a bundle of lies," Ambati asserted, further accusing Naidu of trying to divert attention from the real issues facing the state.



Collector stresses role of libraries in youth development

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad highlighted the power of reading during the inauguration of the 57th National Library Week at the District Central Library on Thursday. Addressing a gathering of students and library enthusiasts, the Collector underscored the vital role of libraries in combating ignorance and poverty. "Reading books is the key to eradicating ignorance and poverty. It provides the youth with a golden future," he said.

Encouraging young people to make reading a habit, Prasad likened libraries to "lighthouses that guide us all". He emphasised their role in spreading knowledge and illuminating the path to success. In honour of Children's Day, the Collector paid tribute to Jawaharlal Nehru and extended his best wishes to all children. He also recalled how for-

mer President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam utilised libraries to shape his career and expand his knowledge.

"Libraries hold the power to enhance knowledge and open doors to opportunities," Prasad stated. He urged the youth to make the most of these resources and avoid wasting time on phones. The Collector also shared that the State government, in collaboration with the Education Department, is working to improve library facilities in the district. "HRD Minister Nara Lokesh recently visited our local libraries and made several valuable suggestions," he said.

Following his address, the Collector toured the library and interacted with students preparing for competitive exams. The event was attended by District Education Officer N. Prem Kumar, District Central Library Secretary RCH Venkata Rao, and other officials.

AU sets record with 460 new international students

This brings total number of foreign students to 1,200

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Andhra University (AU) has achieved a significant milestone this academic year, admitting nearly 460 international students from 60 countries, bringing the total number of foreign students to 1,200. This marks the highest-ever enrolment of international students in the university's history.

AU officials attribute the surge in international enrolments to a strategic focus on undergraduate programmes, particularly in engineering, management, and pharmacy, which have seen increasing demand among students worldwide. The university's international student body is predominantly composed of students from Africa, the Middle East, and SAARC countries, with Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, Ethiopia, Nepal, and Bangladesh contributing the largest numbers.

Prof. G Sasibhusana Rao, in-charge Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University, emphasised the university's role in attracting international students. "In the past, we have averaged around 300 foreign student admissions annually," he explained. "However, due to targeted efforts



from our administration and the Office of International Affairs, we've welcomed nearly 460 new students this year. This number is growing, supported by scholarships from the Indian Council for Cultural Relations and the Study in India programme." The success of AU's international programmes is also reflected in the achievements of its alumni. Many AU graduates hold prominent positions across the globe, including ministers and university leaders. Ergogtie Tesfaye, the current Minister of Women and Social Affairs in Ethiopia, is a notable alumnus. She earned her doctorate in anthropology from AU and credits her education for her career success.

"The education I received at Andhra University was crucial to my development," said Tesfaye, who visited the university in 2022. "Ethiopia and

India share many cultural and linguistic similarities, and I encourage Ethiopian students to consider AU for their higher education. Additionally, growing investments from India in Ethiopia strengthen this connection."

Prof. EN Dhanamjaya Rao, Registrar and Dean of International Affairs, noted the university's expansive global presence. "Our students come from countries as diverse as Madagascar and Tuvalu, with alumni occupying leadership roles worldwide," he said. "In Ethiopia, 10 out of 42 public universities are headed by AU alumni." The university celebrates its international diversity through an annual International Student Day, while also working to expand accommodation options to meet rising demand. Prof. Dhanamjaya Rao added that AU generates approximately Rs 30 crore annually from its international student community.



Art of Living founder meets Pawan Kalyan

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Art of Living founder and spiritual leader, Sri Ravi Shankar, met Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj, Pawan Kalyan, at his camp office in Manga lagiri on Thursday.

Pawan Kalyan extended a warm welcome to Gururji at his office. During the meeting, Ravi Shankar shared his insights on the essential skills for success in life—Bhakti, Mukti, Ukti, and Shakti. He emphasised that true success can only be achieved through willpower and perseverance.

Pawan Kalyan praised Ravi Shankar for his contributions to promoting global peace and highlighting India's spiritual uniqueness. He expressed admiration for Gururji's efforts, particularly in introducing the Sudarshana Kriya, a unique yogic practice, which has been widely recognized for its transformative benefits.

Child Rights Week observance launched

Stress on the role of social and family factors in shaping children's behaviour



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On the occasion of Children's Day, the observance of Child Rights Week was inaugurated at the Government Boys' Observation Home in Rotary Nagar on Thursday. The event was graced by Dr Indira Ramasubba Reddy, distinguished psychiatrist and former president of the Child Welfare Committee. Other attendees included members of the Child Welfare Committee, B Radha Kumari, members of the Juvenile Justice Board, and T Madhusudana Rao, Joint Commissioner of Child Welfare Department.

In his address, Dr Ramasubba Reddy highlighted the psychological challenges children face during their development, emphasising the role of social and family factors in shaping behaviour. He noted that criminal

tendencies in children could be prevented through proper counselling, guidance, and providing opportunities for employment. Reflecting on his 30-year association with child welfare, Dr Reddy recalled his tenure as the Chairperson of the Child Welfare Committee, where he worked tirelessly to reunite missing and vulnerable children with their families. He also shared his involvement in securing land for the construction of the Observation Home building. He assured the children that his hospital's doors are open for any psychiatric support they may need.

B Radha Kumari expressed hope that the children will grow into responsible citizens, learning from past mistakes, whether intentional or unintentional. She reaffirmed the committee's commitment to providing all necessary assistance for their rehabilitation.

Libraries emerge as havens for job aspirants

Unable to afford hefty fees at training centres, candidates turning to local libraries for exam preparation

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The recent announcement of an upcoming District Selection Committee (DSC) notification has ignited a surge in interest among teaching job aspirants in the region. As training centres fill up rapidly, many candidates, unable to afford the hefty fees, are turning to local libraries as affordable alternatives for exam preparation. "There's a clear need for better facilities in public libraries," said a local resident, advocating for improvements. "Many students rely on these spaces because they can't afford costly training fees."

The State government's ambitious goal of creating two million new jobs, coupled with the upcoming Group-2 Mains Exams scheduled for February next year, has further fuelled the aspirations of unemployed youth. Candidates are urging the government to equip public libraries with essential study materials and resources to facilitate effective preparation. "The government needs to step up with better resources," said one exam candidate. "We need access to updated books and proper facilities to study effectively."

However, under the previous (YSRCP) government's



approach, library usage has declined. The Government Regional Library near Dondaparthy, which once attracted 150-170 daily visitors, now sees only 50-60 due to limited resources. "Basic amenities like chairs and tables are often provided by donors," shared a library official. "Competitive exam books are either missing or outdated, creating significant hurdles for students."

Recognising the growing demand, the coalition government has prioritised library infrastructure development. The latest State budget has allocated substantial funds for building new facilities in underserved areas. Visakha district, with its 67 libraries and

book deposit centres in over 60 villages, is at the forefront of this initiative. A new district library building in Suryabagh, funded by local taxes, is also in the pipeline.

The Civic Library in Visakhapatnam, supported by donors, caters to over 9,000 registered members and serves 900-1,000 individuals preparing for competitive exams. A library organiser emphasised the need to expand such facilities to other libraries to provide robust support to exam aspirants. As the demand for study resources and spaces continues to rise, residents are optimistic that government initiatives will strengthen public libraries, empowering thousands of candidates in their pursuit of a brighter future.

Rushikonda Resort dominates discussion in House

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The construction of the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Resort at Rushikonda Hill continued to dominate discussions in the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly for the third consecutive day on Thursday, with lawmakers questioning the escalating costs of the project. Speaker Ch. Ayyannaipatru announced that a comprehensive debate would be held on

Monday.

The issue was raised by MLAs Vishnu Kumar Raju and Adi Narayana Reddy, who sought clarification on the significant expenditure involved in constructing the luxurious resort complex at Rushikonda Hills, a scenic location in Visakhapatnam. The project, developed by the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC), has

attracted widespread attention due to its high costs.

In response, Minister Kandula Durgesh explained that the APTDC built the resort, which consists of seven blocks with a total built-up area of 13,542 square meters (1,45,767 square feet) on a 61-acre site in Yendada village. The new resort replaced an older facility, and the total project cost amounted to Rs 409.39 crore, with a per square foot construction

cost of Rs 15,293.

The Minister further clarified that beyond the main buildings, considerable expenses were incurred for the development of infrastructure, including hard-scaping, slope protection, roadways, parking facilities, water supply systems, fire safety measures, sewage treatment, compound walls, street lighting, and other amenities. Additional funds were allocated for electrical systems, sewer lines, interi-

or furnishings, and water harvesting structures.

MLA Vishnu Kumar Raju raised concerns over the allocation of such a large sum, arguing that the Rs 409 crore could have been better utilised to build 22,743 houses for the underprivileged. He also questioned the resort's original purpose as a tourism facility, suggesting that it had shifted to serve as a potential camp office for Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, following a committee's recommendation to use the Rushikonda Palace for this purpose.

National symposium held on Metallurgy

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A national-level symposium on 'Metallurgy, Materials & Manufacturing' was organised by the Department of Metallurgy and Materials Engineering at Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge and Technology (RGUKT), commonly known as IIT. The event took place on the Nuzvid campus on Thursday.

The symposium was inaugurated by IIT Director Prof S Amarendra Kumar, Dean Ratnakar, and Head of the Metallurgy Department Dr B Venkateshwarlu, who lit the ceremonial lamp. Professor Dr N. Kishore Babu, Head of the Metallurgy Department at NIT Warangal, Professor Dr G Swami Naidu, Head of the Metallurgy Department at JNTU Vizianagaram, and Y Gopal Rao, Director of



Kushalava International Industries, were the guests.

In his speech, Prof S Amarendra Kumar emphasised that such national-level symposiums are designed to

impart knowledge about new innovations and advancements in metallurgy to students, with a focus on enhancing their expertise. Prof Dr N Kishore Babu delivered a talk on

'Titanium Alloys', which are extensively used in the aerospace and marine sectors. Additionally, Prof G Swami Naidu presented a lecture on manufacturing processes

involving 'Severe Plastic Deformation' techniques.

Gopal Rao, the Director of Kushalava International Industries, provided an informative lecture on materials used in engine cylinder liners and discussed the centrifugal process and its parameters. As part of the event, B.Tech Metallurgy students showcased scientific posters related to their research projects and prototype models related to metallurgical engineering technology.

Other administrative officers of the IIT Nuzvid campus, including Lakshmana Rao, Srinath, and Brahma Swamy, along with department heads and assistant professors from the Metallurgy Department, such as Veera Srinu, Shiva, Madhusudhan, and Shivakumar, also participated in the event.

Collector urges kids to set goals and excel in education

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

On Children's Day, West Godavari District Collector Chadalavada Nagarani encouraged children to set goals and strive for excellence in their education. The Collector participated in Thursday's Children's Day celebrations at ARKR Municipal School in Bhimavaram.

During the event, Collector Nagarani paid tribute to India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, by garlanding his portrait in commemoration of his birth anniversary. In her address to the children, she advised them to avoid becoming overly reliant on mobile phones, social media, and excessive movie-watching. She further urged them to stay away from harmful habits like drug use and to adopt good behaviour.

The Collector also cautioned the students to be aware of people with bad character and



encouraged them to keep their friends informed and help maintain a distance from such individuals. She emphasized the importance of showing gratitude towards teachers, parents, and society at large, while also stressing the value of respecting others. "Cultivating good habits not only shapes

character but also contributes to overall well-being," she added. Nagarani highlighted that the Indian Constitution guarantees specific rights for children and urged them to understand these rights. She reminded the children that education is a fundamental right under the Constitution and that every

child is entitled to it.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to the welfare of children, the Collector stated that child labour will not be tolerated in society. She urged all girls to prioritise their education and encouraged them to set the goal of achieving financial independence. She also spoke against child marriages, stressing the importance of education in securing a better future for every girl.

Later, the Collector distributed medals and certificates to students who excelled in various competitions. She also unveiled a wall poster on children's rights as part of the event.

District Education Officer E. Narayana, Women and Child Welfare Officer B. Sujata Rani, and School Headmaster A.V. Satyanarayana, along with School Education Committee Chairman D. Renuka, were among those who attended the programme.



Cop killed in hit-and-run case

PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM

A police constable was killed when an unidentified vehicle hit his motorcycle at Akunuru village on the Machilipatnam-Vijayawada highway and his wife, who was pillion rider on the bike, was injured. Police said that the deceased Matte Rama Koteswara Rao was working as a constable attached to Pamidi mukkala police station and he was looking after court-related works.

When the constable was going on a motorcycle along with his wife Durga Bhavani, an unidentified vehicle hit their bike from the rear end killing the constable instantaneously. His wife Durga Bhavani, who is working as an excise constable, suffered grievous injuries in the accident. She was admitted to the GGH in Vuyyuru. The police registered a case and shifted the body to the GGH for postmortem.



KARTHIKA POORNIMA

Elaborate steps taken for holy dip at Suryalanka Beach: SP

PNS ■ BAPATLA

In view of the holy dips on the occasion of Karthika Poornima on Friday, elaborate security arrangements are being made at Suryalanka Beach to ensure the safety of the devotees, said Superintendent of Police (SP) Tushar Dudo.

Speaking to the media on Thursday, the SP informed that lakhs of devotees are expected to visit Suryalanka beach for the auspicious event, where they will take holy dips. To maintain law and order and

ensure smooth proceedings, around 400 police personnel will be deployed at the beach. Expert swimmers and boats have also been stationed at the location to prevent any untoward incidents during the event.

The SP highlighted that devotees will not only come from the Bapatla district but also from neighbouring areas to participate in the religious occasion. Signboards have been placed at vulnerable areas of the beach, cautioning the devotees not to venture too far

into the sea. Additionally, boats have been arranged in coordination with local fishermen to ensure the safety of those taking the dip.

Police personnel, equipped with life jackets and safety ropes, will be stationed along the coastline to assist devotees and prevent any drowning incidents during the holy dips. SP Dudo urged devotees to follow the safety instructions and cooperate with the authorities for a safe and peaceful observance of Karthika Poornima.



Student of Padmavati Mahila College ends life

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

A female student studying degree at Padmavati Mahila College committed suicide by hanging herself in the hostel room on Thursday. College lecturers told the media that the deceased P Anitha (20) was studying second-year graduation bio-chemistry.

Police said that she ended her life by hanging herself in her hostel room. The police registered a case and shifted the body to the SV Medical College for postmortem. The deceased student belonged to Gurramkonda village in Annamayya district.

However, the student union leaders staged a dharna demanding an inquiry into the death. The union leaders alleged that the DEO had not visited the body in the hostel room so far. Such incidents took place earlier also. They said that they had doubts about the death of Anitha and demanded action against the college principal.

Onus on all to provide a radiant future to students: Collector

PNS ■ ELURU

Collector K. Vetri Selvi has emphasised that it is the responsibility of everyone to ensure a bright and prosperous future for children, adding that the government machinery in the district is committed to protecting the rights of children.

The Children's Day programme was held at the ESD Girls' High School campus in Eluru on Thursday. The Collector participated in the celebrations and cut the cake to mark the occasion.

In her address to the students, the Collector encouraged them to approach their studies with enthusiasm and make the most of the opportunities available to them. She stressed the importance of Class 10 as a critical stage in a student's educational journey, describing it as the foundation for further learning. "Class 10 is a turning point in your education. It is crucial that you give your best during this



time," she said, urging students to set clear goals and work diligently to achieve them.

The Collector also highlighted the significance of discipline and dedication, noting that these qualities are essential for success and personal growth. She spent time interacting with the children and encouraged them to cultivate these values in their academic and personal lives.

J. Rajendra Prasad, a Member of the AP State

Commission for the Protection of Child Rights, gave a detailed explanation of the implementation of the Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005. The event was also attended by several prominent officials, including ICDS Project Director K. Padmavati, District Education Officer Venkatalakshamma, Municipal Commissioner A. Bhanu Prathap, District Education Programme Officer Surya Chakraveri, and other officials.

'Super Six' schemes cannot be implemented: Kakani

PNS ■ GUNTUR

YSRCP senior leader and former Minister Kakani Govardhan Reddy has predicted that the Naidu headed government can not implement their 'Super Six' flagship schemes and the budget has indicated it.

Speaking to the media in Nellore on Thursday, Kakani highlighted that TDP's own budget documents, prepared during their tenure, recorded the State's debts as Rs 6.46 lakh crore. However, former Finance Minister Yanamala Ramakrishnuudu falsely stated in the Council that the debt had risen to Rs 14 lakh crore. He challenged TDP to substantiate the claims.

Kakani also refuted allegations of hidden debts under the YSRCP government, noting that the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) had verified all financial details. He questioned why the TDP, despite being in power for five months now, had not uncovered any concealed debts if such claims were true.

Kakani claimed that the YSRCP government had maintained fiscal discipline. He further added that claims of negative GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product) growth under the YSRCP government were false, as the state had recorded a 4.83% growth rate, which was higher than TDP's 4.42% during their tenure from 2014 to 2019.

Ambulances will be used solely for patient transport: Collector

Expresses concern over 28 vehicles that failed to reach patients on time, due shortage of drivers and insufficient fuel budgets

PNS ■ PADERU

District Collector AS Dinesh Kumar has issued a strict directive to ensure that ambulances in the district are exclusively used for transporting patients. The decision comes after a review meeting conducted at the Collectorate to assess the current state of ambulance services in the district.

"Our top priority is to make sure that ambulances are readily available for patients in need," stated Collector Kumar. He emphasised that the vehicles must be used solely for medical purposes and that any other use, such as transporting medicines, stationery, or equipment, will not be tolerated.

The Collector reviewed the district's ambulance fleet, which includes 70 ITDA ambulances, 69 feeder ambulances, and 108 ambulances under the medical department. He expressed concern over 28 vehicles that had failed to reach patients on time, citing reasons like a shortage of drivers and insufficient fuel budgets. To address these issues, he stressed the importance of targeted service in areas with limited road access and suggested that feeder ambulances be used to transport patients from remote villages to main ambulances.

Kumar also highlighted the inadequacy of the current Rs. 45,000 per vehicle allocation from the National Health

Mission (NHM). He proposed an additional Rs. 15,000 to cover essential costs and mandated that each ambulance must serve at least four patients daily. To streamline the transportation of deceased individuals, he introduced a plan to deploy vehicles under the Maha Prasthanam initiative.

In response to increasing complaints about ambulance delays, the Collector directed that complaint hotline numbers be displayed prominently in all hospitals. He stressed that calls to the Collector and Project Officers regarding ambulance delays will no longer be entertained and that Regional Medical Officers must take responsibility for ensuring prompt dispatch of ambulances.

The review meeting was attended by key Health Department officials, including DMHO Dr. Jamal Basha, ITDA AO Hemalatha, representatives from 108 and 104 ambulance services, feeder ambulance personnel, and project officers from various ITDAs.

Keel laying of first Fleet Support Ship held at HSL

First-of-its-kind project with 80 per cent indigenous content

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) marked a historic achievement on Thursday with the keel-laying of India's first indigenously built Fleet Support Ship, a 44,000-tonne vessel at the HSL Covered Building Dock. Vice Admiral B. Sivakumar, AVSM, VSM, Controller of Warship Production & Acquisition for the Indian Navy, presided over the ceremony, underscoring the growing confidence of the Indian Navy in HSL's capabilities to produce sophisticated modern warships.

The Fleet Support Ship, a first-of-its-kind project with 80 per cent indigenous content, will play an essential role in naval operations by replenishing fleets at sea with fuel, water, ammunition, and stores. This capability extends the



operational range and strategic reach of the Navy, ensuring India's maritime forces remain mission-ready in all operational theatres.

Vice Admiral Sivakumar, speaking at the ceremony, highlighted the importance of the project: "This vessel represents a significant step towards self-sufficiency in defence manufacturing and showcases HSL's evolution as a strategic shipbuilding partner for the Indian Navy. It strengthens our readiness while advancing the

nation's Atma Nirbhar Bharat mission."

The keel-laying marks a significant milestone for HSL, symbolising a decade-long journey since its transfer to the Ministry of Defence in 2010. The project is expected to generate approximately 169 lakh man-days of employment over the next eight years, creating opportunities for skilled workers and encouraging the growth of associated industries, including an estimated 550 MSMEs.

Inter-state burglar arrested, Rs 25 lakh worth of booty recovered

PNS ■ ELURU

The police arrested an inter-state notorious burglar and recovered booty worth Rs 25 lakh.

Informing this to the media here on Thursday, SP K Pratap Shiva Kishore said that a police team led by Jangareddygudem SDPO U Ravichandra and CI V Krishna Babu arrested notorious inter-state burglar Chikatla Satish alias Pandu and recovered gold jewellery weighing 381 grams, silver ornaments weighing 4.151 kg, cash Rs 2,45,150 and a motorcycle altogether worth over Rs 25 lakh from him.

The burglar Satish was involved in several offences and a DC sheet was opened against him in Tadikalapudi police station. He is addicted to drinking liquor and consuming ganja. He committed burglaries in Aswaraopet, Nallajerla when he was a minor boy and he was arrest-



ed and sent to juvenile home. Later, he committed 80 burglaries in Hyderabad, Palwanth, Kakinada, Rajahmundry, Pedapadu, Denduluru, Kaikalur, Singarayakonda, Tadepalligudem, Devarapalli, Gannavaram, Dharma jigudem, Chebrolu and Agiripalli. He was convicted in 35 cases but after being freed from prison, he would resume burglaries. He was also involved in a murder case in 2013 at Buttayagudem.

The Palwanth police invoked the PD Act against him and sent him to prison.

After he was freed from the prison, he again started committing burglaries. On November 2, 2024, he along with his accomplices Abdullah and Nakka Kishore, barged into a house at Sagipadu village, hit two women on the head and decamped with gold jewellery, silver ornaments and cash.

Free diabetic screening camp held

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As part of the observance of World Diabetes Day, GITAM Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (GIMSR) organised a free diabetic screening and awareness camp at Rushikonda Beach on Thursday. The event saw a significant turnout, with many locals taking advantage of the free screening services.

The initiative was led by GIMSR's Pro Vice-Chancellor Dr B Geetanjali, Medical College Dean Dr SP Rao, and Hospital Superintendent Dr. Vasantha Kumar. Dr Geetanjali highlighted the alarming rise of diabetes in India. "More than half of those with diabetes are unaware of their condition, leading to delayed diagnosis and severe health complications. Our aim is to encourage



regular checkups and empower individuals to take charge of their health."

Medical experts at the camp emphasised the serious health consequences associated with uncontrolled diabetes, such as heart attacks, strokes, nerve damage, and blindness. "Early detection is crucial to prevent irreversible damage," said Dr SP

Rao, adding that the camp was part of GIMSR's ongoing commitment to community health. The event also addressed the mental health implications of living with diabetes. Dr Vasantha Kumar noted, "Managing diabetes is both a physical and mental challenge. We are here to support the community on both fronts."

CHILDREN'S MOCK ASSEMBLY

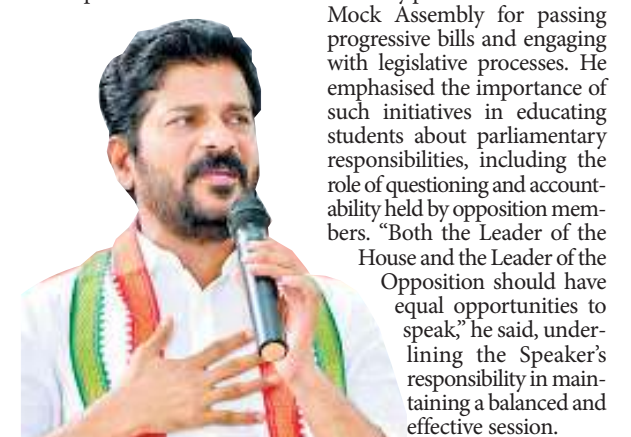
TG CM advocates lowering age for MLA, MP elections to 21

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, speaking at the Children's Mock Assembly, advocated for lowering the minimum age requirement for contesting legislative elections from 25 to 21, emphasising that this change would encourage greater youth participation in politics.

Addressing young students, he highlighted that empowering the youth could bring fresh perspectives and energy into governance, making politics more accessible to aspiring young leaders. He said if IAS and IPS can enter service at 21 and if people are eligible to vote at 18, then politics also should be open to youngsters.

Reddy praised the Children's Mock Assembly for passing progressive bills and engaging with legislative processes. He emphasised the importance of such initiatives in educating students about parliamentary responsibilities, including the role of questioning and accountability held by opposition members. "Both the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition should have equal opportunities to speak," he said, underlining the Speaker's responsibility in maintaining a balanced and effective session.



ACROSS THE STATES



Tribal conclave 'Samvaad' to kick off in Jamshedpur

A total of 2,500 delegates representing 168 tribes from across the country will gather here on Friday for the five-day tribal conclave, Samvaad 2024. The annual event, organised by the Tata Steel Foundation (TSF), will kick off with a tribute to the legendary tribal icon, Dharti Aaba Birsa Munda, on the occasion of his birth anniversary. The opening ceremony will feature a symbolic tribute, marked by the beats of 351 nagadas (drums), representing 32 tribal groups. TSF CEO Sourav Roy shared the details of the upcoming event during a press conference, emphasising its importance in fostering understanding and appreciation of tribal culture. "Samvaad serves as a platform for tribal communities to come together, share their traditions, and connect with people from across the country," Roy said. "This year, we've introduced several exciting features, including performances by first-time participants," Roy said. In the evening sessions, tribes such as the Neigi, Hajong, Kokani, and Paraja will showcase their cultural performances for the first time.



Cong candidate promises LPG cylinders even to infiltrators

ICC general secretary and Jharkhand in-charge Ghulam Ahmad Mir on Thursday courted controversy after he said at a poll rally that if the party is voted to power, gas cylinders will be given at Rs 450 to all citizens of the state, whether they are infiltrators or not. In response, the BJP claimed that such a remark is 'anti-national' and reflects the Congress' appeasement and polarisation politics. "We have promised that we will provide gas cylinders at Rs 450 from December 1 if our government is formed. This will be for the common masses... whether they are Hindus, Muslims, infiltrators - it will be given to all Jharkhand citizens, no other factor will be considered," Mir said addressing a poll rally at Chandrapura in Bermo assembly constituency.



'Edathavalam' at airport to help Sabarimala devotees

An 'edathavalam' (halting point) has been established at the International Airport here for pilgrims traveling to the Sabarimala Lord Ayyappa temple by air. The facility, located in a 5,000-square-foot area near the police aid post on the domestic arrivals side, was inaugurated by State Industries and Law Minister P Rajeev on Thursday. The minister stated that the government has ensured all necessary facilities to provide a smooth and convenient pilgrimage experience for the devotees. "For many years, a significant number of Sabarimala pilgrims have travelled by air. It was only last year that we first arranged a terminal for Sabarimala pilgrims at the airport. Around 6,000 devotees used the terminal facility during the last pilgrimage season," Rajeev said. "This time, the halting point at the airport is being launched with even better facilities."

Farmers' group donates Rs 5 lakh for Palestinian people

The Kirti Kisan Union, a farmers' organisation, Thursday donated Rs 5 lakh for the people of Palestine through its mission here as a humanitarian aid and expressing solidarity with the people there facing difficult times due to the ongoing conflict. A delegation of the union met Palestine ambassador to India Abed Elrazeg Abu Jazer at the Palestinian embassy here and donated the money, a release from the organisation said. The union has raised its voice in favour of a permanent truce in West Asia and also demanded that the United Nations find a sustainable solution to the Palestine issue. The Kirti Kisan Union delegation



Nirbhai Singh Dhudike, General Secretary Rajinder Singh Deep Singh Wala, Press Secretary Raminder Singh Patiala, Vice President Jatinder Singh Chhina and Treasurer Jaswinder Singh Jhabelwala. Addressing a press conference later, they alleged that the most 'terrible genocide' in the history of human civilisation was being carried out by Israel under the 'incitement' of major powers like the US in which thousands of people have lost their lives so far. "We condemned what is described as the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people by Israel," the union's president said and labelled it a "dark chapter in the history of human civilisation".

Cong gave 'Garibi hatao' slogan but looted poor: PM

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said Congress gave the 'Garibi Hatao' slogan, but looted the poor, adding that the party's mentality was to ensure that the poor did not progress.

"If the poor are benefiting, you feel happy, but the Congress doesn't feel happy over this," Modi said, addressing a rally at Panvel in Maharashtra for the November 20 state assembly elections.

"The Congress is far ahead when it comes to vote bank politics, but is the enemy of the poor," Modi said. The poor have a big responsibility to stop the Congress, he added.

The Congress has always worked with the agenda of keeping the poor in poverty, Modi said.

"Generation after generation these people kept giving the false slogan of eradicating



poverty. In the name of eradicating poverty, the Congress looted the poor," he said.

Even after 70 years of Independence, most of the people in the country were struggling to get food, clothing and shelter, Modi said. This situation has changed for the first time in the last 10 years, he added. Modi said his govern-

ment has brought 25 crore people out of poverty.

Modi also spoke of his love for Maharashtra, the land of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

"When the BJP chose me as the PM candidate in 2013, I went to Raigad fort and sought the blessings of Shivaji Maharaj to work for the country," he said.

"Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj gave us the oath of swaraj (self-rule). We have to carry forward the resolution of suraj (good governance) along with swaraj to build a developed India," he said.

Modi said a Congress leader has promised to provide subsidised cooking gas cylinder even to infiltrators if the INDIA bloc comes to power in Jharkhand. "Today, a Congress leader has said in Jharkhand that we will give cheap gas cylinders to Hindus and Muslims as well as infiltrators. Should such people who praise the infiltrators get any opportunity anywhere?" he said.

"This is an example of the game they are playing with the country and with the bright future of your children to get votes," he said.

Modi asked the crowd at the rally to say 'Ek hai tath safe hai' so that those seeking to divide society lose their sleep.



'Modi would have embraced different policies had he read the Constitution'

PNS ■ NANDED

Nanded (Maha), Nov 14 (PTI) Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi would have pursued different policies if he had read the Constitution of India.

Speaking at a rally here ahead of the November 20 Maharashtra assembly elections as well as the Nanded Lok Sabha byelection, Gandhi said the Constitution does not teach us to discriminate between the rich and the poor.

"Modi has waived loans of Rs 16 lakh crore of 25 rich people, but not the loans of the poor and farmers," he claimed, adding that this is not what the Constitution teaches you. Gandhi also touched upon the ongoing strife in Manipur,

and said never in the country's history we have seen a situation where 'a state has been burning for more than one year but the prime minister has not visited it.' Displaying a red-cover Constitution, he said, "Modi ji says this book is blank. Is it blank? He has not understood the Constitution of India. It is the voice of the country and contains the history and soul of India. You (Modi) have not read it in your life. Otherwise you would not have done what you do."

The BJP was working "discreetly" to finish off the Constitution but it would not say so openly because then the entire country would be up in arms against it, Gandhi said.

The Constitution protects the rights of the poor people and the Congress is fighting to protect it, he said.

Congress to PM: Why Mumbai made to lose big-ticket projects to Gujarat?

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday by posing questions to him on Mumbai, asking why is the metropolis "made to lose" big-ticket projects to Gujarat and why is the BJP "sponsoring Adani's Dharavi land grab".

Ahead of Modi's poll engagement in Mumbai, Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh posed five questions which he said the people are asking the PM. He asked whether the BJP is scared of losing the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) polls.

"The Mahayuti government's repeated delays in holding the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation elections is a blatant attack on democracy and the rights of Mumbai's citizens. The government claims that the delays are

due to issues like OBC reservations and ward delimitation but the reality is that the BJP was afraid of facing the electorate, fearing a loss that would undermine its image before the elections," Ramesh alleged in his post on X.

"With the BMC under an un-elected administrator, the ruling coalition has been using the civic body's funds and resources to benefit its own MLAs and supporters," he alleged. Without elected repre-

sentatives, Mumbai's citizens have also struggled to get their voices heard and grievances addressed by the BMC, Ramesh said.

"This is a clear attempt to consolidate power, and a blatant subversion of democratic principles. Why has the BJP betrayed the people of Mumbai? How much longer do the people have to wait to have their voices heard?" he said.

Ramesh further asked why is the BJP "sponsoring Adani's

Dharavi land-grab". "The Redevelopment Project has turned into a BJP-sponsored land grab for the non-biological PM's best friend, the Adani Group. The latest tender, floated by the Mahayuti government in September 2022, was allegedly geared specifically towards the Adani Group, the eventual winner," he alleged.

The structure of the Adani-led Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) established through this tender served to completely alienate Dharavi's seven lakh residents, he said.

The share of the Slum Rehabilitation Authority was reduced to 20 per cent, the ability of residents to negotiate at the planning level was removed and the process of public debate and participation that had emerged from the start of the process was scrapped in its entirety, Ramesh said.

BJP's Arjun Singh claims conspiracy to kill him, TMC calls him 'mentally bankrupt'

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Senior BJP leader Arjun Singh on Thursday claimed that conspiracies were being hatched to eliminate him and alleged that these efforts were politically motivated due to his opposition alignment.

"I am being maligned, and there are plans to eliminate me," Singh told reporters after appearing before the CID in connection with alleged irregularities in the awarding of a tender during his tenure as chairman of Bhatpara Municipality in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district in 2020.

The Trinamool Congress dismissed the allegations as baseless with party leaders claiming that Singh had become "mentally bankrupt." Singh, who had switched from the BJP to the Trinamool Congress (TMC) after the 2021 assembly elections, only to return to the saffron party



ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, denied any wrongdoing during his time as chairman of Bhatpara municipality.

"I was the first civic body chairman in the state to introduce e-tendering in Bhatpara. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee knows very well there were no illegalities in my tenure," Singh said soon after coming out from the CID headquarters at Bhabani Bhavan.

The BJP leader further claimed that there were plots being hatched by the administration

to harm him and Suwendu Adhikari, the Leader of the Opposition. "We are under the protection of central security forces, so they cannot harm us physically in public. However, I have reliable information that I might be slowly poisoned during interrogation," Singh alleged. "I don't know for sure, but I have been warned by some trusted sources," the former MP claimed. He warned that if he died from multi-organ failure in the next six months, the state government would be held responsible. "I will hold the state government accountable if anything happens to me," he said.

Singh also said he was fully prepared to cooperate with the CID and would not be intimidated. "I have nothing to hide. I will face their questioning whenever they summon me. Today, they asked irrelevant questions for over three hours, but I remained calm and gave the same answers," he said.

Cong-BJP spar over K'taka CM's charge on 'horse trading' bid

PNS ■ BENGALURU

The Congress and the BJP on Thursday sparred over Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's statement that the saffron party offered Rs 50 crore each to 50 MLAs of the ruling party to topple his government.

At an event in Mysuru, Siddaramaiah reiterated the claim that "none of the Congress MLAs had accepted the offer". He also accused the BJP of filing false cases against him in a bid to "remove him and overthrow his government". The BJP went ballistic against Siddaramaiah calling it a "baseless allegation".

Karnataka BJP President B Y Vijayendra challenged Siddaramaiah to disclose the source of his allegation. He alleged that the CM had lost faith in his party MLAs and hence was leveling false allegations. If the Chief Minister fails



to prove that Rs 50 crore each was offered to 50 Congress MLAs, people will not take him seriously anymore, Vijayendra said. Siddaramaiah declined to comment on Vijayendra's statement. "I will not comment on him. Why do you ask me about the person who came (into politics) just recently?" asked Siddaramaiah.

Vijayendra alleged that Siddaramaiah was behaving in a manner that undermined the dignity of the responsible position he was holding.

"You have your own government and your own investigating agencies. Hence, it is your moral responsibility to reveal to the people, the source of the Rs 50 crore bribe charge. Otherwise, your statement will be nothing more than a childish political statement," he said. The Chief Minister's allegation was an "insult" to the democratic system as it depicts the MLAs as commodities for sale, he alleged. Vijayendra further accused Siddaramaiah of "weaving a lie" to keep the MLAs in check and "cover up the corruption cases" surrounding him. Noting that the allegation made by the Chief Minister needs to be investigated, he said the Enforcement Directorate should urgently take it up on its own and immediately conduct a probe.

Former Ministers V Sunil Kumar and C T Ravi flayed the CM of making a "baseless allegation".

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Kirti Kisan Union, a farmers' organisation, Thursday donated Rs 5 lakh for the people of Palestine through its mission here as a humanitarian aid and expressing solidarity with the people there facing difficult times due to the ongoing conflict. A delegation of the union met Palestine ambassador to India Abed Elrazeg Abu Jazer at the Palestinian embassy here and donated the money, a release from the organisation said. The union has raised its voice in favour of a permanent truce in West Asia and also demanded that the United Nations find a sustainable solution to the Palestine issue. The Kirti Kisan Union delegation



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PNS ■ TONK (RAJASTHAN)

Independent MLA candidate Naresh Meena was arrested on Thursday following high drama and escalating violence in which a mob assaulted a PTI reporter and video cameraperson and burnt their camera.

The attack, a day after the Congress rebel contesting as an Independent in the bypolls slapped SDM Malpura Amit Chaudhary outside a polling booth in front of hundreds of people, came while the PTI crew was covering a protest following the arrest.

PTI reporter Ajeet Shekhawat and cameraperson Dharmendra Kumar were badly injured and rushed to hospital. In a selfie video sent to the PTI head office in Delhi, Shekhawat can be seen bleed-

ing from under his left eye. He said his colleague Dharmendra suffered a gash on the head and his arm may be broken.

The two came under attack when they were about to interview Agriculture Minister Kirodi Lal Meena, who had gone to the trouble spot to assess the situation in Tonk district's Samravta village, about

100 km from the state capital Jaipur. The violence has been going on since Wednesday evening when police tried to stop Naresh Meena's supporters from sitting on dharna.

The slap, videos of which were circulated widely on social media platforms, set in motion differing protests from both his supporters and Rajasthan

Administrative Service officials. The tension that started outside the polling booth snowballing into outright violence through the night and into Thursday.

Work across government offices in the state was hit in the morning with officials of the RAS Association and allied services going on a pen-down strike

demanding that Meena be arrested. They said they would continue till a meeting with Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma.

Ranged against them were Meena's alleged supporters. About 60 two-wheelers and 18 four-wheelers, including police vehicles, were torched in the violence that erupted outside the polling booth in Samravta village in the Deoli-Uniara assembly constituency when police tried to prevent the dharna.

About 60 people were arrested in the early hours of Thursday following the violence that also saw crowds pelting stones at police personnel. As the morning progressed, tension spiralled. "I will not surrender," a defiant Meena told jostling camera crews in Samravta after he was taken into custody.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

Bulldozer justice quashed

The SC strikes down 'bulldozer justice,' mandating strict accountability for officials involved in illegal demolitions

The Supreme Court of India has delivered a landmark judgement against the practice of "bulldozer justice," emphasising that officials who engage in illegal demolitions will now be held personally liable to restore properties and pay damages. The judgement is a response to the growing concern over arbitrary demolitions used as punitive measures, often targeting properties associated with individuals accused of crimes. The judgement introduces strict procedural requirements and enforces personal accountability for officials. This liability includes covering the cost of restoring the demolished properties and compensating affected parties. This measure is designed to deter officials from disregarding due process and underscores the responsibility that comes with exercising state power. The Supreme Court has established mandatory procedural guidelines to prevent arbitrary demolitions— A 15-day prior show-cause notice is required, along with a personal hearing; a detailed final order justifying why demolition is the only viable action must be provided and a 15-day grace period post-final order allows the affected party to seek legal recourse or vacate the premises.



The Supreme Court has mandated real-time updates on a digital portal for all demolition notices and orders to prevent arbitrary actions and foster transparency. Additionally, the entire demolition process must be videographed, with a list of officials involved to ensure accountability and adherence to procedure. Officials violating these directives risk contempt proceedings and prosecution, underscoring the Court's commitment to upholding the rule of law. The judgement holds far-reaching implications for governance, rule of law and individual rights in India. By restricting demolitions carried out as a form of punishment, the Supreme Court reinforces the fundamental legal principle that the executive cannot act as judge and enforcer. The decision underscores the judiciary's role in protecting individuals' rights against arbitrary state action, affirming that everyone is entitled to due process before facing punitive measures. The decision is laudable because it is tough on arbitrary demolitions, which often infringe on the right to shelter, impacting families and communities and safeguards citizens' fundamental rights, emphasising that actions targeting individuals suspected of crimes must follow legal due process. The judgement must come as a relief to many families who dread the demolition as one of them might have been on the wrong side of the law. However, the judgement falls short of putting onus on the political masters of the bureaucrats on whose behest such actions are often taken. Nevertheless, it would rein in the erring officers who go out of way to please their political masters. It is a bold move that could reshape administrative conduct.

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PICTALK



A crow quenches its thirst by drinking water from a fountain, in New Delhi

India's cricket boycott is a safety issue, not politics



BHOPINDER SINGH

As the deadliest year in Pakistan's recent history unfolds, calls for separating sports from safety concerns overlook the urgent realities facing the nation

Global Terrorism Index 2024 reports that Pakistan had the highest recorded terror attacks of any country in the world. 490 attacks were formally recorded with spiralling instances in the fourth successive year of increased deaths and terror incidents. The US Department of State currently maps the situation at "level 3" i.e., warning its citizens to "Reconsider Travel". Similarly, British authorities "advise against all travels to parts of Pakistan" and note bluntly, "No travel can be guaranteed safe".

There are two dedicated Pakistani Army Divisions deployed to secure Chinese personnel and assets of the various Chinese-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) imperatives in Pakistan, yet the same gets targeted with seeming impunity and deadly consequences. Even royals from various Arab sheikhdoms who used to descend into the Pakistani hinterland for the annual Houbara hunting season have desisted from the same, given the acute security concerns prevailing. Whereas India has rightfully slammed Pakistan for being the "world's terrorism factory" for its nefarious record in fanning religious extremism and armed insurgency on Indian soil, since independence.

Stating that there is a grave security concern in Pakistan is not a political statement but a statement of fact. The fact that it was featured prominently in the Grey List of the global anti-terror watchdog agency, Financial Action Task Force (FATF) till very recently, is also a fact. Amidst this undeniable security landscape in Pakistan, Pakistani authorities pooh-pooh concerns of the Indian Cricket Board, i.e., BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India), to avoid sending the Indian Cricket Team to play in Pakistan owing to security concerns, is not political one-upmanship but the expected concern of any board towards the safety and welfare of its team. That several India-facing terror groups are thriving on Pakistani soil is a very old story that needs no reiteration, and that itself makes the threat to the Indian team especially severe. The official breakdown and



downgrading of diplomatic ties between Delhi and Islamabad since 2019, do not help mend popular mood or perceptions about India or Indians in Pakistan (or vice versa), either.

While it is certainly true that sporting ties between the two restive nations were always given to political 'point-scoring' and even positive leverage in the form of 'cricket diplomacy' (to thaw bilateral freeze) — this time the security situation in Pakistan has deteriorated to such levels, that to suggest that it is the usual 'point-scoring' diplomacy is to live under a rock. The reality of the situation is even beyond the intellectual debate of allowing or disallowing sports between two 'enemy' countries. Sometime back, India did choose to conflate sports with other bilateral engagements owing to Pakistan's established role in sponsoring terrorism in India, but even if one were to delink the two, the security situation in Pakistan itself warrants a cautionary note from the Indian side.

Understandably the Pakistanis are miffed and embarrassed about what they perceive as a deliberate Indian affront, but deep down they know better given that 2024 has emerged as the deadliest year ever, from the perspective of terrorism in



PAKISTAN IS IN THE MIDST OF AN UNDENIABLE AND COMPLEX SECURITY CRISIS AND WILL ONLY BE ABLE TO RESUME EVENTS WITH INDIAN PARTICIPATION, ONCE THE GROUND SECURITY SITUATION CHANGES

Pakistan. However, coming from its imagined nemesis i.e., India, it is a bitter pill to swallow openly. Given that Pakistan's Interior Minister, Mohsin Naqvi, also double-hats as the Chairman of the Pakistani Cricket Board (PCB) — the Pakistani reaction to BCCI concern assumes a political reaction. He has cavalierly downplayed the 'Hybrid Option' (wherein India plays its matches in a neutral venue, while others can play in Pakistan) by countering, "one of the options the government is mulling is that of asking the PCB to ensure Pakistan don't participate in the Champions Trophy", as a political face-saving comeback. He also fumed that the PCB ought not to be expected to "carry on with their good gestures" of playing in India, as Pakistanis did earlier. This wounded statement misses the point of contrasting the security situation existing in India, vis-à-vis Pakistan, currently.

The Pakistani Government may be tempted to 'retaliate' optically and go as far as asking its team to desist from playing against India in any of the ICC or Asian Cricket Council tournaments, to negate the perceived sleight. Currently, the heavily invested narrative of a perennial 'enemy' in India leads to an instinctive ostrich-

like head in the soil, and denials by Pakistan. Situational irony is magnified by the chairing of the global body of cricketing governance i.e., the ICC, by the son of India's Home Minister (equivalent of Interior Minister in Pakistan), Jay Shah.

Pakistani social media is agog with memes of Kathik-calling-Karthik allusions and its questionable neutrality in handling the current situation. Fair as that concern might be from a Pakistani perspective in normal times, it still does not take away from the genuineness of security concerns in Pakistan. For Pakistan to give examples of the security cover afforded to India's Foreign Minister on a recent visit to Pakistan as an example of its preparedness to host matches with tens of thousands of spectators and other accompanying circumstances, is contrived and grossly stretched logic. Pakistan is in the midst of an undeniable and complex security crisis and will only be able to resume events with Indian participation, once the ground security situation changes. For now, it is clearly beyond political one-upmanship.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry; the views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CLIMATE CRISIS IGNORED

Madam — The editorial, 'Deliver tangible results' (November 13), should sensitise all the concerned. The COP29 is seen more as a ritual congregation than as producing anything tangible in the interest of humanity. The present economic order, marked by rabid chasing of capital for instant profits with its predatory character, knows no sentiments. As capital has gained such power over the policies of a government or even changed the government itself to make its course further smooth. In this background, Trump regaining his political power grossly reduces the scope for any further positive developments in this affair. He is for outright support for faster exploitation for mines and oil wealth to enrich the rich at the cost of the very survival of the living beings.

The latest manifestations of climate change are serious signals to attend to the damages inflicted on the environment but have yet to be taken seriously by any country. COP 29 that meets periodically, discusses the issue, receives consents and commitments for its resolutions from members but utterly fails to put in practice to bring about any tangible improvements in the status. The Indian government is not different. The amendments brought in by the Forest Act last year will see more damage to forests and more men and material loss. Attaching more importance to money has its toll on living beings, which, under the present economic order, is very difficult to infuse a humane face to it.

A G Rajmohan | Anantpur

VISTARA MERGED WITH AIR INDIA

Madam — The Indian full-service airline called Vistara Airlines has finally reached its merger completion stage with Air India. With this, it is now only the Tata Group-owned Air India in the country to manage the full-service flight facility in India. The ten-year-old Vistara, which is a joint venture between Indian and Singaporean companies, has finally flown its last flight from Delhi to Singapore with the code name UK. The premium Club

Inflation rates surge



The inflation rate based on the consumer price index increased to 6.21 per cent in October, up from 5.49 per cent in September, according to the data released by

the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. The increase was driven by the prices of food products, particularly the vegetables, especially tomatoes, onions and potatoes (TOP), rising above 42 per cent.

The food inflation rose sharply to 10.87 per cent in October from 9.2 per cent in the preceding month. There is a greater need for the government to implement additional supply-side measures to stabilise food prices. A weakening of the rupee to an all-time low (November 13, rupees 83.40 against one dollar) against the dollar has also raised the specter of India's oil import bill climbing, which could stoke inflation if retail fuel prices go up. Since this is man-made inflation, the government, which has virtually failed to check inflation, needs to make all-out efforts to check it to give a sigh of relief to the poor.

S K Khosla | Chandigarh

Vistara tickets and pre-booking orders of Vistara have already been shifted to the Maharaja Club of Air India.

Although this whole merger and amalgamation process of Vistara is quite heartening, as Vistara is renowned for its quality service, while Air India grapples with some service issues. Although Air India is in its process of transitioning, any comment with respect to its services quality and experience post merger with Vistara would be too early. Tata's are the trusted group of India, and let's not forget that their airline's contribution holds a long history. They have been in national service in India since 1932, with the visionary mentality of JRD Tata. The expansion of Air India with the merger of Vistara will surely improve the aviation operations of Air India and also help the Air India group to focus more on customer-centric service with a memorable quality experience in every flight.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

PROMISES AND POLITICS

Madam — The political scenario is getting hotter as the stakes are very high in the

Maharashtra state elections. Honours are even and fighting for supremacy is gearing up in a fancy mood. Allegations and counter-allegations are mounting up and a war of words is now in a now-or never situation. Freebies funds find routes in a big way, finding routes from the household items and electronic items.

As the manifestos are out, the realities come to light in the electioneering. In the public view, election manifestos are issued solely to sway voters, who know they will hear about these promises again only when the next election comes. People will have to simply wait and watch as mute spectators. If parties truly believe in the validity of their manifestos, they should allow voters to judge these promises on their own merits, rather than muddying the waters with divisive or defamatory statements. The real lie lies in cheating voters. Lies lay low in a political flow of fight between EVMs and electorates.

C K Subramaniam | Mumbai

Pathway to a knowledge-rich, future-ready nation

By promoting multilingualism, skill development and character-building, NEP 2020 aims to empower students to tackle both national and global challenges

On July 29, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 completed four years, a transformative framework that has reshaped the country's educational landscape by connecting contemporary needs with its traditional roots. NEP 2020 stands as the first education policy since independence that genuinely aligns with Bharat's ancient traditions, advocating for accessible, quality education with an emphasis on relevance and inclusivity.

The policy introduces a host of progressive features, such as flexible study options, multiple entry and exit points, the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC), credit transfer mechanisms, and a focus on online courses, aiming to create a seamless, adaptable educational journey for learners across the nation. A defining aspect of NEP 2020 is its commitment to the five foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability. NEP 2020 brings traditional values, arts, languages and culture into the mainstream curriculum, underscoring



Bharat's ambition to reclaim its heritage as a knowledge superpower.

One of the most notable additions is the incorporation of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), promoting the revival and research of traditional subjects such as Vedic mathematics, Ayurveda, environmental studies, linguistics, Yoga and other indigenous disciplines. This shift helps bridge the gap left by prior policies, which often neglected or excluded these areas under the influence of Western paradigms. The NEP also recommends a three-language formula, promoting multilingualism by including at least two Indian languages in school curricula. While this policy is intended to support India's linguistic diversity, it

faced resistance in some non-Hindi-speaking states, where concerns about linguistic hegemony and regional language preservation surfaced. The central government may need to address these concerns carefully, especially given education's status on the Concurrent List, to ensure a balanced approach that respects regional identities while achieving national integration. The policy's emphasis on Sanskrit, often regarded as a foundational element of Bharat's cultural heritage, is a major milestone. With Sanskrit included as an optional language under the three-language formula, both school and higher education institutions are encouraged to integrate it into their curricula. NEP serves as a turning point in Bharat's educational history, aiming to foster character development and national pride alongside academic excellence. NEP 2020 emphasises two overarching themes: nurturing Indian values and fostering character-building among students. This holistic approach is intended to develop responsible, ethical citizens ready to tackle both national and glob-

al challenges. Despite allegations of "saffronisation," proponents argue that the NEP aims to realign the educational system with what benefits the nation and its people. Science and history, though based on facts, are often viewed through the lenses of time and place. A major thrust of NEP 2020 is skill development, with the objective of enhancing employability by integrating vocational training and practical learning into the curriculum. The inclusion of courses on data structures, programming, machine learning and artificial intelligence is intended to prepare students for a tech-driven future. NEP 2020 also encourages societal engagement through initiatives like internships and community visits, fostering creativity and real-world problem-solving skills. Institutions like NIT Uttarakhand have already embraced the NEP's multidisciplinary model, focusing on research and innovation to build a skilled and socially conscious workforce.

(The author is the BJP Councilor, New Delhi; views are personal)



UMANG BAJAJ

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FIRST COLUMN

UNVEILING THE SHAKTIS

Shakti forms are central to authentic spiritual practice.

Nature's energies are accessible but require dedication



ASHWINI GURURJI

The creation is governed by certain *Shaktis*. As you progress in your *sadhana*, you can experience their forms. Every day, each one of the 365 days, is governed (sanchalit) by a specific *shakti*. That is why the importance of *niyam* and daily practice is insisted upon in yoga. If one misses the *sadhana* for even a single day, the *shakti* of that day is left behind and the *sadhana* of an entire year goes to waste because in Brahmand, if a single thing goes missing then its effect is felt on everything — our body, the earth, as well as other planets and stars. Every *Shakti* has a day, but one need not perform rituals to access them. In yoga and *tantra*, there is no ritual, just the *sadhana* of *Shakti*. It is important to understand the *shakti* of each day and the *Swaroop* of that *shakti*. There is a name for every form of *Shakti*, but at the present moment, we will only be discussing their forms. The names are taken only after generating the capacity in the body, through specific *sadhanas*. At a basic level, when you do *dhyana* with your *guru*, you can see certain forms in him/her, like the sun or even the moon. Ever wondered where these forms come from and what they represent? There are many *sadhaks* who have reported seeing the form of the sun in *dhyana*. What is so special about the Sun? If you look at the Sun at the time of Sunrise and Sunset, keeping the awareness of *Manipoorak* and chanting the mantra 'Ram', you will find a certain glow starts coming into the body and just within a month you will start looking very different (A word of caution here, for any yogic practice it is important to have a Guru who guides you as per your capacity). Just like the sun, the moon too is an extremely interesting energy. The moon merely reflects the light of the Sun, but with that



light, it can attract the tides as well as the earth's surface on a full moon night. Have you ever thought about it—what is so special about the moon? Not just that, on a full moon night, animals become violent, the mentally unstable start behaving funny and accidents and fights are on the rise. Right now I am only discussing the basic aspects, to give you a hint that there is something different about these forms. What that is, is a subject of experience and you will get that experience with the correct practice of *Sanatan Kriya*.

The speciality of the Moon is that it looks calm and peaceful but it is more volatile than even the Sun. When you look at the moon under the guidance of a *Guru*, you will be able to see all the mantras in its form because you cannot see the sun, which channelises that *Shakti*. There are certain *shaktis* which you cannot see and so there are certain other *shaktis* through which you can see and feel their effect, it becomes an experience for you. And till you have that experience, yoga is a waste for you, nothing can happen and nothing is possible.

Experience is the basis of yoga. All the things that we see in the sky and on the earth, there are so many flowers of so many different kinds and colours, if you simply look at them without blinking your eyes under *Guru Sanidhya*, all the defects and imbalances in the body disappear. But there is a small problem... *niyam*. There should be no break in the practice, and the break will come if you do not have the capacity for that *Shakti* or if you don't have a *Guru*. Nature, everything that we see around us, has all the *swaroops* of *shaktis* hidden in it and all these *shaktis* are very easily accessible. If one makes him/herself stir on these *shaktis* and accesses them properly, then they start following that person. The nine days leading to Diwali are especially powerful because of the congregation of specific *shaktis* during these days. Our ancestors prescribed observing the *vrat* of *brahmacharya* during these days to make the body strong enough to accept these *Shaktis*.

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

AI revolutionises the beauty and wellness industry



DINESH SOOD

As global demand for unique beauty solutions surges, the sector's embrace of AI reflects a profound shift towards customisation, efficiency and consumer satisfaction



Innovative products and services utilising new technologies are beginning to disrupt the beauty and wellness sector. As a result, traditional skills need to be strengthened and combined with modern technological skills such as artificial intelligence (AI), app development, augmented reality for try-on services, data analytics and enhanced customer engagement strategies. AI has made significant advancements in the beauty and wellness sector, particularly as the demand for customisation and personalisation has increased.

This trend reflects diverse customer preferences, lifestyles, body types and genetic factors. Recent news about Maybelline's AI-powered "makeup" filters for Microsoft teams has reignited discussions on AI's role in the beauty sector. It is crucial to explore how AI is transforming the industry and to stay updated on the latest developments. The global beauty industry market utilising AI was valued at \$216.12 million in 2020 and is projected to reach \$1.26 billion by 2027. An industry report indicates that the annual growth rate (CAGR) of AI in the beauty sector from 2021 to 2027 is expected to be 33.2 per cent. Several laboratories have developed AI-driven skin consultation tools that integrate augmented reality and artificial intelligence to analyse skin ageing.

These tools can identify signs of ageing and assess skin strength, providing tailored skincare recommendations to prevent further deterioration. Their algorithms are based on 10,000 images and 15 years of dermatological expertise. Users can take a selfie and provide their age and skin type to receive an estimate of their skin condition along with a personalised analysis. They will then receive customised skincare prescriptions. AI assists in analysing skin conditions, recommending personalised skincare and wellness routines and even predicting trends, ultimately enhancing product development and customer satisfaction.

Acne is a common concern worldwide, affecting 80 per cent of teenagers and 40 per cent of adults. With AI, a database of 6,000 images representing various ethnic skin types

enables accurate analysis and personalised routine recommendations for those suffering from acne. This groundbreaking AI technology draws from a library of 10,000 authentic images evaluated by real dermatologists, achieving an accuracy rate of nearly 97 per cent across eight clinical parameters and a wide array of skin types.

In the ever-evolving beauty and wellness industry, where innovation fosters confidence and self-expression, AI has become a powerful ally in creating more effective and personalised product formulations than ever before. By leveraging its diverse applications and capabilities, AI is driving a revolution that is changing how beauty and wellness products are developed, personalised, and marketed.

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From trend spotting to precise product formulation, AI is reshaping the beauty industry in exciting and groundbreaking ways. Integrating AI into the formulation process can also ensure product effectiveness. AI algorithms can simulate how ingredients are absorbed and metabolised by the skin, identifying potential unwanted interactions or side effects.

This approach minimises the risks associated with bringing new products to market and ensures consumers achieve optimal results without compromising their wellbeing. Traditionally, skincare products have been developed with a one-size-fits-all approach, often failing to meet individual consumers' unique needs. AI changes this methodology by analysing various data points, including skin type, age, environmental factors and personal preferences.

By using AI-powered tools, brands can create customised skincare products tailored to each customer's specific requirements. For instance, AI algo-

ritms can assess a user's skin condition through photographs and questionnaires, recommending or formulating products with particular concentrations of active ingredients that address individual skin concerns. Additionally, AI can analyse molecular structures to predict how new compounds will interact with human skin, significantly reducing the time and cost of traditional trial-and-error methods.

The AI system recommends suitable ingredients, products and skincare routines tailored to each individual's needs. It can also suggest branded products that address specific conditions in the beauty and wellness industry, aiming to connect deeply with each customer's preferences. As technology continues to evolve, it promises solutions that will enhance both appearance and wellbeing in the future. Importantly, your data remains private; it is not stored and only you can view the results unless you choose to share your information with others. A personalised experience is crucial for success in the beauty and wellness industry. AI technology plays a significant role in identifying each customer's unique preferences and addressing their individual needs.

As technology advances, beauty companies are expected to introduce innovative services that enhance customer interaction and contribute to the global growth of the beauty market. Online services are evolving rapidly alongside these technological advancements. The importance of websites, engaging social media platforms and online marketplaces is increasing. The share of online revenue in the beauty and personal care sector, which was approximately 4.6 per cent in 2017, is projected to rise to 18.2 per cent by 2025. The

future of the beauty and wellness industry will depend on an omnichannel experience that seamlessly integrates online and offline interactions, utilising a range of digital tools to enhance the consumer experience.

Virtual try-ons and consultations have become standard in beauty retail; however, replicating the human connection remains a challenge. Online influencers and "show me how" content are gaining popularity as consumers learn to master services that they previously sought from professionals.

Additionally, live streaming on platforms like Facebook Live and Instagram significantly engages younger consumers. In India, the beauty and wellness industry is growing rapidly, expanding twice as fast as that of the United States and Europe. Greater consumer awareness and aspiration have led to increased spending on beauty and wellness products and services.

Per capita spending on beauty and personal care products rose from Rs 450 per annum in 2017 to Rs 684 in 2022, with a further increase projected to Rs 772 by 2025. Today's consumers demand unique experiences, making traditional approaches less effective. There is a growing preference for convenience and on-demand services, which have become essential in the fast-paced lives of working professionals. As a result, there is an increasing need for transferable skills within the workforce in the beauty and wellness sector, as customer service expertise becomes more in demand.

(The writer is co-founder and MD of Orane International, a training partner of the National Skill Development Corporation and a network Member of India International Skills Centres, an initiative of GoI; the views expressed are personal)

Cybersecurity: Safeguarding a digital future amid rising cyber threats

India must act swiftly to secure its digital future in an era where technological prowess is now essential for national security

Today, cyber-attacks impact every aspect of life, from government agencies and corporations to individuals' personal data and privacy. While the reach of cybercrime is vast, the underlying complexity remains poorly understood by many, with significant security consequences for nations that fail to address these threats adequately. Cyber-attacks threaten national security and underscore the vulnerabilities associated with our increasing dependence on digital infrastructure. Although the internet has revolutionised the world by providing incredible convenience, connection and comfort, these benefits come with the challenge of safeguarding critical data and



VINAY PATHAK

infrastructure. As cybersecurity becomes the essential defense for peace, prosperity, and privacy in the digital age, recent incidents such as the breach of 7.9 million customer records at India's stock-broking firm Angel demonstrate the necessity of strengthening digital protections. While the internet facilitates ease of access, it also introduces serious vulnerabilities that call for immediate,

concerted efforts.

The recent cyber-attack on Iran marks a chilling advance in digital warfare, illustrating that no nation is immune to the risks of a hyperconnected world. As countries, corporations, and citizens expand their online presence, the scope for potentially devastating cyber-attacks rises dramatically.

This incident serves as a reminder of the need for nations to address cyberspace's complex, escalating risks. India, for example, is undergoing a digital revolution with over 936 million internet users as of December 2023. These "Digital Nagriks" fuel a dynamic digital economy, supporting critical sectors such as healthcare, education, finance and agricul-

ture. However, the rapid pace of digital adoption has outpaced India's cybersecurity measures, creating opportunities for cybercriminals to exploit these gaps.

According to the 2024 Cisco Cybersecurity Readiness Index, only 4 per cent of Indian companies are fully prepared to counter cyber threats, exposing significant vulnerabilities within the nation's digital framework. These threats arise not only from criminal organisations but also from state-sponsored entities targeting India's economic and strategic assets. Moreover, emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) enable more sophisticated cyber-attacks, including deepfake technology and disinformation cam-



paigns, adding complex layers to cyber defenses. In today's world, technological prowess in fields such as AI and cybersecurity equates to national security, rivaling traditional military strength. However, India faces several challenges in coordinating an effective cyber defense. While initiatives like Cyber Surakshit Bharat have shown early progress, a comprehensive national cybersecurity

strategy is still missing, which limits effective threat response and assessment. A recent step forward has been the Prime Minister's Office's appointment of a cybersecurity oversight official, but gaps remain in the infrastructure needed to support comprehensive defence. Cyberspace's borderless nature complicates defence efforts, as attacks can target both military and civilian assets globally, bypassing traditional political and geographic constraints.

India has implemented several initiatives to tackle cyber threats. For instance, the Cyber Fraud Mitigation Centre (CFMC) at the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre in New Delhi unites major players—including

banks, telecom providers and law enforcement agencies—to combat online financial crimes. This initiative, exemplifying "Cooperative Federalism," enables swift responses to fraud. The government has also introduced the Samanvaya Platform, a centralised repository of cybercrime data to foster interagency cooperation. Despite these initiatives, further action is required to establish a comprehensive cybersecurity framework. Without unified regulatory standards, gaps remain in protecting the public and private sectors, especially for small businesses that may lack the resources for robust cybersecurity protocols.

This vulnerability could undermine both national

security and public trust in India's digital infrastructure. Programs like Cyber Surakshit Bharat, the National Cybersecurity Coordination Centre (NCCC), and CERT-In have all aimed to strengthen India's defences, with additional measures such as the Information Security Education and Awareness Project (ISEA) helping to create a culture of security consciousness among citizens. The 2023 Digital Personal Data Protection Act reinforces this commitment by aligning with global data security standards to improve transparency and accountability among companies.

(The writer is an assistant professor, Indian Institute of Information Technology, Sonapat; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



CCPA orders probe into deficiencies in Ola Electric

Consumer rights regulator CCPA has ordered a detailed probe into complaints related to alleged 'deficiencies' in services and electric two-wheelers manufactured by Ola Electric. The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) headed by Nidhi Khare has directed the Director General (Investigation), who is also head of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), to investigate this matter. The order to this effect was issued on November 6 and the BIS DG has been asked to submit the investigation report within 15 days. The company has responded to the notice. The CCPA has now asked the DG (Investigation) to investigate the matter in detail and submit the report within 15 days, a senior consumer affairs ministry official said. The move comes after the CCPA initiated action after it received 10,000-odd complaints on the National Consumer Helpline (NCH). The regulator had issued a notice to Ola Electric on October 7 citing alleged violations of consumer rights, misleading advertisements and unfair trade practices.



SPIC reports July-Sept profit before tax at Rs 48.39 cr

Southern Petrochemical Industries Corporation Ltd (SPIC) has reported a profit before tax of Rs 48.39 crore during the July-September 2024 quarter, the company said on Thursday. The company had reported a profit before tax of Rs 71.35 crore in the corresponding quarter of last financial year. For the year ending March 31, 2024 the profit before tax stood at Rs 142.99 crore. Commenting on the financial performance, SPIC Chairman Ashwin Muthiah said, "SPIC's financial performance this quarter underscores steady growth, with an increase in quarterly turnover. Despite a challenging economic landscape, SPIC has sustained operational strength, and we remain committed to delivering long-term value through our focus on operational efficiency and Research and Development driven agri-solutions." The total income during the quarter under review was at Rs 761.22 crore, as against Rs 747.50 crore registered in the year ago period. The total income for the year ending March 31, 2024 was at Rs 1,962.16 crore



AIBOC presses for 5-day work week, protective steps

All India Bank Officers' Confederation (AIBOC) on Thursday demanded a long pending implementation of a 5-day work week for bank employees among others. Besides, the bank officers union pressed for recruitment at public sector banks to address staff shortage. The acute shortage of clerical and subordinate staff compels officers to undertake tasks outside their primary duties, AIBOC said in a statement. Recently, it said, bank employees have been subjected to violent attacks, often instigated by politically connected individuals, both within branches and in public spaces. AIBOC in a letter written to the Department of Financial Services said the current environment of physical risk, coercion and internal toxicity has become a serious deterrent. "We look forward to your prompt attention to this matter and an affirmative response that reassures our officers of the Ministry's commitment to their safety and well-being," it said.

Exports up 17.25% in Oct, highest in 2 years; trade deficit widens

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's merchandise exports in October rose by an impressive 17.25 per cent, highest in over two years, to \$39.2 billion, while the trade deficit widened to \$27.14 billion. According to the government data released on Thursday, imports increased by 3.9 per cent to \$66.34 billion in October compared to \$63.86 billion in the year-ago period.

The trade deficit (gap between imports and exports) narrowed as compared to \$30.42 billion recorded in October last year. However, it has widened from \$20.78 billion recorded in September this year.

India's merchandise exports had marginally risen by 0.5 per cent to \$34.58 billion in September.

During April-October this fiscal, exports increased by 3.18 per cent to \$252.28 billion, and imports by 5.77 per cent to \$416.93 billion.

Commenting on the data, Commerce Secretary Sunil



Barthwal said, "This has been an extremely good month for exports...If we continue in this manner, we will cross \$800 billion of exports (goods and services together) this (fiscal) year."

He said that the government's strategy to focus on six sectors -- engineering, electronics, pharma, chemicals, plastics and agriculture -- as well as 20 countries is yielding positive results.

These 20 countries account for 60 per cent of the total global imports and these six

segments have a share of 67 per cent in global imports.

The commerce ministry has undertaken deeper economic integration in these nations through market access initiatives, promotion of brand India, addressing non-tariff barriers and conducting trade promotion events.

Barthwal also said that they are holding a series of meetings with Indian missions abroad to promote shipments.

"We are formulating strategies to promote exports in these focus countries and I am

sure that the strategy will help us in showing excellent result by end of this year," he added. Healthy Christmas demands could be one of the reasons for exports to register double digit growth in October. Meetings were already held with key European nations. A similar exercise is planned for America and Asia-Pacific nations, Africa and middle east countries. Crude oil imports in October rose to \$18.2 billion from \$16.1 billion in the same month last year.

Commenting on the data, Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said, "This has been an extremely good month for exports...If we continue in this manner, we will cross \$800 billion of exports (goods and services together) this (fiscal) year"

Gold slide continues; tanks Rs 700 to Rs 77,050 per 10 gms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices saw yet another steep fall on Thursday, with the precious metal declining Rs 700 to Rs 77,050 per 10 grams in the national capital amid subdued demand trend in the global markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity closed at Rs 77,750 per 10 grams in the previous session, a day after falling marginally by Rs 50 on Wednesday.

Silver also plummeted Rs 2,310 to Rs 90,190 per kg against the previous close of Rs 92,500 per kg.

Extending the losses for the fourth straight session, the price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity fell Rs 700 to Rs 76,650 per 10 grams. It had ended at Rs 77,350 per 10 grams on Wednesday.

In futures trade on the MCX, gold contracts for December delivery plunged Rs 804 or 1.08 per cent to trade at Rs 73,678 per 10 grams. During the day, the precious metal

declined Rs 1,182 or 1.59 per cent to Rs 73,300 per 10 grams.

"Gold's weakness persisted with price falling near Rs 73,500 in MCX as the dollar climbed. The US CPI data, which came in higher at 2.6 per cent compared to the expected 2.4 per cent, fuelled the dollar's strength.

"While the Fed has been continuing with rate cuts as inflation approached its 2 per cent target, the CPI data raised concerns that further cuts may be paused," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said.

This development added pressure on gold prices, which reacted negatively to the stronger dollar and the potential shift in Fed policy, Trivedi added. Silver contracts for December delivery plummeted Rs 2,067, or 2.32 per cent, to Rs 87,130 per kg.

Globally, Comex gold futures fell USD 29.10 per ounce, or 1.13 per cent, to hit a two-month low of USD 2,557.40 per ounce.

SECI issues showcase notices to RPower, its arm over fake bank guarantees

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Renewable energy agency SECI has sent a showcase notice to Reliance Power, asking why a criminal action should not be taken against the company and its arm for submitting fake bank guarantees. Last week, Solar Energy Corporation of India barred Reliance Power and its arm Reliance NU BESS from participating in its tenders for submission of fake documents in its bids.

Meanwhile, in a filing to exchanges, Reliance Power said that it has been "a victim of fraud, forgery and cheating conspiracy".

"A criminal complaint in this regard has already been lodged with Economic Offence Wing of Delhi Police against the third party on October 16, 2024, basis on which First Information Report (FIR) has been registered on November 11, 2024. The matter is under investigation and due process of law will follow," Reliance Power

said. In a notice dated November 13, SECI said on account of submission of fake endorsement of a foreign Bank Guarantee (BG) as part of its bid submission, it was discovered that the said BG submitted by Reliance NU BESS Ltd. (known as Maharashtra Energy Generation Ltd. at the time of bid submission), was also fake.

"The repeated submission of a fake Bank Guarantee (BG) along with its counterfeit endorsement has been deemed a deliberate act by the Bidder, intended to vitiate the tendering process and to secure the project capacity through fraudulent means," SECI said in the notice.

"SECI has issued showcase notices to the entities, namely Reliance Power Ltd. and Reliance NU BESS Ltd, seeking explanation as to why SECI should not initiate criminal proceedings against them, in view of the fraudulent and forged actions," the notice stated.

Kerala CM assures safety of investments in coop sector

PNS ■ KOCHI

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan assured on Thursday that no one would lose their investment in the state's cooperative sector, emphasising that the sector is robust, with investments amounting to Rs 2 lakh crore. "Only Kerala's cooperative sector could make such a claim in the country," he said while delivering the inaugural address at Co-operative Week celebrations here.

He assured that no investor would lose even a single paisa that they have deposited in the cooperative sector, as no such incident has occurred so far.

Referring to the recent allegations of corruption in the cooperative sector, Vijayan said that any irregularities would be thoroughly addressed. "A negative reputation that we do not deserve has been created by a few individuals and certain institutions," he added.

'NCRTC exploring ways to integrate AI for efficiency, sustainability, security'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NCRTC is exploring opportunities to integrate AI into its systems to enhance efficiency, sustainability and security, Managing Director Shalabh Goel has said.

Goel said in a written interview that digitalisation and technological advancements were key focus areas for the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC), enhancing both project execution and passenger facilitation.

The urban transporter has implemented European Train Control System (ETCS) Level 2 over the LTE backbone for the first time in the world, which includes automatic train protection and automatic train supervision sub-systems. Platform screen doors are also integrated with the ETCS signalling system for enhanced passenger safety, he said.

"Since inception, the NCRTC leveraged technology to deliver a truly commuter-centric project. We are actively exploring opportunities to integrate AI into our systems



to enhance efficiency, sustainability and security," Goel said. "Our goal is to utilise AI to improve asset management, streamline scheduling, reduce operational costs, and strengthen safety protocols, ultimately driving long-term value and performance across our operations," he further said.

According to Goel, the 42-kilometre stretch from Sahibabad to Meerut South of the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS), covering nine stations, is already open for public use. Construction of the remaining portion of the corridor is on track to meet the 2025 deadline for full operation.

Civil construction for key stations in the Delhi section such as Sarai Kale Khan and New Ashok Nagar is nearing completion. Viaduct construction in the Uttar Pradesh section is nearing completion. Tunnel construction at all three underground stations in Meerut is complete, with final finishing work underway, he said. Goel further said the operational section from Sahibabad to Meerut South had seen a steady increase in daily commuters.

Autodesk partners with IIT Bombay to drive skills for 'Design and Make' units

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Autodesk and the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT Bombay) have signed a pact to foster skills development among the next-generation of engineers, designers, and innovators, in a bid to prepare them for 'design and make' industries.

The collaboration will combine Autodesk's industry expertise with IIT Bombay's leadership in education, research, and innovation, a release said adding the goal is to train and provide skills to top talent, support India's growth, and shape the country's technical and scientific landscape.

The Design and Make industries - encompassing architecture, engineering and construction, design and man-



ufacturing, and media and entertainment - employ nearly 300 million globally and will represent an estimated USD 30 trillion in value globally by 2027, according to the release.

The MoU between Autodesk and IIT Bombay was signed by Steve Blum, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at

Autodesk and Professor Ravindra Gudi, Dean of Alumni and Corporate Relations at IIT Bombay.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Autodesk President and CEO, Andrew Anagnost, during his visit to India, and IIT Bombay Director Professor Shireesh Kedare, along with other executives.

As the industry strives for continuous innovation and sustainable outcomes, partnerships with academia play a significant role in creating opportunities for collaboration and helping the industry to embrace digital transformation, Blum said.

Shireesh Kedare, Director of IIT Bombay said: "This collaboration will bridge academic learning with cutting-edge industry technology, foster innovation, and position our graduates as vital contributors to India's progress in science, technology, and sustainable industry practices".

Over five million students in over 14,000 secondary and post-secondary schools across India use Autodesk's software, learning how to train for in-demand skills, it added.

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Over five million students in over 14,000 secondary and post-secondary schools across India use Autodesk's software, learning how to train for in-demand skills, it added.

'Lubrizol MoU with Polyhose to make TN strong in medi tech'

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Global leader in specialty chemicals, Lubrizol Corporation, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with diversified industrial conglomerate Polyhose India Pvt Ltd to establish a medical manufacturing facility in Tamil Nadu.

The partnership aims to make the state a powerhouse in medical technology, according to the government.

Under the agreement, high-quality medical tubes will be produced at a facility near Chennai. These products will be used in critical applications such as neuro-vascular and cardiovascular treatments, including intravenous catheters, hemodialysis tubes, central venous catheters, and brain stimulation, said Minister for Industries, TRB Rajaa.

Top officials from Lubrizol and Polyhose met with the Minister and senior government representatives at the Secretariat to exchange documents during the signing ceremony.

"Happy to have participated in the signing of an MoU between Lubrizol and Polyhose for a crucial partnership in the MedTech sector. Such partnerships are key in our journey to make Tamil Nadu a MedTech manufacturing powerhouse, leveraging our strengths in electronics, engineering and healthcare," Rajaa said in a social media post.

The facility will span 8,000 sq ft near Chennai, with production focused on high-quality medical tubes for neurovascular and cardiovascular treatments. "Under the leadership of Chief Minister M K Stalin, we are committed to fostering high-value collaborations that drive innovation and create quality jobs in Tamil Nadu," Rajaa added.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the proposed factory is expected in 2025, with operations scheduled to begin in 2026. The facility, located in Kelambakkam, Chennai, will create around 200 jobs, according to company officials.



BAILING OUT LOSS-MAKING UNIT

SC asks Assam Tea Corp to give list of its properties

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the chairman of Assam Tea Corporation Limited to submit the details of movable and immovable properties owned by it after the state government said it does not have capacity to pump-in more funds into the loss making corporation, which runs 14 tea gardens.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George

Masih noted the submission of Assam Chief Secretary Ravi Kota that the state has tried its best to bail out the cash strapped Assam Tea Corporation Limited (ATCL) but has not been able to bring it out from the situation. Kota, who appeared virtually before the court, submitted that the state cabinet has discussed the situation of ATCL and decided it will not be prudent to pump-in more funds into the loss making

enterprise. The bench observed if the state government is not willing to put in more money into

the corporation, then it will direct the selling of its 14 tea gardens to pay the dues of its employees, including the provident funds.

The top court was hearing a contempt petition for non-payment of dues to the workmen working in these tea estates of the ATCL, a state-owned enterprise. The contempt petition has been filed in the 2006 petition filed by the International Union of Food and Agriculture Workers for payment of dues and pensionary benefits.

During the hearing, the bench at the outset asked the

ATCL how it was going to pay the dues as it was not disputing the liability to pay the workers.

Senior advocate Nalin Kohli, appearing for the ATCL and the Assam government, told the bench that the corporation is having shortage of funds and it can pay the present salaries or the past one but it cannot be treated as a precedent and cannot be directed to pay the arrears time and again.



TAAPSEE TO PERFORM HER OWN STUNTS IN GANDHARI



Over the years, Taapsee has picked up challenging roles and tried her hand at every genre—family drama, horror and action. Now her fans are eagerly awaiting the release of her upcoming film *Gandhari*, which is billed as an action thriller. The film revolves around the story of a mother who takes on a fierce and brutal fight to save her child who is abducted. The actress has been working rigorously to prepare for the role that is sure to leave a lasting impact on the audience.

According to a source, "As per the source, we have learned that Taapsee will not be using a body double for her upcoming film *Gandhari* and she will be doing her own stunts for action scenes, where she will be seen playing a mother for the first time. Her role is based on a determined mother who is on a mission and you will also see her bond with her child. She is focusing on her agility to keep her character and fight scenes more real and raw."

After the tremendous success of *Phir Aayi Hasseen Dillruba*, *Gandhari* marks her second collaboration with writer-producer Kanika Dhillon. The film is tentatively scheduled to stream next year.



Neha's initiative empowers women's health and fitness

In a powerful celebration of women's health and empowerment, actress and fitness advocate Neha Dhupia has introduced the *GoFlo Run 2024*, a landmark event that blends fitness, community and advocacy for menstrual health. Co-hosted by visionary entrepreneur Anita Lobo, the inaugural *GoFlo Run* is scheduled for December 8, 2024, at the MMRDA Grounds. This event marks the beginning of a new era in women's fitness events, expanding beyond the scope of traditional runs to spark meaningful conversations about women's health. It aims to break stigmas surrounding menstruation while promoting an active lifestyle for women and girls. Open to participants aged 12 and above, the event encourages them to run, walk and engage in a movement that not only fosters physical well-being but also strengthens a sense of community among women. Speaking on the launch of *GoFlo Run 2024*, Neha Dhupia shared her personal connection to running and her motivation behind championing this cause. "The one thing I have always loved to do is run—whether I'm happy, sad, free, or busy, I always crave that run. It's not about being fast, good, or athletic, it's about listening to my mind and body, deciding my strength and pace, and setting myself free. The more I ran, the more I connected with a wonderful community of runners, full of mental and physical strength and discipline, with so much room to grow. Together with my running partner, Anita Lobo, we've taken a baby step towards creating a healthier world for women and girls. It is an invitation for women and girls across the city and nation to come out, run, walk and join us for a healthier today and tomorrow. More importantly, it's a platform to raise awareness about menstrual health, a subject that's often less talked about but has a huge impact on women's lives." It invites women of all fitness levels to participate in this groundbreaking initiative. By blending the energy of a fitness event with the power of social advocacy, it promises to be a celebration of strength, unity, and positive change.



LOOKBOOK

Tira, launched its flagship store at Jio World Plaza on Wednesday night, with numerous Bollywood celebrities present at the event. Numerous celebrities were present at the event, such as Mira Rajput, Shahid Kapoor, Triptii Dimri, Shalini Passi and Seema Sajdeh. Kareena Kapoor, Suhana Khan and Kiara Advani, all brand ambassadors, were present at the event.

Veteran British actor Timothee West passes away at 90!

The British film and television actor Timothee West has passed away. He was ninety. The actor's kids released a combined statement to the press regarding the tragic news, stating that West passed away "peacefully in his sleep." "He was with his friends and family at the end. All of us will miss him terribly. We would like to thank the incredible NHS staff at St George's Hospital, Tooting and at Avery Wandsworth for their loving care during his last days," read the complete statement shared by the BBC.

Timothee West is survived by his three children—Juliet, Samuel and Joseph West, who stated that the artist had an "extraordinary and lengthy life both on and off the stage." West is also survived by his spouse, Prunella Scales, recognised for her role in *Fawlty Towers*. They were united in marriage for 61 years. In the meantime, West was recognised for works including *Great Canal Journeys*, *Edward the Seventh*, *The Day of the Jackal*, *Cry Freedom*, *Masada*, *Iris* and *Brass*, among others.



Jaya Bachchan begin filming Dil Ka Darwaaza Khol Na Darling

Get ready to be swept into a world of romance with loads of laughter and craziness in *Dil Ka Darwaaza Khol Na Darling*, starring the ever-green Jaya Bachchan, alongside the talented Siddhant Chaturvedi, Wamiqa Gabbi and Swanand Kirkire, amongst others.

It's time to get a little crazy with lots of love. Beginning their first leg of shooting in Goa, the film promises to be an exciting journey with a stellar cast on board.

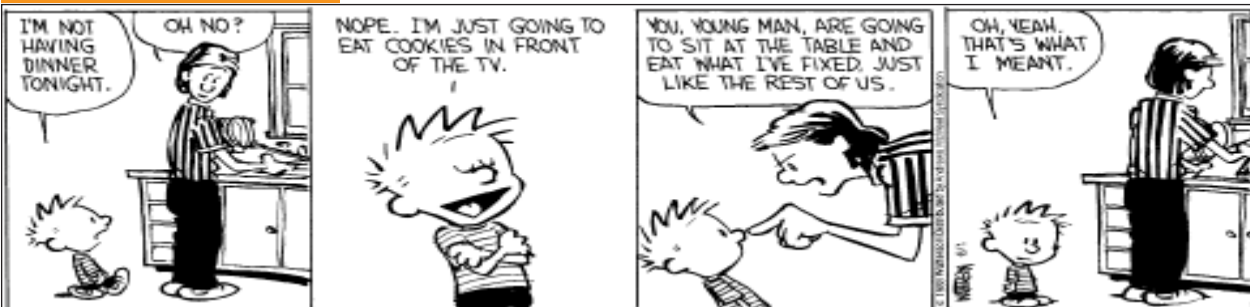
Presented by Tips Films Ltd., Baweja Studios Ltd. and Jumping Tomato Studios, *Dil Ka Darwaaza Khol Na Darling* is a Good Co. production, directed by Vikas Bahl. Produced by Ramesh Taurani, Harman Baweja, Rohandeep Singh, Viraj Sawant and Ramesh Pulapaka, the film is all set to release in theatres in 2025!

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



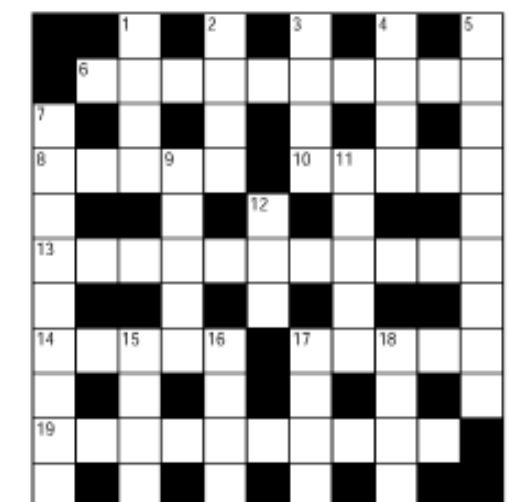
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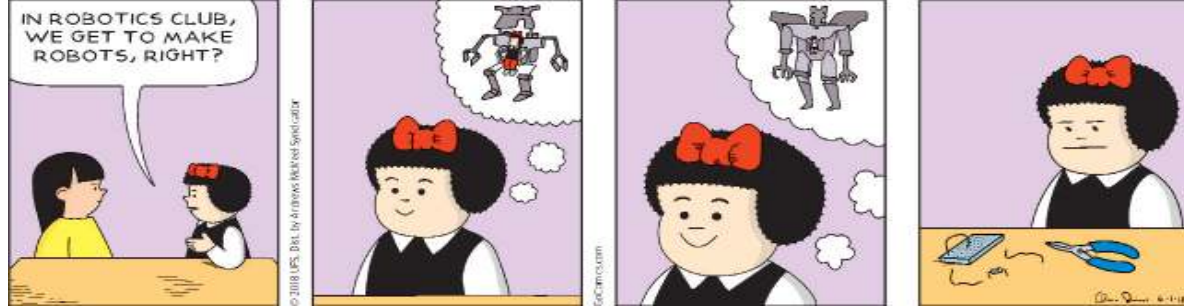
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

ACROSS

- 6 Words that ask you politely to come
- 8 Arm joint
- 10 The head of a city council
- 13 Very tall city buildings
- 14 From Ireland
- 17 These birds honk
- 19 A person who has seen something happen and can give evidence in court

DOWN

- 1 A round handle
- 2 The scene from a window
- 3 Do damage to
- 4 Very small
- 5 Took clothes off
- 7 Sweated
- 9 A desert green place
- 11 This fruit has pits
- 12 Rub with a towel
- 15 A thought
- 16 This grows on heads
- 17 Firearms
- 18 The direction opposite west



GINGER MEGGS



Vijayaawada

the pioneer

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Friday
November 15, 2024

From the sun-kissed beaches of French Polynesia to the snow-capped peaks of Antarctica, Savi Munjal and Vidit Taneja have been on a journey of a lifetime. In an exclusive chat, they share their most unforgettable experiences and what's next for the power couple behind 'Bruised Passports'



AROUND THE WORLD WITH BRUISED PASSPORTS!

TRAVELOGUE

AARTI SREENATH
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In a world where wanderlust is a way of life, one couple stands out from the rest: Savi Munjal and Vidit Taneja, the trailblazing duo behind Bruised Passports, whose collective passport pages boast an impressive tally of over 100 countries visited. With 1.2 million Instagram followers, these travel aficionados redefine wanderlust with every photograph and every captivating post. From National Geographic to BBC, their story has transcended borders, inspiring millions to view travel as a profound, nature-revering and slightly eccentric adventure.

As they share the highlights of their latest escapades in French Polynesia, plus a few unforgettable memories, they invite us all to step into their journey—and maybe even start planning our next. We caught up with them fresh from their latest escapades to dive into their world of scenic beaches, hidden islands, and... cheese & onion chocolate? Here's what they had to say!

In the heart of Polynesia, Savi and Vid found paradise on earth. "We've been smitten," they admit. From the moment they touched down, every detail enchanted them: white-sand beaches, the vibrant hues of coral-filled waters and people who are as warm as the island sunshine. But it was the locals' reverence for nature that left the most lasting impression. "Their relationship with nature isn't just respectful; it's deeply spiritual. You don't just see this connection—you feel it."

If you're picturing French Polynesia as a backdrop for some truly Instagram-worthy looks, you're right. Their travel wardrobe mirrored the Polynesian aesthetic with a sarong that catches the breeze, flower crowns fit for royalty and long, flowing dresses that add a playful punch of colour to any sandy shore. "For us, dressing up is part of the travel experience," they explain. "Fashion lets me engage with the vibe of each destination and Polynesia was all about natural, flowy beauty."

In Polynesia, where every island feels like a chapter from a dreamy novel, the pair still managed to find a hidden gem—an island so unique it almost felt otherworldly. Taha'a, they confess, was a delightful discovery. "It's like stepping into another realm where time slows down and all you breathe is vanilla," they recall. "We'd never even heard of it before, but we left with the feeling that we'd found an island as magical as it gets."

Of course, being seasoned travellers, Savi and Vid have their fair share of contrasting travel tales. When they talk about their favourite places back home, Ladakh always gets a special mention. "Even after visiting over a hundred countries, Ladakh's landscapes are extraordinary," they added. The barren beauty, the isolated monasteries, the peace that settles over you—it's something they haven't quite experienced anywhere else.

Their journey through Polynesia was enhanced by the right hotel choices—something they believe can make or break a trip. "In a beach destination, nothing beats a room with an ocean view," they insist. "Our hotel in Polynesia didn't just have incredible views; it added an extra layer to our experience. A little planning goes a long way in making a holiday unforgettable."

When they need a break from all the planning, though, Savi and Vid have a tried-and-true sanctuary: Bali. They've spent almost 20 months there over the years, making it an



easy escape for recharging their batteries. "It's a dream destination for digital nomads," they say. With everything from yoga studios to waterfalls and organic cafes, Bali offers a perfect balance of calm and adventure, letting them enjoy the slower rhythms of life whenever they need to rest.

However, not all of their travel stories are as relaxing. One chilling memory involves being stranded in a Croatian forest, thanks to a malfunctioning GPS. "It was pitch dark and we were completely lost. At the time, we were terrified!" they recall.

A continent that holds an almost mythical status in their memory is Antarctica. "They say you should save Antarctica for last, because nothing will ever measure up afterward," they say, describing the icy beauty of the place. "Seeing penguin colonies, hiking glaciers and floating past icebergs felt like we were on another planet." It was an experience they'd dreamed of and it didn't disappoint—though both admit they may be ruined for snowy landscapes anywhere else!

Of course, travel is also an experience that brings out the nostalgia for simpler times. One of their most cherished travel memories involves squeezing into a Maruti 800 and heading for hill stations like Shimla with their families. "It's such a core part of the childhood travel experience in India. It taught us early on that the journey itself is the most memorable part sometimes."

With South America firmly on their travel radar, Savi and Vid are eager to explore Brazil and Colombia, two places they've been longing to capture for their social media audience. "We think our followers would love it," they say. As they share their stories and dreams with a loyal community, it's clear that for this couple, travel is as much about the people who join them on their virtual journey as it is about the destinations themselves.

Their soundtracks are carefully curated, too. Savi and Vid love discovering local music wherever they go, but if they need a go-to playlist, you'll hear old-school jazz and Frank Sinatra wafting through their speakers. But travel brings laughs, too—especially with cultural misunderstandings. One of the funniest happened in Australia, where they misinterpreted the phrase, "How are you going?" as an inquiry into their mode of transportation. "We actually answered by saying 'we'd be taking a cab!'" they remember. It was a moment that reminded them why travel is truly the greatest education.

When it comes to mementos, they skip the usual fridge magnets and instead collect quirky snacks from around the world. "We've brought home everything from electric-blue Takis to wasabi KitKats and cheese-flavoured chocolates. It's a fun way to relive our trips after we're back," they share.

If you're looking for their top travel hack, Savi has one that every over-packer needs to hear. "Pack lighter than you think you need to! Once you lay everything out, take out about a third of it. You'll be surprised at how much you can do without." As seasoned travellers who know the importance of making space for new experiences (and maybe a few extra snacks), Savi and Vid have learned that the lightest bags hold the best memories.

As they prepare for the next chapter in their journey, they remind us that travel isn't about ticking places off a list, it's about discovering just how much magic the world holds and maybe even sharing a little of it with others.

Promising show with room for growth

TEJAL SINHA
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The wait is over! The realm of love, unexpected twists and complex feelings makes its way back with the thrilling second season of *Half Love Half Arranged* on Amazon MX Player! The popular rom-com series from Dice Media has just released its trailer, offering fans a sneak peek into Riya's heartfelt adventure as she seeks love amidst family pressures and revelations.

REVIEW

In this season, *Half Love Half Arranged* reintroduces the cherished dynamics between Riya (played by Maanvi Gagroo) and Jogi (played by Karan Wahi), while adding a fresh element with Ved (played by Rithvik Dhanjani), who enters the cast in a significant role. Set in the context of contemporary love, the series centers on Riya as she reaches a pivotal moment, deciding between her dreams and a future filled with obstacles. Filled with touching scenes and comedic turns, Season 2 guarantees a deeper exploration of Riya's journey to self-discovery and the fragile equilibrium between her happiness and family customs.

HIGHLIGHTS

The series explores themes of love, relationships, family and identity, all set against the backdrop of modern-day India. The tone is light-hearted and humorous, with a touch of wit and sarcasm. The show balances comedy and drama beautifully, making it an engaging watch. The season being divided into six episodes, each episode's title, including *Kya Karein Kya Na Karein*, *Chup Chup Ke*, *Dard-e-Disco*, *Bhaagam Bhag*, *Tere Mere Pyaar Ke Charche* and *Kuch Khaas Hai*, aptly hints on what the episode is going to be about. And so do the particular episodes too. This season buckles up to being more heart-pumping drama, sultry romance and life-altering choices. The climax is surely worth the watch.

DRAWBACKS

Though the plot is pretty much relatable to current-day love and relationships, some scenes do feel predictable, of course with a few surprises along the way. The show's focus on romantic love feels overwhelming at times, with other aspects of the characters' lives taking a backseat. The show could have benefited from a more nuanced portrayal of the challenges and complexities of arranged marriages. In a few scenes, some viewers may feel bored.

PERFORMANCES

Maanvi Gagroo shines as Riya Tanwar yet again, bringing a nuanced and relatable performance to the role. She perfectly captures Riya's vulnerability, wit and charm, making her a lovable and rootable protagonist. Karan Wahi has a natural charm and likability that makes his character hard to resist, and his chemistry with Maanvi Gagroo is undeniable. The lasting relationship between Maanvi Gagroo and Karan Wahi is making a comeback in the latest season and Rithvik Dhanjani also holds an



important role. Rithvik being Rithvik adds his own humour, fun and let's not forget, he and his skills make you feel pretty much relatable to his character. The supporting cast gives you the perfect vibes of your regular Indian family and the chaos.

TECHNICAL ASPECT

The editing is crisp and well-paced, with a good balance of fast-paced and slow-burning scenes. The transitions between scenes are smooth and the show's timeline is easy to follow. Music by Vishal Patil, Advait Sawant and Karthik Rao is another plus point this season. But again, there are a few places where the cinematography doesn't reach the mark.

VERDICT

Half Love Half Arranged Season 2 is a resplendent and captivating romantic comedy series that masterfully navigates the intricate complexities of love, relationships, and family in modern-day India. With phenomenal performances from Maanvi Gagroo and Karan Wahi, who bring a mesmerising blend of wit, charm and vulnerability to their characters, the show is an absolute triumph and a must-watch for fans of the genre.

DIRECTOR: Simarpreet Singh

WRITER: Parikshit Joshi

PRODUCER: Aditi Shrivastava

CAST: Karan Wahi, Maanvi Gagroo, Rithvik Dhanjani, Supriya Shukla, Amit Singh Thakur, Aradhana Tripathi and Grusha Kapoor, among the rest

MUSIC: Karthik Rao

RATING: 3.5/5

Navigating complex world of Huntington's disease

Huntington's disease is a progressive hereditary disease that is caused by the mutation of faulty gene cells. It leads to the decay of nerve cells present in the brain, affecting a person's ability to think, move and memorise. There are two forms of Huntington's disease: adult onset, in which the symptoms usually begin after the age of 30, and early onset, which is a rare condition known as juvenile Huntington's disease, affecting children and teenagers. When it develops at an early stage, the symptoms are different and have a faster progression than the ones that begin later in life. According to the Huntington Disease Society of India, the disease is prevalent but rare, and approximately 7 in 1 lakh people have it.

The most common cause of this condition is the presence of a faulty gene, passed on from one parent who has the same condition. Individuals with a family history of this condition are at higher risk of being diagnosed with it. It causes a wide range of physical, behavioural and cognitive symptoms and varies from person to person, which worsens over time if not treated.

These include:

Physical symptoms:

- Facing difficulty while eating, speaking or swallowing
- Uncontrolled movement and lack of coordination
- Loss of consciousness or seizures
- Chorea, involuntary movements causing spasms, jerks or twitches in the body
- Loss in weight and weakening of a person's

immune system

Behavioural symptoms

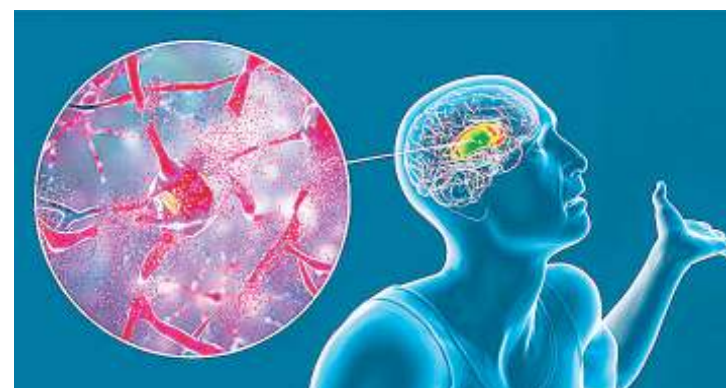
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) that leads to repetitive behaviours affecting everyday life
- Inability to sleep or insomnia
- Stubbornness
- Irritability and mood swings due to the inability to perform daily tasks
- Delusional disorders, which involves false beliefs that are not based on reality

Cognitive symptoms

- Inability to memorise things
- Hallucinations
- Lack of focus while performing activities
- Trouble in learning new things
- Often causes dementia if it worsens

With no cure yet, Huntington's disease cannot be completely treated, but there are a few options available to help manage its symptoms and provide a better quality of life. It has a multifaceted approach, from medications and therapy sessions to lifestyle modification. Medications like antidepressants are usually prescribed to help manage the anxiety and depression that can be caused by the inability to do basic tasks. Therapies like speech therapy to help with communication and cognitive behavioural therapy to help manage cognitive symptoms like improving concentration. Apart from this, a healthy lifestyle and an increase in the intake of nutritious food and diet to strengthen the immune system can significantly help. Including exercise, yoga, and other physical activities in daily life can help manage the symptoms. It is important to be aware of the symptoms of this condition and seek medical help in case it can't be managed. Treatment, which is tailored to the specific condition, ensures effective care and improvement in the quality of life.

(Dr. Purva Sharma, is a Consultant in neurology, at Manipal Hospital.)



India thrash Thailand 13-0 in women's ACT hockey

PTI ■ RAJGIR (BIHAR)

Young striker Deepika slammed five goals as defending champions India thrashed minnows Thailand 13-0 to virtually assure a semifinal berth at the women's Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament here on Thursday. It was a completely one-sided match as the Indians found the net at will, with Thailand failing to take a single shot at the opposition goal. Deepika (3rd, 19th, 43rd, 45th, 45th minutes) found the net five times, while Preeti Dubey (9th, 40th), Lalremsiami (12, 56th) and Manisha Chauhan (55th, 58th) scored a brace each. Beauty Dung Dung (30th) and Navneet Kaur (53rd) were the other goal getters for India who registered their third consecutive win in the round-robin league stage. India had earlier defeated Malaysia 4-0 before eking

out a close 3-2 win over South Korea. The Indians will next play Olympic silver medallists China on Saturday. India are now in the second spot in the standings with nine points, the same as China who, however, are on the top on the basis of a better goal difference. China have a goal difference of +21 as against +18 of India. The top four teams out of six at the end of round-robin league stage will qualify for the semifinals. It was complete domination from India from start to finish as they continuously toyed with the Thai defence, which looked clueless against the home team's relentless attacks. The Indians also improved on the penalty corner front, converting five out of 12 PCs they secured in the match. It took India just three minutes to take the lead through a fine field goal by Deepika. She beautifully controlled a defence spitting



pass from Neha and to find the back of the net Minutes later, Manisha Chauhan got a free shot inside the circle but she couldn't connect the ball

properly. In the ninth minute, Preeti doubled India's lead, tapping in Sangita Kumari's pass from close range. Three minutes later, Lalremsiami scored from a rebound after skipper Salima Tete's initial try was saved by Thai goalkeeper Siraya Yimkrajang. India continued to mount raids and secured their first penalty corner in the 17th minute but the Thai custodian made a triple save. In the 19th minute, Deepika scored her second goal of the day, again with a fine shot from the top of the circle. The Indians then wasted three penalty corners before scoring from the next set piece just at the stroke of half-time through Beauty, who found the net from a goal-mouth melee as the hosts went into the breather with a comfortable 5-0 lead. An unmarked Preeti beat the onrushing Thai goalie neatly and found the net in

the 40th minute for her second goal of the match. Minutes later, Deepika converted a penalty corner with a flick to the top right corner of Thai goal. Within a span of two minutes, Deepika scored two more goals -- one from field play and the next from penalty corner -- to hand India a comprehensive 9-0 lead at the end of the third quarter. After resumption, Navneet scored with a reverse hit after receiving a pass from Sushila Delvi. Five minutes from the final hooter, Manisha converted India's 10th penalty corner before Lalremsiami deflected in Udit's slap shot from another set piece in the next minute. Manisha registered her name again in the scoresheet two minutes from full time from field play. In other matches of the day, Malaysia beat Korea 2-1 while China continued their unbeaten run by defeating Japan by the same margin.

Surya gave me chance to bat at No. three after I asked, had to repay faith: Tilak Varma

PTI ■ CENTURION

Tilak Varma did not want to become a source of chagrin for his skipper Suryakumar Yadav after requesting him for the number three slot in the batting order in the third T20I against South Africa. And he didn't. Varma had batted at number four in Durban and Gqeberha, scoring 33 and 20. Surya, who himself batted at number three, after giving it a thought, obliged his young teammate. "In Gqeberha, he (Tilak) came to my room and said, 'Give me the opportunity to bat at No. 3. Let me express myself,'" said Surya. Now it was for Varma to make the most of the opportunity and responded with a match-winning century. After reaching his 51-ball-century, second fifty coming in just 19 balls, Varma pointed towards the dug-out and blew a flying kiss to acknowledge his captain. "It was for 'SKY', our skipper because he gave me a chance to bat at number three," Varma told reporters after India's 11-run win on Wednesday night. "I love batting at number three, but in last two matches, I played at number four. Last night he came to my room



and said that 'You will bat No. 3' and he said it's a good opportunity. Go and express yourself. "I told him, 'You have given me an opportunity, I will show you on the ground'" said the second youngest Indian centurion in T20 Internationals. His innings of 107 off 56 balls had seven sixes apart from eight fours including a straight and a flicked six off opposition's fastest bowler and his former Mumbai Indians teammate Gerald Coetzee. Varma added 107 runs with another

youngster Abhishek Sharma, who scored a half-century after a string of failures. "The team backed us even when we flopped. They told us to play the brand of cricket Indian team is known for and the skipper and the management (interim head coach VVS Laxman) said, 'Bindaas khelna Agar wicket gire tab bhi (Play freely even if you lose a wicket)'" The stylish Hyderabad batter spoke about missing out on international tours of Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka due to finger injury but said he always knew that he would score when his time comes. "During the last IPL game, I had a finger dislocation and was ruled out for two months. Then during nets post recovery, I sustained another fracture. So I missed two back-to-back series -- Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka. "I was feeling bad that I missed out on two series and good opportunities. But I had to remain patient, focus on the process and keep working hard. I knew my time would come and when right time comes, I will score runs." The team management chose to persist with Varma when the chips were down and the youngster is reaping rewards for that. "I was waiting for this opportunity and unfortunately in the last match it didn't happen but captain and management also supported a lot, and the results I am getting now is because of their complete backing." He is a handy off-spinner and feels that he has worked hard on his bowling as he wants to be seen as an all-rounder. "The ball is really coming out well and I have worked hard on my bowling. I want to contribute as an all-rounder."

McSweeney doesn't need to copy Warner, he has his own game: Khawaja

PTI ■ PERTH

Veteran Australian opener Usman Khawaja backed his new opening partner Nathan McSweeney, urging him to play his own game against India in Perth rather than trying to ape David Warner, who was a "special player" in his own right. Approaching his 38th birthday, Khawaja, a veteran of 73 Tests with nearly five and half thousand runs and 15 tons, also believed that needing to score runs at a quick clip is nothing but an urban myth, and advised McSweeney to just "repeat the process" which has worked for him till date. "I don't know where this myth started that you needed someone to score really fast. As an opener you're trying to score runs and you've got five



days to do it. We didn't have one Test match go for five days, last year. Opening is as much about scoring runs and just being able to absorb that time," Khawaja was quoted as saying by news.Com.Au. Talking about Warner, Khawaja said that not

everyone is as gifted as his former opening partner, who could switch gears at ease in the traditional format. "Davey (Warner) was special. He could score runs while absorbing. He could sometimes score 100 of 100 balls but he didn't

do it every time. Sometimes it took him 170, 180 balls to get that 100. "He was consistent, he was out there, he was setting a platform for guys later to come in and score runs. Those two are both very important things," Khawaja said. Khawaja is confident that besides scoring runs at a fair clip, McSweeney also has the ability to bat time. "I think Nathan does that really well. He can score runs, but he can also bat time. They're really important facets to have in Test cricket if you want to set games up." Khawaja warned McSweeney that there were "no guarantees in cricket" but said that the 25-year-old batter didn't "have to do anything different" in the Test arena. "You just try to repeat the process. The only thing that really changes is that you have a few more people watching. Not many people watch Shield cricket." Khawaja seems confident that McSweeney can handle the demands of an extremely high-skilled format like Tests. "You always go through ups and downs in cricket, but when you look at Nathan, you look at his demeanour, you look at the way he plays, you feel that over a longer period of time that, yes, this guy will be able to handle the scrutiny of Test cricket and the pressure of Test cricket." "Even though there are no guarantees, I'm sure the selectors have made a calculated decision with him," Khawaja concluded.



Mendis and Fernando tons earn Sri Lanka comfortable win over New Zealand in first ODI

AP ■ DAMBULLA (SRI LANKA)

Kusal Mendis and Avishka Fernando smashed centuries against a new-look New Zealand as Sri Lanka cruised to a 45-run win under the DLS method in a rain-hit first ODI. Mendis smashed a career-best 143 off 128 balls and Fernando made 100 off 115 in Sri Lanka's imposing total of 324-5 in 49.2 overs before rain came and reduced New Zealand's target to 221 off 27 overs. Will Young and Tim Robinson, one of the three New Zealand debutants, combined in an 88-run opening stand but Sri Lanka derailed the Black Caps' chase through its spinners and restricted the reply to a total of 175-9. Slow bowlers Maheesh Theekshana (2-32), captain Charith Asalanka (2-15), and Jeffrey Vandersay (1-40), in place of injured Wanindu Hasaranga, all left their mark before left-arm fast bowler Dilshan Madushanka grabbed 3-39 to give Sri Lanka a 1-0 lead in the three-match series. Earlier, Mendis and Fernando combined in a 206-run second-wicket stand after debutant Nathan Smith took a well judged running catch at

mid-on. Mendis, who smashed Bracewell for two sixes and a boundary in his last over, tried to accelerate further in the death overs but sliced a regulation catch to extra cover in Duffy's return spell. Mendis struck 17 fours and two sixes in a dominant display of strokeplay after struggling in the drawn T20 series against the Black Caps last week at the same venue. New Zealand's top-order slipped against the spinners despite Young (48) and Robinson (35) combining in a decent start of 88 off 80 balls. The visitors lost five wickets for 22 runs -- going from 88-0 to 110-5 -- after Maheesh Theekshana removed both openers in one over. Theekshana had Robinson stumped by Mendis at the second attempt and then went through the defenses of Young with a straight delivery. Asalanka picked up two wickets in successive overs with Theekshana grabbing a stunning catch at short mid-wicket to dismiss Mark Chapman as Sri Lanka deflated Black Caps' run-chase. Pallekele will host the remaining two matches of the series on Sunday and Tuesday.

attacking and playing second middle. Most of Rinku's better efforts have come when he has batted at number five but in a line-up where Sanju Samson is settling as an opener and Tilak Varma has staked claim as a No. 3, it might be difficult for Rinku to be promoted ahead of Hardik Pandya. It is an issue that team think-tank would do better to solve at earliest. Team Combination India have used 12 out of their 15 players in the first three games and it would be interesting to see if one among the two uncapped pacers Yash Dayal or Vysakh Vijaykumar gets a debut cap in case the pitch warrants an extra specialist speedster. For Samson, he would like to forget that he is turning into Marco Jansen's 'bunny' after back-to-back failures. In the final game, it wouldn't

Focus on Rinku's form and batting position as India aim series win

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

Rinku Singh's batting slot and circumspect approach must be a cause of concern for the India team going into the deciding fourth T20I against South Africa as the side aims for another bilateral series victory here Friday. Centuries by Sanju Samson and Tilak Varma on either side of an inept batting performance has kept India's nose ahead in the series and team would want a more collective batting effort to clinch it 3-1. The Wanderers 'Bull Ring' has always been a happy hunting ground for India, where they won the 2007 T20 World Cup final against Pakistan. Even during the previous T20I series a year back, skipper Suryakumar Yadav's last international hundred till date came at this very stadium and that too in a winning cause.

The Indian captain, who enjoys a staggering victory percentage of 81.25, having come up trumps in 13 out of the 16 matches, would like to do one better compared to the last series in the Rainbow Nation which had ended in a 1-1 draw with one game being washed out. Curious case of Rinku Singh Rinku, one of the finest exponents of T20 cricket has suddenly gone off the boil in the past few months, reasons of which aren't exactly clear and it wouldn't be lost on the skipper and interim head coach VVS Laxman. On the face of it, it seems that his batting position and use as a floater at number six and seven isn't helping the Aligarh man's cause. The next T20 World Cup in India is still some distance away in 2026 and Surya, as a skipper, has enough time to dissect and put things back on

track for the man, who is too precious to be lost due to lack of clarity. In the current series, Rinku came in at number six in two games and number seven in another and has managed just 28 runs. The scores 11, 9 and 8 shouldn't be taken in isolation looking at where he is coming in to bat but when the number of balls (34) he has taken to the score runs is taken into consideration, it becomes worrisome. Even during the last IPL Rinku got to play a total of 113 balls in 15 games for KKR: roughly 7.5 deliveries per game. Being seen strictly as a specialist "finisher" Rinku, on an average, would get to face 10 balls in an innings. The strategy would have been devised to help the India team but of late it has eroded some of southpaw's confidence as he seems to be caught between



be a bad option for skipper Surya to check on Ramandeep Singh's steady medium pace as he can be an asset with multiple skills, including ability to field at all positions save keeping. Squads: India: Suryakumar Yadav (c), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (WK), Rinku Singh, Tilak Varma, Jitesh Sharma (WK), Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, Ramandeep Singh, Varun Chakaravarthi, 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, Mhlabi Mpongwana, Ngaba Peter, Ryan Rickelton, Andile Simelane, Lutho Sipamla, Tristan Stubbs.

Even Varun Tej couldn't save *Matka!*

Varun Tej, a member of the Mega family, has been searching for a breakout hit in recent years. Though he attempted different genres in his previous films, success has eluded him. Now, he has ventured into a period drama with *Matka*, directed by Karuna Kumar of *Palasa* fame. Varun Tej extensively promoted the film across Andhra Pradesh, pinning his hopes on its success. Meenakshi Chaudhary stars as the female lead, with Nora Fatehi in a significant role. Produced by Vijender Reddy and Rajani Talluri, did *Matka* finally deliver the success Tej has been seeking? Let's find out.

Story:

The plot follows Vasu (played by Varun Tej), who arrives in Visakhapatnam from Burma with his mother. Following a confrontation with a local, Vasu lands in jail, where he develops a fearless demeanor under the influence of the jailer (played by Ravi Shankar). After his release, he tried to secure work in Poorna Market. In an incident, he saves Reddy (played by Ajay Ghosh) from the goons of local don KB (played by John Vijay), which leads to a friendship with Nani Babu (played by Kishore), a local politician. With Nani Babu's support, Vasu ventures into business, opening garment shops and other enterprises.

During this time, he meets Sujatha (played by Meenakshi Chaudhary), a woman from an underprivileged background, and they fall in love and marry. A trip to Mumbai introduces Vasu to a group gambling with small sums, sparking his interest in starting a matka game in Hyderabad. The popularity of the game soon spirals out of control, affecting the Indian economy, prompting the Prime Minister to initiate an inquiry. Sujatha urges Vasu to abandon the game as it leads many to ruin, yet the investigation intensifies. Rival groups begin targeting Vasu, and his journey through these challenges forms the crux of the story.



Cast: Varun Tej, Meenakshi Chaudhary, Nora Fatehi, Naveen Chandra, Ajay Ghosh, Satyam Rajesh, Kishore, John Vijay, Ravi Shankar and others

Writer, director: Karuna Kumar

Producer: Vijender Reddy Teegala, Rajani Talluri

Music: GV Prakash Kumar

Cinematographer: A Kishor Kumar

Rating: 2/5

Analysis:

Director Karuna Kumar drew inspiration from the real-life Matka King Ratan Khatri. However, while he spoke extensively about the game pre-release,

it is scarcely explored on screen, limited to roughly 15 minutes. The narrative begins with Vasu's arrival in Visakhapatnam and his rise to local prominence, which is initially intriguing but quickly loses momentum as the pacing slows.

Though Vasu ventures into multiple businesses, it's only when he stumbles upon gambling that he sees a lucrative opportunity. However, the director fails to delve into the nuances of the matka game, a missed opportunity to explore its mechanics and impact. A notable absence of storytelling depth in this regard detracts from the film, as the director handles the subject matter in a formulaic and predictable way.

The film's strongest aspect is its production value, effectively capturing the period backdrop. Certain loca-

tions, such as Visakhapatnam's Poorna Market, offer a nostalgic touch that local audiences may appreciate. However, the climax is weak and the storyline becomes predictable, devolving into a standard revenge drama between Vasu and his adversaries. A highlight in the second half is an interaction between Varun Tej and Nora Fatehi, but otherwise, the narrative lacks engaging elements. The songs detract from the film's flow, and GV Prakash Kumar's background score is underwhelming, though the cinematography is commendable.

While films like *KGF* and *Pushpa* showcased protagonists with darker shades in compelling ways, *Matka* fails to replicate this success. Despite Varun Tej's honest portrayal, the story's lackluster execution hinders the film. The slow-paced narrative offers little excitement beyond a couple of notable scenes.

Performance:

Varun Tej brings sincerity and depth to Vasu, especially in portraying the character's aged version. However, even his dedicated performance cannot compensate for the film's weak storyline.

Meenakshi Chaudhary delivers an adequate performance, while Nora Fatehi impresses with her negative role! Supporting actors like Ajay Ghosh, Kishore, John Vijay, Satyam Rajesh and Salloni perform adequately but aren't given substantial material to shine.

The dialogues are ordinary, and the music, as noted, detracts from the overall impact.

Verdict:

Ultimately, Karuna Kumar's *Matka* is a formulaic film with an uninspired story and conventional narration. Apart from Varun Tej's performance, *Matka* has little to offer.

While the title suggests a focus on 'matka', it's limited to brief moments, leaving the audience wanting more substance on the subject.

What went wrong with *Kanguva*?

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One of the much awaited films, *Kanguva* starring Suriya in dual roles was released on Thursday. The film which took years to complete, is finally released. Siva, who made films with Tamil superstar Ajith, is the director of this film. This is also one of the high budget films in the latest times, with the inclusion of graphics because of its periodic story. Previously, Suriya's *Jai Bhim* which was released directly on OTT in 2021, has now high hopes on this one. The movie was also released in a 3D format. Disha Patani plays the female lead. Did this film live up to the expectations and give a hit to Suriya? Let's see the film's story and how it goes...

Story:

Francis (played by Suriya) is a bounty hunter and helping the police to nab the people whoever they wanted. He works with his friend (played by Yogi Babu) and his rival is his ex-girlfriend Angelina (played by Disha Patani). One day Francis meets a boy and he finds that there is some connection between him and the boy.

Whenever the boy sees into his eyes, Francis feels some kind of bond and then the story takes us centuries back. *Kanguva* (played by Suriya) or Kanga, who is the leader of a tribal sect and he does anything to save his people. On the other side a Roman leader is trying to occupy the tribal lands, with the help of other tribal sects. Udhiran (played by Bobby Deol) is leader of one tribal sect and he wants to help the Roman. How *Kanguva* defends his land from the enemies and what is the connection between *Kanguva* and a boy? Also what is the connection between *Kanguva* and Francis and the boy? You have to see the film for all the answers.

Analysis:

Director Siva and Suriya's *Kanguva* got big hype and expectations. Before the release, the makers had praised the film pretty much. The promotional videos also look interesting, so one expects something from this one. The story starts with the present day and the director starts with Suriya and Yogi Babu's combination scenes in a more comic way. The director feels those scenes are humorous, but actually it tests the patience of the



Cast: Suriya, Disha Patani, Bobby Deol, Yogi Babu, KS Ravi Kumar, BS Avinash, Redin Kingsley and others

Director: Siva

Producer: KE Gnanavel Raja, V Vamsi Krishna Reddy, Pramod Uppalapati

Music: Devi Sri Prasad

Cinematographer: Vetri Palanisamy

Writers: Siva, Adhinarayana, Madan Karky

Rating: 2/5

ing on the screen and one can't be sure what they are and whom they are fighting.

The 3D version of the film is completely bad and not up to the mark. I watched the film in 3D and I found it very difficult to see it as the miniature kind of visuals. After the first half completed, I watched the second half of the film in 2D which looked good. I don't know why the makers wanted to release it in 3D, which is completely a bad thought. The movie completely falls short of expectations and except the visuals, the film offers nothing.

Performance:

When it comes to the performance, Suriya is good in the warrior and period look. After watching him on the big screen, one can see that his efforts are sincere! Disha Patani is there for glamour and nothing more. Yogi Babu and Redin Kingsley characters are irritating.

There are many other characters, most of them are in Tribals and some of them are Russians. The music is not up to the mark, but the cinematography is good.

Verdict:

Finally, *Kanguva* is a complete dud and falls short of expectations. Director Siva is not showing anything new, as it simply sees as if he has remade the *Magadheera* film, in his own style. Despite Suriya's efforts, you can skip this film, especially the 3D version.

SDT'S 10 GLORIOUS YEARS IN TFI

Mega Supreme Hero Sai Dharam Tej is an energetic phenomenon. The entertainer made his smashing entry into the Telugu film industry on November 14, 2014, with *Pilla Nuvvu Leni Jeevitham*. The crazy and beautiful love entertainer became a massive success. The actor made a powerful debut and continued his rise with a string of successful films. First impressions are often the best, and this mega nephew quickly won over mega fans with his energy in his first movie. Over his 10-year film career, he has experienced both highs and lows. However, the major setback came when he became the victim of an accident, which took a toll on him. But, he made a remarkable recovery and returned to the sets in no time. The actor delivered his career-best blockbuster last year with *Virupaksha* and shared screen space with his inspiration and the current Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan in *Bro*. His massive comeback impressed everyone. Now, after a long gap, he is gearing up to create a sensation with *SDT18*.

His new looks and makeover have raised expectations for the film. Along with entertaining his audience, he continues to showcase his good heart and social responsibility. Recently, he responded to miscreant comments about children and donated a significant amount for the flood relief efforts in the Telugu states. With everything going perfectly for Sai Dharam Tej, he is all set to continue his Supreme reign.



Sobhita Dhulipala has chosen her wedding trousseau on her own!

Sobhita Dhulipala is gearing up for one of the most special days of her life—her wedding with the Telugu star Naga Chaitanya. Sobhita, known for her chic choices in fashion and style is planning to give a personal touch to her wedding by getting it all done by herself and not taking help of a stylist, which is very common with Bollywood celebs. Also, its an attempt to keep everything closer to Telugu culture.

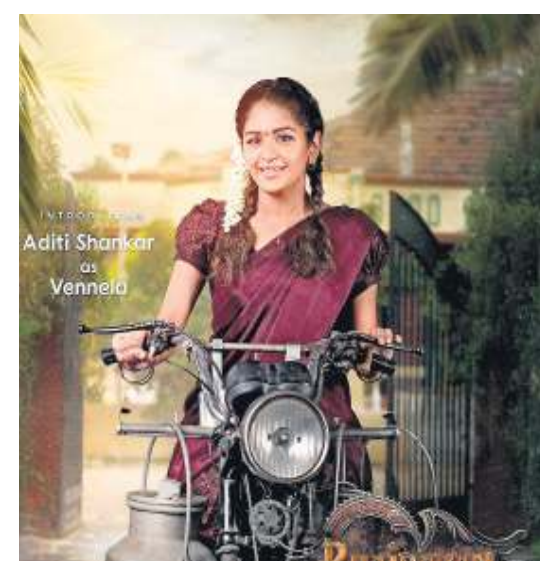
According to a source, she is planning to choose her wedding outfit without a stylist, "Sobhita Dhulipala has chosen her wedding trousseau on her own without a stylist's help," shared the source. "She has been shopping with her mother at old local shops in Andhra Pradesh and a few regions of Telangana and Tamil Nadu which are popular for authentic and traditional fabrics for sarees from the land. She believes in giving a personal touch to the big day and so she has been discussing her outfits with the designers just as she wants them to be," source concluded.

Naga Chaitanya and Sobhita Dhulipala got engaged in a traditional ceremony a few months ago. Chay and Sobhita are set to tie the knot soon in the presence of their family and friends. The actress has been giving sneak peeks at several traditional pre-wedding functions that were held at her house on her social media account. The simple and stunning traditional silk saree Sobhita donned for the wedding ritual was gifted to her by her mother-in law Lakshmi Daggubati (Naga Chaitanya's mother).

Nithiin's *Robinhood* teaser hints actor's much-deserved break

Nithiin, who was once a much-celebrated star in the Telugu cinema, had the biggest turn offs in his life with back-to-back flops, affecting his career in a way.

However, now the actor has teamed up with his favourite director, Venky Kudumula, for an action-comedy titled *Robinhood*. Produced by Mythri Movie Makers, the film has been in the making for the last two years. On Thursday, the makers released the first-look teaser of the film, which has been creating quite a good buzz. From story, to comedy, looks and actions, the teaser hits the right chord. The teaser hints at the actor in the character of *Robinhood*, who cheats the rich. Venky Kudumula has surely raised the expectations. Sreeleela also makes her comeback after a hiatus. She surely enraptures hearts. The film also stars Rajendra Prasad and Mime Gopi.



Aditi Shankar is an 'Allari Pilla' in *Bhairavam*

Bellamkonda Sai Sreenivas's upcoming film *Bhairavam*, is a neo-noir action thriller. Not long ago, Nara Rohit and Manchu Manoj's characters were introduced.

Now, on Thursday, the makers introduced the character of Aditi Shankar. Her character, Vennela is described as 'Allari Pilla'. "She will capture your hearts like never before," wrote the makers. The poster shows the actress as a milk vendor. Aditi was previously seen in *Viruman* and *Maaveran* in Tamil.