

QUOTE OF THE DAY
 The pioneer
KCR started such a vile culture...KTR took it forward...Now CM Revanth Reddy and the Congress leaders are continuing it. The society of Telangana will not tolerate the personal insults of the leaders of BRS and Congress parties, offensive and degrading language against families and individuals who have nothing to do with politics. The time has come to expel those parties for the mistakes that the Congress and BRS parties are making. BJP condemns bringing other people's family affairs into politics and bringing women's personal matters into politics just for political self-interest and criticizing opponents
G Kishan Reddy, Union Minister P2

Govt rolls out internship scheme on pilot basis



FROM HIGH FASHION TO HIGH DRAMA



'Mr Bachchan was the one that actually BACKFIRED'



DON'T MISS...

CM promises to make TG ...

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy inaugurated the Chief Minister's Cup - 2024 at LB Stadium in Hyderabad on Thursday. During his address, he outlined his government's vision to transform Telangana into a premier sports hub in India. Highlighting Hyderabad's legacy, Revanth mentioned how the city hosted major international events like the Commonwealth and Afro-Asian Games 25 years ago, which positioned Hyderabad as a model city. However, he expressed concern over the neglect of sports in the State over ...

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BRS on downward spiral ...

The BRS party, which had been in power for two consecutive terms, is facing a series of setbacks. After the party lost power, many leaders have been facing unprecedented challenges. Even MLAs, MLCs, and former ministers are leaving the party. Party leaders, who once enjoyed power, are giving short shrift to party workers and thus facing backlash from their party activists. While key leaders in the BRS are exploring alternative opportunities, dissatisfaction among the party cadre ...

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Job market clocks 6 pc growth, buoyed...

White-collar hiring activity witnessed a 6 per cent growth in September compared to the same month last year, mainly driven by a recovering IT sector, a report said on Thursday. The Naukri JobSpeak Index reached 2,727 points in September, marking a 6 per cent year-on-year (YoY) growth, it said. This positive trend was largely driven by a resurgent IT sector, which demonstrated 18 per cent YoY growth in hiring activity. Non-traditional IT hubs showed significant growth, potentially indicating a geographical...

-PAGE: 8

India need top guns firing in...

A stellar effort by senior stars would be mandatory when India take on New Zealand in their opening Group A match of the women's T20 World Cup here on Friday, aiming for a strong start in their quest to wipe off the memories of past near-misses. Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, who in all likelihood, will be appearing in her last T20 World Cup, has been witness to several near misses and disappointing moments from close quarters, including India's capitulation to Australia in the final at Melbourne in 2020...

-SPORTS



Bhatti's US, Japan tour concludes

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 The official tour of Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu, to the US and Japan which commenced on September 24 concluded successfully on Thursday. He was accompanied by Special Chief Secretary for Finance, P. Ramakrishna Rao, Energy Secretary Ronald Ross and SCCL CMD N. Balaram. The team is scheduled to return to Hyderabad on Friday. During the tour, the primary focus was on observing cutting-edge green energy technologies, advanced high-productivity mining machinery, and safety protocols through virtual reality, which Bhatti intends to implement in Telangana. At the MINEX-2024 International Mining Exhibition in the US, he examined state-of-the-art shovels, dumpers, continuous miner machines and safety systems from prominent companies like Komatsu, Hitachi

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Min Konda comes down



Withdraws comments



Nagarjuna files defamation suit

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Akkineni Nagarjuna filed a defamation suit against Konda Surekha at the Nampally court in Hyderabad. The Akkineni family is not only disappointed by the Minister's statements but is also hurt. Despite reports that they may not proceed legally, the family decided on Thursday to file a defamation complaint against the Minister for her remarks. In a complaint filed in Hyderabad's Nampally district, Nagarjuna Akkineni accused Congress leader Konda Surekha of deliberately spreading lies, fully aware that they were false, with the sole aim of tarnishing his personal, professional and family reputation. "The statement was made with malicious intent, designed to convey falsehoods to the public at large with the objective of damaging the complainant and his family's reputation for political gain and sensationalism," the complaint said. It further emphasised that "these actions constitute a criminal offence," he said in his complaint. Drawing flak over her comments blaming BRS leader KT Rama Rao for the divorce of actors Samantha Ruth Prabhu and Naga Chaitanya, Telangana Minister Konda Surekha on Thursday withdrew her comments that had made the Telugu cinema industry to rally behind their colleagues. Samantha and Chaitanya spoke out against the Minister and stressed that their decision to separate was mutual. Speaking to the media, Surekha said she mentioned the names of the actors as she had turned emotional over the comments made by KTR about her. "I had to criticise him (KTR). I do not have any personal animosity towards anyone. Mentioning the name of a family was accidental. I felt really bad after seeing her post (Samantha's Instagram). Last night itself, I posted

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No going back on Musi

Govt to go ahead with project despite political risks, asserts CM Revanth

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has firmly declared that the Telangana government will go ahead with the Musi Riverfront Development Project, despite its political risks. Speaking during the launch of the Family Digital Card Pilot Project in Hyderabad on Thursday, the CM emphasised that the decision is for ensuring the future of Hyderabad. "I know the people are angry, but this is for our future," he said. The CM reaffirmed that the project's focus is on safeguarding the city's long-term interests and not political gains. He criticised the opposition for staying silent during discussions on the Hyderabad Disaster Response and Management Authority (HYDRAMA) in the Assembly and raising concerns only to protect their personal interests, particularly farmhouses owned by leaders like KTR and Sabitha Indra Reddy's sons. He asked whether the farmhouses belonging to KTR should be demolished and also raised the issue of illegally constructed buildings owned by BRS leaders.

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Payment for procured paddy within 48 hrs

- Govt to pay Rs 500 bonus per quintal for thin paddy varieties
- Focus on paddy procurement

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has directed officials to ensure smooth paddy procurement in all districts. In line with the promise made to farmers, the government will pay an additional Rs 500 per quintal as bonus for thin paddy varieties from this season, the Chief Minister announced. He said that while payments were made within three days during the previous season, this year,

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CM launches TG's own Aadhaar-like initiative

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Stating that this is similar to the Aadhaar card, the Chief Minister said that Family Digital Cards would be issued under the 'one state one card' policy and would become a protective cover for families.

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BRS TURNCOAT MLAS' DISQUALIFICATION

HC refuses to stay, posts case to Oct 24

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 The BRS MLAs who defected to the Congress suffered a setback as the Telangana High Court's division bench refused to stay the single bench's order regarding their disqualification. The division bench, presided over by the Chief Justice, said that the single bench's ruling on the disqualification of Dana Nagender, Kadiam Srihari and Tellam Venkatarao would remain in effect for now. The disqualification was earlier challenged by the Secretary of the Assembly. The HC announced that arguments would continue later this month, and the case would be heard again on October 24. It is nearly three weeks after the single bench initially passed its verdict. The court had asked the Assembly Secretary to speed up the decision-making process regarding the MLAs' disqualification. The ruling has heightened tensions among MLAs who defected from the BRS to the Congress. The court indicated that if no decision is made within four weeks, it would proceed with the case on its own, without requiring any further plea. Political analysts believe that Dana Nagender, Kadiam Srihari, and Tellam Venkatarao may soon lose their membership of the Assembly as a result of this process.

Centre approves 78-day bonus to Railway employees

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
 The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved payment of productivity linked bonus of 78 days for Rs 2028.57 crore to over 11.72 lakh railway employees, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said. The amount will be paid to various categories of Railway staff like track maintainers, loco pilots, train managers (guards), station masters, supervisors, technicians, technician helpers, pointsman, ministerial staff and other Group XC staff, an official statement said later. The payment of productivity linked bonus acts as an incentive to motivate the railway employees for working towards improvement in the performance of the Railways

Surekha stirs another controversy: suggests 'KTR may have killed KCR'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Minister Konda Surekha sparked a major controversy during her tour of Siddipet district on Thursday, as she expressed concerns that BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao might have been involved in the death of his father, former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao. Konda Surekha hinted at this possibility, noting that KCR has not been seen in public for several days, raising questions among political circles and the public alike. Continuing her tirade against BRS Working President KT Rama Rao, Endowment Minister Konda Surekha said that the BRS and the BJP have struck a deal to save BRS MLC Kavitha. That's how Kavitha came out from jail on bail, she said. Participating in the Gajwel Market Committee governing body swearing-in ceremony as the district in-charge Minister along with Ministers Tummala Nageshwara Rao and Ponnamp Prabhakar, Surekha said

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TTD 'laddu prasadam' case hearing posted for today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 The Supreme Court of India has adjourned to October 4 the hearing of a batch of petitions seeking a court-monitored investigation into allegations of the use of animal fat in the preparation of laddus served as 'prasadam' at the Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple in Tirumala. The adjournment came after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta requested the hearing be postponed to tomorrow (Friday) at 10:30 AM.

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USCIRF report 'malicious'
 India strongly objects and rejects

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
 India on Thursday trashed a report by the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) and described it as a "biased" organisation with a "political agenda". In its report, the USCIRF that monitors universal right to freedom of religion criticised India for alleged violations of religious freedom. It also recommended to the US state department to declare India a "Country of Particular Concern" (CPC) in the context of religious freedom. In a strong reaction, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the USCIRF should utilise its time more productively on address-

ing human rights issues in the United States. "Our views on the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) are well known. It is a biased organisation with a political agenda," external affairs ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. "It continues to misrepresent facts

and peddles a motivated narrative about India. We reject this malicious report, which only serves to discredit USCIRF further," he said. He was responding to media queries on the 'country update' on India in the report. "We would urge USCIRF to desist from such agenda driven efforts. The USCIRF would also be well advised to utilise its time more productively on addressing human rights issues in the United States," the spokesperson said. The USCIRF report also mentioned clashes between Kuki and Meitei communities in Manipur and said months of ongoing violence resulted in the destruction of thousands of homes.

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SC bans caste-based discrimination in prisons

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
 In a landmark verdict, the Supreme Court on Thursday banned caste-based discrimination like division of manual labour, segregation of barracks and bias against prisoners of de-notified tribes and habitual offenders by holding as "unconstitutional" the jail manual rules of 10 states for fostering such biases. Observing that "right to live with dignity extends even to the incarcerated", a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said, "Criminal laws of the colonial era continue to impact the postcolonial world." It asked the Centre and the states to amend

Quashes jail manual rules of 10 states

It asked the Centre and the states to amend their prison manuals and laws within three months, and file compliance reports before it

their prison manuals and laws within three months, and file compliance reports before it. It dealt with certain discriminatory provisions of jail manuals of Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh,

Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Kerala, Maharashtra Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh and set them aside. Referring to touchability, it said Article 17 enunciates that everyone is born equal. "There cannot be any stigma attached to the existence, touch or presence of any person. By way of Article 17, our Constitution strengthens the equality of status of every citizen..." it said. Referring to an instance, it said convicts from communities lower in the caste hierarchy were expected to continue with their customary occupations in jail and the caste hierarchy outside the prison was

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Mahesh asks film folks to end controversy, Nagarjuna approaches court

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC President B. Mahesh Kumar Goud appealed to the film industry to end the ongoing controversy as Endowment Minister Konda Surekha had apologised to Samantha.

Mahesh released a video message regarding this on Thursday. "I request all film industry bigwigs to call off their protest as the Minister has withdrawn her comments. So put a full stop to the issue here. There are women on both sides. So leave this matter at that. The Minister did not mean to hurt the sentiments of women. Konda Surekha had posted on X that, 'The way Samantha grew as a heroine is not only admirable but also an ideal for me.' If a brother garlands his sister we see trolls on social media. Don't talk badly about each other in society. I am appealing to Congress leaders and Ministers to speak carefully," he said. However, film hero Akkineni Nagarjuna ignored the appeal of Mahesh, approached the Nampally court and filed a petition seeking criminal defamation action against Surekha.

Raghunandan files complaint against KTR, Harish

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP's Medak MP, M. Raghunandan Rao, filed a complaint against senior BRS leaders KT Rama Rao and T. Harish Rao and some YouTube channels with the Cyberabad Police Station on Thursday in connection with social media trolling against Endowment Minister Konda Surekha. The police filed a case and started an investigation.

Raghunandan filed a complaint with the Cyberabad Police alleging that BRS activists with photos of Harish Rao as their DP trolled Konda Surekha and him by posting their photo. He appealed to the police to take action against them.

Solar power pilot project in Kondareddipalli village

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The village of Kondareddipalli, located in the Kodangal constituency of Vikarabad district, has been selected for a pilot solar power project. Under this project, solar power systems will be installed in 153 homes and for 29 agricultural consumers. The authorities have already conducted a door-to-door survey to assess the needs of the village.

Musharraf Faruqui, IAS, Chairman & Managing Director of the Southern Telangana Power Distribution Company, Vikarabad Collector Prateek Jain, IAS, TG REDCO VC & MD V. Anila, KADA Special Officer Venkat Reddy, Chief Engineer Anand and other officials visited the village in connection with the project.

After the visit, Faruqui held a meeting with officials and provided guidance on the steps needed for the timely completion of the project.

Rangareddy tops voter count

Nalgonda leads in GPs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State Election Commission (TGSEC) has released voter data for the upcoming gram panchayat elections scheduled for 2024.

The annexure details the total number of Gram Panchayats (GPs), wards and voters across all districts. With over 16.7 million voters, the data provide an insightful view of the distribution of voters across different districts.

The district with the highest number of Gram Panchayats (GPs) is Nalgonda, with 856 GPs and

7,392 wards, making it the district with the most significant voter base in rural representation. Sangareddy follows closely with 5,718 wards and 491 GPs.

Rangareddy district stands at the top with a staggering 7,46,625 voters, of which 3,58,220 are men and 3,88,399 are women. The district's voter strength showcases its significant role in the upcoming elections.

Medak follows Rangareddy with 5,34,075 voters, reflecting the prominent electoral weight in these regions.

Mulugu has the lowest number of 124 GPs but it still maintains a respectable voter base of 1,34,577. In terms of wards, Narayanpet has the lowest number of 2,544 wards, with the number of GPs standing at 858.

The district with the least number of voters is Mulugu where the total voter count stands at 1,34,577, followed by Jayashankar with 2,09,579 voters. Despite their small size, these districts will play a crucial role in the upcoming elections.

Across all districts, there are 493 voters categorized under the "others" category,

reflecting inclusivity in the election process. The total number of voters in the state stands at 16,733,584, with women slightly outnumbering men at 8,528,073 compared to 8,204,518 men.

As Telangana prepares for Gram Panchayat elections, these figures highlight both the diversity and the varying voter strengths across districts.

From the bustling voter base of Rangareddy to the smaller yet significant electoral presence in Mulugu, every district will be important in deciding the outcome of the 2024 elections.

BJP against bringing personal, family matters into politics: Kishan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP condemns bringing other people's family affairs and women's private, personal matters into politics just to serve one's political self-interest, Union Minister of Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy said.

Police officials said that during BRS rule, the KCR government used to tap phones to know the personal details of film celebrities and businessmen, blackmailed them and collected crores, Kishan said.

"KCR started the vile culture. KTR took it forward. Now Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Congress leaders are continuing it. The people of Telangana will not tolerate the insults of BRS and Congress leaders, and their offensive language against families and individuals who have nothing to do with politics. The time has come to boot out the Congress and the BRS," he said.

Speaking to the media at the State BJP office here on Thursday, Kishan termed Revanth as 'HYDRAA'.



"HYDRAA means Revanth Reddy. Revanth means HYDRAA. The HYDRAA idea has come from Revanth," Kishan said.

Many real estate companies and businessmen have built buildings on water bodies. HYDRAA must show its strength against them first. Demolish Owaisi's illegal Fatima College if the government has the guts. The Congress government is trying to deflect attention from the promises it made to the people like the BRS government, Kishan said.

He recalled that KCR staged a dharna in New Delhi saying that meters are going to be

installed on farm pumps to divert people's attention. People should think whether meters have been installed anywhere in Telangana, he said.

The Congress government is now trying to divert public attention by not implementing its 'six guarantees,' he said.

He said that there is a financial crisis in Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka. The Congress government in Karnataka is facing a corruption trial. In Telangana, Congress leaders are looting through RG TAX and RR-TAX. RR-TAX is being collected from real estate companies, he said.

Marriott International picks Hyd for its first GCC in India

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Marriott International, Inc. has announced the establishment of its first Global Capability Centre (GCC) in India and has selected Hyderabad as its location. This move marks a significant milestone in the hospitality sector, as Marriott becomes the first to enter the Indian market with a GCC.

The Marriott Tech Accelerator, a key component of the initiative, will use Hyderabad's technology talent to enhance Marriott's global operations, especially in technology infrastructure, engineering and security.

The announcement was made during an event attended by Drew Pinto, Marriott's Executive Vice President and Chief Revenue & Technology Officer, along with several other high-ranking officials from the company.

Telangana's Minister for Information Technology, Duddila Sridhar Babu, was also present and he urged Marriott to consider further investments in tier-2 cities across the state.

The Marriott team expressed interest in expanding its footprint. They also met the CM after the announcement.

Hyderabad has grown rapidly as a hub for GCCs, with around 300 AI start-ups, 12 data centres, and a Centre of Excellence for AI. The region's robust ecosystem, combined with the state's strategic focus on emerging technologies, has made it an attractive destination for multinational companies.

Industries Minister Sridhar highlighted Telangana's leadership in the tech industry, citing the around 200 existing GCCs and a vast talent pool, as evidence of the state's competitive edge.

He emphasised that the Marriott

Tech Accelerator aligns with Telangana's vision of becoming a global hub for AI, Data Science and Industrial IoT.

Addressing the audience, Drew Pinto said, "We have chosen to establish the Marriott Tech Accelerator in Hyderabad because of its world-class talent and its reputation as a major IT hub in India."

Marriott's Global Chief Technology Officer, Naveen Manga, added, "As Telangana becomes a global technology hub, this centre will enhance customer experience and reinforce our position as leaders in delivering cutting-edge solutions." The Marriott Tech Accelerator is expected to open in early 2025, supported by ANSR, a leader in establishing GCCs for global enterprises. This move is anticipated to not only boost Marriott's tech capabilities but also contribute significantly to Telangana's economic growth.

Researchers link climate shocks with increased domestic violence

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Climate shocks such as floods and landslides are likely to lead to an increased domestic violence over the next two years, researchers, who analysed survey data from 156 countries between 1993 and 2019, have found.

As global warming intensifies, the researchers, led by those at the University College London, UK, urged countries to include funds and gender action plans in



climate mitigation to address this issue, even as they said the climate shock-violence link remains complex and challenging to discern in a manner understandable to policymakers.

The team did, however, add that domes-

tic violence was increasingly prevalent and severe, especially in countries having patriarchal societies where violence against women is considered acceptable. Violence rates were found to be low in countries having a higher Gross Domestic Product.

The analysis, published in the journal PLoS Climate, is the first to provide evidence of how climate shocks can influence national rates of physical and sexual intimate partner, or domestic, violence, the authors said.

BJP spreads hatred, oust it from Haryana: Rahul

PNS ■ NUH

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday said his party will not let the "hatred" being spread by the BJP on the basis of religion, language, and caste win and appealed to the people of Haryana to oust the ruling party in the Assembly polls.

"The most important thing is brotherhood. Wherever the BJP and RSS people go, they spread hatred. In whichever state they go, somewhere they talk about language, somewhere they talk about religion and somewhere they speak about caste. Hatred has to be ended.

home guards and a cleric. The fight is between 'mohabbat' (love) and 'nafrat' (hatred). The Congress spreads love while the BJP spreads 'hatred', Gandhi said on the last day of campaigning for the October 5 assembly polls.

"We will not let this hatred win in the country. Love, brotherhood and unity will win in the country," said the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha.

With hatred, the country gets weakened. Hatred spreads sorrow and fear. It is only love which is an antidote to hatred.

Most rivers in Bihar flowing above danger mark

PNS ■ PATNA

The flood situation remained grim in several districts of Bihar on Thursday, with the water level of rivers still flowing above the danger mark at most places, officials said.

Earlier in the day, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar inspected the water level of the Ganga at Patna's Gandhi Ghat, where it has receded from the danger mark, he said.

"The water level of most rivers in the state, including Kosi, Gandak, Bagmati, Mahananda and Ganga is still above the danger mark at various places. The Water Resources Department (WRD) is on alert and flood protection work is being carried out as required," an official notification said.

According to the state's disaster management department, food packets and other relief materials are being air-



dropped by IAF helicopters in 17 flood-affected districts, including East and West Champaran, Araria, Kishanganj, Gopalganj, Sheohar, Sitamarhi, Supaul, Madhepura, Muzaffarpur, Parnera, Madhubani, Darbhanga and Saran.

Altogether, 33 teams of the NDRF and SDRF have been pressed into service for relief and rescue operations, while around 975 boats are also plying in the affected areas, it said.

The chief minister visited the Gandhi Ghat after virtually laying the foundation stone for the construction of 'Centres of Excellence' at 87 Industrial Training Institutes of the state government, the officials said.

He also inaugurated the Krishna Ghat link and the Gaighat up ramp link of JP Ganga Path here to facilitate smooth movement of vehicular traffic, they added.

German NSA holds talks with counterpart Doval, Jaishankar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

German NSA Jens Plötner on Thursday held separate talks with his Indian counterpart Ajit Doval and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar as part of preparation for German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's trip to India later this month.

Scholz is visiting India to hold wide-ranging talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi under the framework of India-Germany Inter Governmental Commission (IGC).

Plötner's trip to India came weeks after Jaishankar travelled to Berlin.

"Pleased to meet Jens Plötner, Security & Foreign



Policy Advisor to @Bundeskanzler. Continued our conversations with Berlin last month and took stock of preparations for the upcoming India-Germany IGC," Jaishankar said on X.

Cabinet nod for classical language status to five languages

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved conferring the status of classical language to Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Assamese and Bengali languages. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"This is a historical decision and this decision goes very well with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the NDA government's philosophy of taking pride in our culture, taking pride in our heritage and taking pride in all the Indian languages and the rich heritage that we have," Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said at a cabinet briefing.

The classical languages serve as a custodian of Bharat's profound and ancient cultural heritage, embodying the essence of each community's historical and cultural milestone, the government said.

Union Minister Kumaraswamy booked for extortion, criminal intimidation

PNS ■ BENGALURU

A case has been registered against Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy on charges of extortion and criminal intimidation following a complaint by a realtor here, police said on Thursday.

Along with Kumaraswamy, who holds Steel and Heavy Industries portfolio, former MLC of the JD(S) Ramesh Gowda was also booked by the Amruthahalli police in the case.

Vijay Tata, the complainant, alleged that he was the JD(S) social media vice president but had distanced himself from the party as he was focusing on his real estate business.

However, on August 24, Gowda came home and called Kumaraswamy from his phone. The Minister told him that the party needed Rs 50 crore for the Channapatna by-elections as it has decided to field his son

Nikhil Kumaraswamy this time, Tata alleged.

The realtor also claimed that when he expressed his inability to pay, Kumaraswamy allegedly threatened him with dire consequences.

Reacting to the allegation, Kumaraswamy told reporters, "Is this a topic to discuss? Should I answer all this? Should I respond to every other dog on the street?"



TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
 Tithi: Dwitaya: Oct 04 02:58 AM to Oct 05 05:31 AM
 Tritiya: Oct 05 05:31 AM to Oct 06 07:49 AM

Nakshatram: Chitra: Oct 03 03:32 PM to Oct 04 06:38 PM
 Swati: Oct 04 06:38 PM to Oct 05 09:33 PM

Rahukalam: 10:36 AM to 12:04 PM
 Yamagandam: 3:01 PM to 4:30 PM
 Varjyam: 12:54 AM to 02:42 AM
 Gulika: 7:39 AM to 9:07 AM
 Amritakalam: 11:24 AM to 01:12 PM
 Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:41 AM to 12:28 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Scattered Showers
 Temp: 32°
 Humidity: 69%
 Sunrise: 6:07 AM
 Sunset: 6:02 PM
 Updated: October 3, 2024 5:00 PM

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CITY EVENTS

Multi-speciality Health Camp & Blood donation camp

By Telangana State Legal Services Authority. To be inaugurated by Justice Alok Aradhe, Chief Justice, Telangana High Court.

Venue

New filing section, Ground Floor, High Court, October 4, 10am

I-Venture Immersive

The I-Venture Immersive is a six-month, full-time, on-campus programme designed to support aspiring entrepreneurs in launching or scaling their ventures.

Venue

ISB Campus (I-Venture @ ISB, Road # 6), Gachibowli, Hyderabad. October 4, 12:00 noon.

Dubai Property Show

Property experts coming to your city

Venue

ITC Kohener, HYTEC City, Plot No. 5, Survey No. 83/1, Madhapur, Opposite Inorbit Mall October 5 and 6.

Aura by Jalsa

Grand opening.

Venue

8-2-601, P, 31, Ground Floor, Road No. 10, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad. October 6, 12.30 pm

SERP - SARAS Fair-2024

Venue

People's Plaza, Hyderabad Till October 7

Toxic

By Abhishek Upmanyu

Venue

Shilpakala Vedika November 2

Prateek Kuhad

Silhouettes tour.

Venue

Hyderabad international convention centre November 8

First term holidays for junior colleges from Oct 6 to 14

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Board of Intermediate Education has announced first term holidays from October 6 to 13. The junior colleges would reopen on October 14.

The notification said that the principals of all the government, private aided, private un-aided, co-operative, TG residential TG social welfare residential and TG tribal welfare were informed that the first term holidays for junior colleges are declared from October 6 to 13 (including both days) and shall be reopened on October 14.

In this connection, all the DIEOs in the State are hereby instructed to give wide publicity in their jurisdiction and see that all the college managements adhere to the schedule, said the secretary of the Intermediate Board.

City Pioneer

the pioneer

HYDERABAD FRIDAY | OCTOBER 4, 2024

03

CHIEF MINISTER'S CUP INAUGURATED

CM promises to make TG a sports hub

PLANS TO ESTABLISH THE YOUNG INDIA SPORTS UNIVERSITY AND A COACHING CENTRE IN TELANGANA

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy inaugurated the Chief Minister's Cup - 2024 at LB Stadium in Hyderabad on Thursday.

During his address, he outlined his government's vision to transform Telangana into a premier sports hub in India. Highlighting Hyderabad's legacy, Revanth mentioned how the city hosted major international events like the Commonwealth and Afro-Asian Games 25 years ago, which positioned Hyderabad as a model city. However, he expressed concern over the neglect of sports in the State over the past decade, pointing out that youth are increasingly turning to drugs rather than pursuing careers in sports.

"It is unfortunate and painful to see this shift, but we are working to change that," he said. The Chief

Minister also emphasised his government's efforts to promote Hyderabad as a world-class venue for sports. He praised athletes like Nikhat Zareen, who hailed from a remote area in Telangana and rose to become a world boxing champion. "Recognising her achievements, we awarded her a DSP post in the police department, which reflects our commitment to supporting aspiring athletes," Revanth remarked.

Further, the Chief Minister noted that his government relaxed

norms to offer a similar position to international cricketer Mohammed Siraj. He also lauded the achievements of PV Sindhu and veteran cricketer Mohammad Azharuddin, adding that Hyderabad's football legacy was made prominent by the famous coach Rahim. To further support the city's sporting talent, Revanth announced that Telangana had adopted the Under-17 National Football Team.

Drawing a comparison with South Korea, which won 36



medals at the recent Olympics, Revanth shared plans to establish the Young India Sports University and a coaching centre in Telangana.

"We will invite South Korean coaches to train our athletes. We want Telangana to be known for its sports talent, and we will support this vision through world-class training and infrastructure,"

he added. Revanth made a strong appeal to the youth, urging them to steer clear of drugs and pursue sports to elevate India's standing globally. "I want to see athletes from Telangana winning gold medals at the 2028 Olympics. The government will take full responsibility for providing the necessary training and resources," he assured.

TG shooters shine winning 22 medals

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana shooters shined at the XV South Zone Shooting Championship, winning 22 medals. The event was held at the SATS Shooting Range in Gachibowli, Hyderabad, featuring shotgun events (NR & ISSF).

It was organised under the guidance of Amit Sanghi, president of the Telangana Rifle Association (TRA). Over 250 athletes from southern Indian states participated, including Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Puducherry and

Tamil Nadu. The matches were held for different age groups: Juniors (under 21, born in 2003 or later), Masters (ages 45-60), Senior Masters (ages 60-70), and Super Masters (above 70). Telangana shooters excelled, securing a total of 22 medals, in which 11 Gold, 6 Silver and 5 Bronze.

Amit Sanghi commended the participants and thanked NRAI officials and the Sports Authority of Telangana for their support. He appreciated the finalists for their dedication and wished them continued success.



Health Minister unveils TG's AMR action plan; to be rolled out soon

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Health Minister C Damodar Raja Narsimha launched Telangana's Anti-microbial Resistance (AMR) action plan and announced it will be rolled out soon.

He noted that Kerala was the first in India to introduce such a plan, followed by five other states.

"We are the 7th State and we are committed to tackling AMR, the silent pandemic," he said, during the opening of the three-day G-SPARC 2024, Global South Conference on infection prevention, control and antimicrobial stewardship, on Thursday at Shilpakalavedika.

The Minister was the chief guest on behalf of the Chief Minister at the inaugural event. He unveiled the conference souvenir and the Telangana AMR action plan poster.

Speaking at the inaugural



Health Minister C Damodar Raja Narsimha lighting the lamp during the inauguration of the three-day G-SPARC 2024 at Shilpakalavedika on Thursday

event, Secretary of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of Telangana, Z Christina Chongthu said that since the India Action Plan on AMR was announced in 2017, progress has been made.

Efforts have focused on capacity building, better auditing and following protocols to reduce the overuse of antibiotics.

The Chairperson of the Infection Control Africa

Network, Prof Chedly Azzouz also noted that India and African countries share many similarities in infection prevention and AMR challenges.

Meanwhile Dr Anuj Sharma from WHO India emphasised the need for collaboration to strengthen the AMR action plan. He also mentioned that the United Nations General Assembly recently set a goal to reduce deaths from AMR by 10% by 2030.

Metro Rail holds safety seminar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

L&T Metro Rail and L&TMRHL concluded its inaugural safety seminar. The programme has brought together top officials, safety experts and dedicated staff of HMRL, L&TMRHL to discuss safety initiatives, share best practices and learn from critical incidents of the Metro and railway industry.

The seminar commenced with a safety walk at the Hyderabad Metro workshop, where teams showcased in-house developed safety practices and demonstrated the importance of adhering to safety rules.

MD, HMRL, NVS Reddy, emphasised the paramount importance of safety throughout the project's construction and operation. He highlighted



Hyderabad Metro's achievement of a zero-fatality record during construction and its numerous safety awards. He stressed the need for continuous improvement and set new goals for the team.

MD and CEO, L&TMRHL, KVB Reddy, reiterated

Hyderabad Metro's unwavering commitment to safety. He assured passengers and staff that the Metro system would continue to prioritise safety and implement enhanced measures.

Sudhir Chiplunkar, COO, L&TMRHL, said, "Safety is a shared responsibility. We urge our passengers to read the safety charter and follow the guidelines to ensure their own safety and the safety of others."

The safety team presented a safety skit, highlighting the 10 life-saving rules that can ensure the safety of employees, passengers and the environment. Throughout the day, various Metro divisions shared their safety initiatives and engaged in brainstorming sessions to exchange best practices and learn from each other's experiences.

Health emergency services for women in ITDA areas

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Health Minister Damodar Rajanarasimha, in a meeting held on Thursday directed officials to come up with enhanced plans of reaching tribals within half-an-hour in an emergency. Pregnant women would have to be admitted in waiting rooms before one week of expected delivery date.

In forest regions lacking 108 ambulance services, alternative arrangements and bike ambulances are to be introduced for emergency situations.

Minister Rajanarasimha ordered the strengthening of hospitals in ITDA areas in Utnoor, Bhadrachalam and Eturnagaram. Precautionary measures ordered for pregnant women to be shifted to hospitals a week before their estimated delivery date (EDD) and

housed in birth waiting rooms during monsoons.

Under the orders of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, a comprehensive action plan will be formulated to provide quality healthcare to every resident in Chenchu and tribal hamlets. He asked ITDA project officers, health, forest and panchayat raj departments to work together to ensure better healthcare for tribals and Chenchus.

Plans are underway to establish new health sub-centres and primary health centres in geographically isolated tribal areas to ensure access to emergency medical services within 30 minutes, said the Minister. He directed the officials to appoint staff fluent in tribal languages to assist in resolving healthcare issues in remote areas. He reviewed the prevalence of seasonal diseases in the tribal areas.

Cockroach infestation high in city restaurants

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Food Safety Commission (TFSC) inspected restaurants in Patancheru and found live cockroach infestations and multiple violations.

The Task Force officials inspected Sliver Bawarchi Restaurant & Bakers and found live cockroach infestation on storage racks in the kitchen. Some food in the refrigerator was uncovered, expired mustard sauce, poppy seeds and pepper masala were discarded. The fridge was dirty, drains were blocked and pest control records were unavailable.

Finally, the officials inspected Babai Hotel and found cockroach infestations. The FSSAI licence was still in the application stage. Expired papad and shajhera were discarded.

Later on, the officials also inspected



Kaktiya Military Hotel and found similar cockroach infestation. Food in the refrigerator was uncovered, expired mustard sauce, poppy seeds and pepper masala were discarded. The fridge was dirty, drains were blocked and pest control records were unavailable.

Female student loses Rs 1.9 lakh to cyber criminals

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 21-year-old female student from Hyderabad has lost Rs 1,90,000 to cyber criminals by joining Telegram group for daily Google review rating tasks. The student received a message on WhatsApp regarding an online Google rating task. Later, she was asked to join a Telegram group for daily Google review rating tasks. After joining the group, the scammers started asking her for a small investment, promising a higher refund in return.

Initially, she received some money, which built trust. Then, the scammers sent her a link, asking her to create a profile for a Bitcoin (BTC) account to supposedly earn more profits. They asked her to pay Rs 1,90,000. After she made the payment, they asked her to proceed to a third step, which involved another payment, with the promise of doubling the amount.

The victim refused to pay again, but the scammers insisted that only after this transaction would she receive a refund. The scammers are still messaging her, asking for the pending amount in exchange for the refund. The victim's entire invested amount is displayed on a Google portal and the website exchangeg66.com. The victim made a complaint for the recovery of her money.

Lawyers protest attack on advocate

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Lawyers staged a protest in front of the court as well as in front of the Director General of Police (DGP) office on Thursday demanding action against the Madannapet police officers who allegedly assaulted advocate MA Kaleem.

Advocate MA Kaleem has been representing Musi River evacuees in court over disputes regarding double bedroom houses that were previously allocated to them. According to advo-

cate Kaleem, the police targeted him, raided his house and forcibly took him away in a vehicle, subjecting him to physical abuse and verbal harassment.

Lawyers who staged a dharna in front of the court and the DGP office at Lakkidikapal demanded the immediate suspension of the police officer, who allegedly assaulted advocate Kaleem. A large number of lawyers gathered at the DGP office leading to a massive traffic jam on the road.

Mahatma Award for N Galla

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Dr Ramachandra N Galla has been honoured with the Mahatma Award 2024 for Lifetime Achievement, recognising his over 40 years of transformational leadership and commitment to a sustainable future. He is the founder and visionary leader of the Amara Raja Group. The

Mahatma Award is the highest honour for social impact leaders working to improve the world, celebrating efforts in sustainability, philanthropy and corporate social responsibility. Dr Galla received the award from Dr Kiran Bedi, India's first female IPS officer, alongside Nayantara Sehgal and Rajashree Birla.

Azharuddin skips ED summons in money-laundering case

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former Indian cricket captain and Congress leader Mohammad Azharuddin on Thursday skipped the summons from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with the money-laundering case related to alleged financial irregularities in the Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA).

In its notice, ED stated that money laundering took place when Azharuddin was the president of HCA and about Rs 20 crore of irregularities



were committed. According to the details in the ED summons, it has been mentioned in the notices that Azharuddin should attend the hearing on Thursday. This is the first time that he has received a summons from ED in this case.

A case was first registered

against him for allegedly misappropriating funds of Rs 20 crore allocated for the procurement of diesel generators, fire-fighting equipment and canopies for the Rajiv Gandhi Cricket Stadium in Uppal. In October 2023, Hyderabad Police registered a case against Azharuddin along with other HCA former officials.

The HCA, which felt that there had been a diversion of funds, ordered an inquiry. To this extent, the forensic audit conducted the investigation from March 2020 to February 2023.

TG fast becoming a global talent brand, finds survey

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana is absorbing over 61,600 white-collar professionals from across India and abroad this year, with Hyderabad leading the way, according to the Xpheno T+ve 2024 survey. The survey's second edition highlights talent exchange patterns for the 12 months ending in September 2024.

Speaking to the

media in a virtual conference on Thursday, Co-founder of Xpheno, Kamal Karanth stated that Telangana has become a top State for talent absorption, retention and growth. The State's Positive Talent Balance (PTB) has tripled to 20,200, ranking third in India, just behind Karnataka and Haryana.

He also said that Telangana absorbed

61,600 professionals, while 41,400 left the State. Its white-collar talent pool now stands at 4.18 million, with Hyderabad housing 1.87 million experienced professionals.

The survey shows that the tech sector employs 35% of this talent pool, followed by business consulting, BFSI, pharma and healthcare. Telangana produces 100,000 engineers annually,

with women making up over 54% of the academic output.

Karanth emphasised that Telangana's Positive Talent Balance strengthens its reputation as a leading talent hub, making it a prime destination for enterprises setting up Global Capability Centres (GCCs). The report also highlights how the State is fast becoming a global talent brand.

Instagram user booked for animal cruelty

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a disturbing case of animal cruelty, Adibatla Police registered a criminal case against an Instagram reel maker for allegedly torturing animals and uploading videos showcasing the acts.

The videos, which were posted on May 25, 2024, depict inhumane treatment of animals, including force-feeding a scorpion to sheep and forcing a buffalo into painful, unnatural positions. The complaint was lodged by Adulapuram Goutham, a 35-year-old

animal welfare activist associated with the Stray Animal Foundation of India, an NGO.

In his complaint, Goutham stated that the Instagram user intentionally inflicted unnecessary pain and suffering on the animals, violating multiple sections of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.

Goutham has provided the police with video and photographic evidence of these acts, which were included on a pen drive attached to the complaint.

BRS on downward spiral in undivided Warangal district

PNS ■ WARANGAL

The BRS party, which had been in power for two consecutive terms, is facing a series of setbacks. After the party lost power, many leaders have been facing unprecedented challenges. Even MLAs, MLCs, and former ministers are leaving the party. Party leaders, who once enjoyed power, are giving short shrift to party workers and thus facing backlash from their party activists. While key leaders in the BRS are exploring alternative opportunities, dissatisfaction among the party cadre against the leaders has escalated.

In the undivided Warangal district, which has historically been a stronghold of the BRS, the party has been spiralling downward, according to

political analysts. Senior leaders like former Deputy Chief Minister Kadiyam Srihari has not only left the party but also paved the way for others to follow. Some leaders find themselves in a tricky situation. Those who previously joined the BRS when the Congress party was out of power, are now in a predicament, feeling that their situation has become dire and incomprehensible, as discussed within the district.

The discontent among the party cadre has turned into open rebellion in some areas,

with calls for certain leaders to leave the party. The party activists have been up in arms against former MLA Gandra Venkata Ramana Reddy and asked him what he had done for them. Venkata Ramana Reddy won in 2009 while the Congress was in power. In 2014, BRS leader Sirikonda Madhusudana Chari won and served as the first Assembly Speaker after the formation of Telangana State. In the subsequent 2018 Assembly elections, Venkata Ramana Reddy

won on the Congress ticket and joined the BRS. However, BRS chief K Chandrashekar Rao ensured Madhusudana Chari was given a suitable position as an MLC. Meanwhile, Venkata Ramana Reddy was appointed as Jayashankar Bhupalapally district unit president. His failure to take care of the party cadre led to its defeat in several constituencies, it is alleged. Venkata Ramana Reddy's efforts to stage a protest on the loan waiver issue failed because the cadre did not cooperate with him, according to BRS party leaders.

Not only Venkata Ramana Reddy, but most of the BRS leaders in the undivided Warangal district have reportedly been facing backlash.



All set to open paddy procurement centres in RR dist

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

In a move aimed at streamlining the grain procurement process for the Vanakalam (kharif) season, Rangareddy District Collector K Shashanka has instructed officials to ensure that farmers encounter no difficulties at the grain purchase centres. The announcement was made during a meeting held on Thursday at the Integrated District Office. District officials and rice millers were present at the meeting.

Shashanka emphasised the importance of setting up adequate number of paddy purchase centres across the district and providing all necessary facilities for farmers.

He instructed officials to weigh the grain promptly upon its arrival at the centres and to ensure that fine and coarse varieties are properly segregated. Additionally, daily data entry is to be performed, documenting the allocation of fine and coarse varieties to the respective rice mills.

The Collector also stressed the need for an adequate num-



Rangareddy Collector K Shashanka holding a review meeting at the Collectorate in Rangareddy district on Thursday

ber of porters to assist at the centres and ordered strict supervision at the rice mills to prevent delays in grain movement. He further directed that lorries carrying grain should not be held up and that grain reserves should be imported in a timely manner.

To prevent any operational disruptions, the Collector ordered advance arrangements for sufficient tarpaulins, gunny bags, and paddy cleaners at the centres. He assured that necessary training would be provided to officials for proper certification of fine and coarse

grain types. Infrastructure such as tarpaulins, husk removers, moisture machines, and weighing scales are to be in place to ensure the farmers' convenience.

The meeting was attended by Additional Collector Pratima Singh, District Civil Supply Officer Srinivas, Civil Supplies District Manager Gopikrishna, District Agriculture Department Officer Narsing Rao, District Marketing Officer Mohammad Riaz, DCO Sudhakar, and other concerned officials.



Police separating Congress and BRS warning groups at Dubbak in Siddipet district on Thursday

Cong activists hurl eggs at BRS MLA's car

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

Congress workers allegedly hurled eggs at the vehicle of Dubakk BRS MLA Kotha Prabhakar Reddys on Thursday. When Prabhakar Reddy was on his way to attend a meeting in Dubakka, Congress activists obstructed the MLA's vehicle, chanting slogans against the BRS and throwing eggs at his car.

BRS workers too arrived at the scene and began chanting

slogans condemning the Congress party's 'intimidatory tactics', leading to a tense situation.

The Congress workers claimed that they threw eggs at Prabhakar Reddy's vehicle demanding action against those who made inappropriate statements against Konda Surekha on social media platforms.

The police intervened and separated both groups and brought the situation under control.

Kamareddy resident cheated of Rs 9 lakh by cybercriminal

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

A resident of Kamareddy, named Kishan Rao, got a shock of his life on September 26 when he received a phone call from an unknown number.

The caller claimed that he was the police officer from Delhi threatened Kishan Rao of dire consequences if he failed the former's orders.

The con-man posing as police officer threatened Kishan Rao that the latter was involved in money laundering and drug-related cases. The fraudster said that the Delhi police would arrest him. The so-called police officer

coaxed Kishan Rao to transfer Rs 9.29 lakh from his account in instalments to the accounts of the conman.

However, when Kishan attempted to call the number back, he found that the phone was switched off. Realising he had fallen victim to a scam, he contacted the toll-free number 1930 to file a complaint.

Subsequently, Kishan also filed a complaint at the Kamareddy Town Police Station.

Based on Kishan's complaint, a case has been registered, and an investigation is underway, as confirmed by Kamareddy Town Circle Inspector Chandrasekar Reddy.



Officials told to process LRS applications swiftly

PNS ■ KUMRAM BHEEM ASIFABAD

District Collector Venkatesh Dhotre has emphasised the need to speed up the processing of applications received under Layout Regularisation Scheme (LRS).

He was holding a review meeting on Thursday with the District Additional Collector Deepak Teewari, Asifabad Revenue Mandal Officer Lokeshwar Rao, and representatives of survey teams at the Integrated Collectorate building in the district headquarters.

During the meeting, the District Collector stated that applications received under LRS should be thoroughly examined and related records should also be checked. He wanted the officials to do verification at the field level also. He directed the officials to inspect that the lands for which LRS was sought were near the lakes or they were government lands.

The Collector instructed the survey teams to provide information to applicants and conduct field inspections and inspect documents produced by applicants. He urged officials to hold systematic review to avoid any mistakes and complete the procedures swiftly. Town Planning Officer Yashwanth, Panchayat Secretaries, officials from the Irrigation Department, Municipal authorities, and other relevant officials.



Kumram Bheem Asifabad Collector Venkatesh Dhotre and RBI AGM Radhika Bharat unveiling posters on financial literacy in Asifabad on Thursday

People advised to stay alert to check financial frauds

PNS ■ KUMRAM BHEEM ASIFABAD

District Collector Venkatesh Dhotre on Thursday advised citizens to stay alert against various types of financial frauds.

On Thursday, during a meeting at the Integrated District Collectorate building, the Collector, along with Additional Collector Dasari Venu and Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Hyderabad AGM Radhika Bharat, conducted an awareness programme for officials and employees from all departments on financial frauds, cashless transactions, and financial literacy.

Speaking on the occasion, the District Collector emphasised the need for citizens to be aware of different methods of financial fraud to avoid falling victim to fraud. He advised against responding to unknown phone calls and stressed the

importance of never sharing bank account details, ATM card information, or PIN numbers with others. Additionally, he urged people not to write down sensitive information anywhere.

As technology advances, fraudsters are increasingly using it to commit scams, the Collector noted. He advised the public to double-check beneficiary details before transferring money online and never share passwords or OTPs with others. In case of being targeted by fraud, citizens were advised to immediately report it to the Reserve Bank of India's toll-free number 1930 or file a complaint at the nearest bank.

The Collector also called for financial literacy awareness programmes in villages to educate people about different types of financial frauds. Posters related to financial literacy were unveiled during the event.

ITI boost for Huzurnagar constituency

PNS ■ SURYAPET

Huzurnagar constituency has once again got a boost with the sanction of Industrial Training Centre.

Minister for Irrigation and Civil Supplies N Uttam Kumar Reddy said on Thursday that Rs 14.35 crore was released for the construction of a permanent building.

This new ITI, which will start training electricians, fitter, draftsman, diesel mechanic, and welders, is expected to benefit the unemployed youth in the region.

The ITI will begin with a total of 216 students across five courses. Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy secured approval from Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for eight posts, including the principal for this ITI. Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy mentioned that the new Industrial Training Institute (ITI) will be established near the Advanced Training Centre he had previously sanctioned at Ramaswami Gutta.



Minister for roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkat Reddy laying foundation stone for various developmental activities in Nalgonda on Thursday

Komatireddy vows to ensure road connectivity to every village

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkata Reddy on Thursday made it clear that his primary goal is to provide a road connectivity for every village and municipal ward. Apart from it, he vowed to ensure houses for the homeless and all the local tanks are filled with Krishna water. He said he would fulfil his promise and vowed to work for the welfare of people.

On Thursday, the Minister laid the foundation for various developmental works across the Nalgonda district.

He laid foundation stone for the bitumen road from Chandragiri Villa to Thallabavigudem at an estimated cost of Rs 1 crore. In addition, he inaugurated the newly constructed Mutton Market at Prakasam Bazaar, which was built at a cost of Rs 75 lakh.

The Minister also laid the foundation for the construction of a cement concrete road from Mushampally Road to AR Nagar, costing Rs 35 lakh. During the event, he highlighted that road and drainage works worth Rs 500 crore are currently underway in Nalgonda town. He further announced that tenders have been called for constructing a cement concrete road from Thallabavigudem to Pittampally at a cost of Rs 6 crore, and the work will commence within a month.

He directed municipal officials and engineers, including contractors, to ensure that works on the project begin. He asked the officials to see that all the works are completed on schedule.

The Minister revealed that mea-

sures were taken to ensure every household in Nalgonda town receives Mission Bhagiratha drinking water, with the construction of 15 water tanks with a combined capacity of 11 lakh liters, at a total cost of Rs 400 crore. He added that once the Brahmana Vellamula and SLBC projects are completed, the district's tanks can be filled with Krishna water. He also mentioned that funds have been released to facilitate filling through the Brahmana Vellamula project.

Minister Komatireddy also announced that the Bottugguda High School is being constructed at a cost of Rs 3 crore through Prateek Foundation, with plans to inaugurate it by December. A 50-acre plot has been identified for the construction of Indiramma houses for the poor, with each house costing Rs 5 lakh.

Later, the Minister made a surprise inspection of the ongoing construction work at the Urban Primary Health Centre in Manyam Chelaka. He instructed the contractor to ensure that the construction adheres to government norms. He also visited the Jaikhana junction, promising funds for its development and suggesting that a portion of the jail compound wall be removed to enhance the junction's appearance and prevent accidents.

The event was attended by Additional Collector J Srinivas, Municipal Chairman Burri Srinivas Reddy, R&B SE Satyanarayana, Municipal Vice Chairman Abba Goni Ramesh Goud, Municipal Commissioner Musab Ahmed, ward councilors, and other dignitaries.



Khammam Additional Collector D Madhusudhana Naik holding a review meeting in Khammam on Thursday

Employees asked to clock in by 10:30 am

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Additional Collector D Madhusudhana Naik emphasised the importance of government staff attending their duties punctually. He was holding a review meeting at the District Collectorate.

On Thursday, the Additional Collector conducted a review of the performance of various departments in the district.

During the meeting, the Additional Collector instructed officials to be aware of pending files in all departments and take necessary actions for their timely disposal. He stated that Collectorate staff must clock in by 10.30 am and attend their duties on time.

The meeting was attended by Collectorate Accounts officer Aruna, Superintendents from various departments, Collectorate staff, and others.

Cong govt snatching farmlands, alleges Harish

PNS ■ MEDAK

Farmers opposing the Pharma City project gathered to stage a protest led by former minister and Siddipet MLA T Harish Rao at Dappur village under Nyalkal mandal in Sangareddy district. MLA K Manik Rao, Chinta Prabhakar, DCMS Chairman Shivakumar, former Chairman Deviprasad, and others attended the event.

Harish Rao visited the farmers' fields to assess their crops. The farmers made it clear to him that they were not at all inclined to give their lands to pharmaceutical companies. Harish assured them that he would stand by them until justice is done.

Speaking on the occasion, Harish Rao went hammer and tongs at Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, stating that the poor are being burdened and their lands are being snatched away. He expressed his frustration that the governance under Revanth Reddy has turned into absurdity. He accused the Chief Minister of prioritising real estate business over the previously approved Pharma City project, questioning whether Revanth backed real estate.

Harish pointed out that Revanth promised to distribute land titles to assigned lands during the Warangal Declaration before the elections, but has now forgotten those promises. He also mentioned that the loan waiver benefit has yet to reach all the farmers and accused Revanth Reddy of deceiving the people, even going so far as to cheating

the gods.

Harish demanded that Pharma companies be established in areas with stones and hills, arguing that the water here is pure like milk, and that Revanth Reddy is attempting to poison it under the guise of establishing pharmaceutical companies. He vowed to stand by farmers, stating that he would fight for justice.

He highlighted the developmental works carried out during the BRS government in the village, such as improving ponds and setting up substations, asserting that the Congress government is now attempting to seize their land. Harish emphasised that Dappur is known for its mint cultivation, and setting up a Pharma company on such fertile land is unjust.



Former minister T Harish Rao speaking at a protest rally at Nyalkal village in Sangareddy district on Thursday

Crop loan waiver will reach every eligible farmer: Min

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

Minister for Agriculture Tummla Nageswara Rao has said that the implementation of the loan waiver up to Rs 2 lakh would be completed soon.

He was taking part in the oath taking ceremony of the new market committee of the Gajwel Market Yard in Siddipet district on Thursday.

In-charge Minister Konda

Suresha, Transport Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar also took part in the event.

Nageswara Rao said that the government had earmarked Rs 31,000 crore for the implementation of the loan waiver. In the first phase Rs 18,000 crore has been released. Very soon, the loans of the other farmers would also be waived, he said.

The farmers have been earning good profits cultivating the oil



Agriculture Minister Tummla Nageswara Rao speaking at a meeting in Siddipet on Thursday

palm crop. The area under the crop is the highest in Khammam district in Telangana. If the farmers of Siddipet district also cultivate oil palm in large extent of lands, a factory to process the oil palm fruits to extract oil would be set up here. The oil palm crop is beneficial to the farmers because of the crop rotation. For the benefit of small and marginal farmers, agricultural mechanisation would be taken up at a cost of Rs

600 crore.

Ponnamp Prabhakar has appealed to the farmers to sell their produce at the procurement centres to get remunerative prices instead of selling it to middlemen. Paddy procurement centres were opened on October 1.

Konda Surekha, addressing the gathering, the present regime will surely implement six guarantees to establish Indiramma rule in Telangana.

ACROSS THE STATES



63.88% turnout recorded in J&K Assembly elections

Voter turnout of 69.69 per cent has been recorded in phase-3 of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly polls, with women outnumbering men in casting votes, the Election Commission said on Thursday. Overall, 63.88 per cent turnout has been recorded at polling stations, as against 58.58 per cent in the Lok Sabha polls, the poll panel noted. In phase-3 of the polls on October 1, when 40 seats went for voting in the Union Territory, the turnout of male voters was recorded at 69.37 per cent as compared to 70.02 per cent of women, the Election Commission (EC) said. Nearly 44 per cent of voters from the third gender category came to cast their votes in phase-3. Referring to the overall turnout, the Election Commission said it stood at 63.88 per cent with male participation recorded at 64.68 per cent. The overall women turnout was recorded at 63.04 per cent and that of the third gender at 38.24 per cent. The final votes polled will be available post-counting with counting of postal ballots.

Construction of 161-ft-high Ram temple spire begins

Construction of the 161-foot-high Ram temple's spire started on Thursday and is expected to be completed in four months, temple construction committee Chairman Nripendra Mishra said. With the starting of the construction of Ram temple's spire, building of seven other temples in the complex here, dedicated to seven sages, has also gained momentum, Mishra said in a statement. These seven temples are also expected to be completed in the next four months, he said. A three-day review meeting is planned on Thursday to accelerate the construction of the Ram temple, discussing ways to increase the workforce if there is a shortage of labourers and how to enhance the technical team if required, Mishra, who reached Ayodhya in the morning for the meeting, said. The consecration at the Ram temple in Ayodhya was performed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 22.

Surekha stirs another..

Continued from page 1
that the BRS had struck a secret deal with the BJP enabling the BJP to win the Medak LS seat. They reached an agreement with Union Home Minister Amit Shah that they would help the BJP win Medak and in exchange, the BJP would let go of Kavitha. BRS activists voted for the BJP and ensured its candidate's victory, she said. "The BRS is leading people in the wrong direction. KTR is misleading people by spreading lies through social media. The opposition leader, who is

supposed to give suggestions to the government, has so far not visited his constituency or the Assembly. The question is whether Gajvel has an MLA or not. A complaint should be given at the police station that KCR is not to be seen. By keeping KCR aside, by looting public funds, KTR made people lose confidence in the BRS. KTR was the reason for the BRS's defeat in the last election. Suggestions should be given to the government but the opposition must not put impediments in the government's path," Surekha said.

TTD 'laddu prasadam' case..

Continued from page 1
This case has garnered considerable attention due to its potential impact on one of India's most revered religious institutions. The reputation of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) is at stake as investigations into the quality of the prasadam offered at the temple continue. The Supreme Court's decision to delay proceedings has led to questions about how this will affect the ongoing probe and whether it could lead to further legal challenges for the TTD. As the case develops, much attention will be focused on the Supreme Court's next steps in addressing these serious allegations. The outcome could have far-reaching consequences, not only for the TTD but also for public trust in religious institutions across the country. Given the heightened public interest, tomorrow's hearing is expected to be a critical moment in this con-

roversy. In the previous hearing, the Solicitor General was asked to seek instructions on whether the Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed by the Andhra Pradesh Police should be allowed to continue its probe or if the investigation should be handed over to an independent agency. Meanwhile, the Andhra Pradesh Police has temporarily halted the SIT probe into the alleged adulteration of the 'Tirupati Laddu', following the case's escalation to the Supreme Court. In earlier proceedings, the court observed that there was no evidence to suggest that adulterated ghee had been used in the preparation of the laddus. When complaints were raised about the taste of the laddu, the court inquired, "Was the laddu, which tasted different, sent to the lab to determine if it contained contaminated material?"

Continued from page 1

a message unconditionally withdrawing my comments," Surekha said. Meanwhile, Surekha asserted she would not go back on the comments made against her by the BRS on social media and demanded an apology from KTR. On the legal notice sent by the BRS leader, Surekha said she would also proceed legally. Meanwhile, for the first time, Rakul Preet Singh responded regarding her name being dragged in by politicians. "I am totally apolitical and

Min Konda comes..

have nothing to do with any person/political party whatsoever. I request everybody to stop using my name maliciously to gain political mileage. Artists and creative personalities should be kept out of the political slugfest and their names should not be used to grab headlines by linking them with fictitious stories," Rakul said. "The Telugu film industry is known worldwide for its cre-

Govt rolls out internship scheme on pilot basis

Aims to provide 1 cr internship over 5 years

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Thursday rolled out the internship programme that will provide financial assistance of Rs 60,000 per annum to 1 crore youth over a period of five years.

In 2024-25, the total cost of the pilot project will be around Rs 800 crore and will look to provide internship to 1.25 lakh candidates during this fiscal, government sources said on Thursday.

Announced in the Union Budget 2024, the Prime Minister's Internship Scheme in Top Companies will also provide insurance coverage to the interns.

The scheme will be implemented through an online portal developed by the corporate affairs ministry. Subject to certain conditions, youth aged between 21 and 24 years will be eligible for the scheme, the sources said.

The internship programme will commence on December 2.

Through the portal, the sources said, partner companies can offer internship opportunities and the top companies for the pilot project have been identified on the basis of the average of their CSR expenditure in the last three years.



Announced in the Union Budget 2024, the Prime Minister's Internship Scheme in Top Companies will also provide insurance coverage to the interns. The scheme will be implemented through an online portal developed by the corporate affairs ministry

Candidates seeking internship opportunities can register in the portal from the second week of October.

The participation of companies in the scheme is voluntary and an internship will be offered for 12 months, with at least half of the period to be spent in the actual job environment and not in the classroom. Any other company/ bank/

financial institution can participate in the scheme with the approval of the ministry, which will take into consideration factors like sectors and areas under-represented by the top 500 companies.

The interns will be provided a financial assistance of Rs 5,000 per month and out of the total amount, Rs 4,500 will be disbursed by the government

and Rs 500 will be paid by the company from its CSR funds.

Also, a one time grant of Rs 6,000 for incidentals will be disbursed by the ministry to each intern, upon joining the place of internship.

Expenses associated with the training of interns under the scheme will be borne by the company from its CSR funds.

Insurance coverage will be provided to each individual intern under insurance schemes of the Union government, PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and PM Suraksha Bima Yojana. The premium amount in this regard will be offered by the government.

As part of the eligibility criteria, sources said, candidates enrolled in online/ distance learning programmes are eligible to apply.

Candidates who have passed High School, Higher Secondary School, possess a certificate from an ITI, hold a diploma from a Polytechnic Institute, or are graduates with degrees such as BA, B.Sc, B.Com, BCA, BBA, B.Pharm, etc. are eligible, sources said.

Partner Companies will have a dedicated dashboard on the portal where they can post internship opportunities, detailing location, nature, required qualifications, and any facilities provided.



Ceasefire with Pakistan along LoC in J-K has sustained

Chinar Corps GoC Lt Gen Rajiv Ghai

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

The ceasefire with Pakistan along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir has sustained and exceptions to any activity taken by the other side is brought to notice through various means, a top Army officer said on Thursday.

Speaking at a press conference, General Officer Commanding (GoC) of the Army's strategic Srinagar-based Chinar Corps, Lt Gen Rajiv Ghai, said when the ceasefire understanding with Pakistan came into effect at the beginning of the year 2021, the situation was tenuous on the northern borders with China.

"At that point in time, the two countries (India and Pakistan) felt that it was the most apt thing to do so that tensions could be kept under the threshold as far as the LoC (Line of Control) and the western borders are concerned," he said.

Lt Gen Ghai, who is relinquishing the command of Chinar Corps, said the ceasefire understanding has sustained. "There are certain tenets to

which both the sides follow. Every now and then, if any of the sides has any exception to any activity that may have been prosecuted by the other side, those are brought to notice through various means.

"There are hotlines on the LoC. The two DGMOs (director generals of military operations) have access to each other and these are routinely brought to each other's notice. But the ceasefire understanding has sustained and is still very much in force," he added.

To a question about infiltration attempts being made along the LoC, the GoC said the counter-infiltration grid of the security forces is strong.

He said the fence or Anti-Infiltration Obstacle System (AIOS) is technically enabled and numerous attempts of infiltrations have been rendered unsuccessful.

"This year, we saw that there were people at the launchpads and we had intelligence inputs that they will make attempts, but there were not many attempts this summer. What is the reason for that?

Savarkar used to eat meat, was not against cow slaughter

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao has claimed that Hindutva ideologue Vinayak Damodar Savarkar used to eat meat and was not against cow slaughter.

"Savarkar, a 'Chitpavan Brahmin', used to eat meat. He was a non-veg eater and he was not against cow slaughter. He was modern in a way," he said at an event here on Wednesday.

"Some say that he used to eat beef as well. As a Brahmin, he used to eat meat and was openly propagating eating meat. So he had that thinking," the Minister claimed.



Rao added that Mahatma Gandhi was a vegetarian and had a firm faith in Hinduism "but his actions were different.

Says Karnataka Minister Dinesh

'Unfortunate, condemnable': BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Thursday flayed the Congress over Karnataka Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao's controversial remarks about VD Savarkar, saying the revolutionary freedom fighter is insulted by the party whose leaders never faced imprisonment at cellular jail in Andaman-Nicobar Islands by the British.

"The party whose none of the leaders ever suffered 'kala pani ki saja' even for one day is insulting the person who was handed down double life imprisonment at cellular jail in Andaman-Nicobar Islands," BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh said. Rao's statement is "unfortunate, insulting and highly condemnable", he said.

He was a democratic person."

"(Founder of Pakistan Muhammad Ali) Jinnah was another extreme. He was a hardcore Islamist believer. He used to drink wine and it is said that he used to eat pork as well but he became a Muslim icon after the two-nation theory and politics. But Jinnah was not a fundamentalist but Savarkar was a fundamentalist," he said.

On Thursday, explaining the context in which he made the comments, the Minister said there was a discussion on Mahatma Gandhi's assassination in a book release event where he had a 'very healthy discussion'.

No going back..

Continued from page 1

"Should we pull down the farmhouses owned by Sabitha's three sons or not?" he said.

Accusing the BRS of stashing away Rs 1500 crore in party accounts, he demanded that Rs 500 crore should be distributed to the poor living along the Musi River.

The CM also expressed his readiness to engage with the public and the opposition for suggestions and alternatives and invited them to an all-party meeting to discuss the Musi Project. The government is working on providing houses and assistance of Rs 25,000 to those displaced along the river, ensuring that they can live with dignity.

He highlighted the availability of 1,000 acres in Jawahar Nagar to construct Indiramma houses for the displaced and those living in unhygienic conditions in the buffer zone along the Musi River. Aiming at opposition leaders, particularly BJP MP Eatala Rajender, he criticised his stance on the Musi Project while supporting the Sabarmati Riverfront Project. "Eatala is merely copying KTR and Harish Rao in his

speeches," he said, accusing the MP of switching parties but retaining the same "old habits."

He challenged Eatala to join him and the cabinet in seeking Rs 25,000 crore from Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the Musi River Development Project. "Let us all go to Modi and seek the Centre's help," he said.

The Chief Minister also condemned the BRS for allegedly hiring people to protest against the Musi Project. He said the protests are driven by personal interests and are aimed at protecting the illegally constructed buildings of BRS leaders, including KTR, Harish and Sabitha Indra Reddy.

The CM accused these leaders of exploiting the Musi Project issue while ignoring the plight of the poor. He also called for a city-wide survey of encroachments on lakes and ponds, noting that their disappearance has led to flooding, displacing lakhs of families.

He stressed the government aims to provide a better future for the city's residents by eliminating encroachments and ensuring fair compensation for the displaced.

Payment for..

Continued from page 1

the government aims to credit farmers' accounts within 48 hours. The CM, Revanth Reddy, along with Civil Supplies Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy, held a video conference on Thursday with Collectors and SPs from the Secretariat. Ministers Seethakka and Tummala Nageswara Rao participated in the conference from their districts. Chief Secretary Shanti Kumari, Civil Supplies MD DS Chauhan, Agriculture Secretary Raghunandan Rao and Education Secretary Burra Venkatesham also attended the meeting.

The Chief Minister said that around 7,000 paddy procurement centres have been set up for this Kharif. He asked Collectors to provide additional procurement centres wherever necessary. This season, paddy was cultivated in around 66.73 lakh acres, and the Agriculture Department expects a record yield of 140 lakh tons of paddy.

Revanth emphasized that the bonus for thin varieties is being offered for the first time and urged Collectors to ensure that no irregularities occur during procurement. Special arrangements, such as separate counters or dedicated procurement centres, should be provided for thin rice varieties. He warned that any negligence could lead to malpractices, stressing the need for vigilance and strict compliance with prescribed standards. The Chief Minister also asked officials to prevent the inflow of paddy from neighbouring states and to keep a close watch on all routes. He directed police officials to maintain tight surveillance at border checkpoints.

SC bans caste-based..

Continued from page 1

replicated within the prison.

"Rules that discriminate among individual prisoners on the basis of their caste specifically or indirectly by referring to proxies of caste identity are violative of Article 14 on account of invalid classification and subversion of substantive equality," it held.

For instance, rules assigning sweeping work which stipulate that 'sweepers shall be chosen from the 'Mehtar or Hari caste', also is part of discrimination, it said. Penning the 148-page judgment on a PIL of journalist Sukanya Shantha who had written an article on prevalent caste-based discriminations on prisons, the CJJ also ordered deletion of the 'caste' column and any references to caste of jailed under-trials or convicted prisoners' registers inside the prisons.

"The right to live with dignity extends even to the incarcerated. Not providing dignity to prisoners is a relic of the

colonizers and pre-colonial mechanisms, where oppressive systems were designed to dehumanize and degrade those under the control of the State. "Authoritarian regimes of the pre-constitutional era saw prisons not only as places of confinement but as tools of domination. This Court, focusing on the changed legal framework brought out by the Constitution, has recognized that even prisoners are entitled to the right to dignity," the verdict said.

Referring to fundamental rights on equality, life with dignity, abolition of untouchability and the right against slavery, it said in a post-constitutional society, the law must take affirmative steps to achieve equal protection of law to all its citizens. Observing that human dignity is a constitutional value and a constitutional goal, it referred to judgments and said, "Human dignity is intrinsic to and inseparable from human existence" and this also included "the right to protection against torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment".

CM launches TG's own ..

Continued from page 1

The cards can be used to get ration under the Public Distribution System (PDS) and avail of the health insurance scheme Arogyasri, fee reimbursement and other schemes. Information relating to 30 different departments will be available at the click of a button. Currently, families who do not have ration cards are unable to avail the benefits of welfare schemes, and Revanth Reddy assured that all poor families would be provided the cards. He said the digital cards would have the medical profile of families like treatment availed

and medicines used earlier. This will help doctors in treating the beneficiaries in case of emergencies. Revanth said that using these cards, the families who migrated to cities and towns from villages can get ration in areas where they are now staying. The pilot project is being implemented at two places in all the 119 constituencies. The authorities will address problems that can be faced during this phase. Women will be enrolled as the heads of families in these digital cards. In all Assembly constituencies, an official of the rank of Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO) will oversee the implementation of this pilot project.

Line clear for..

Continued from page 1

come under the semi-focal category. The government is expected to issue transfer orders shortly, with the first wave of transfers involving section officers.

These officers, numbering over 150, have not been transferred in over a decade. After that, ASOs and other cadre officers will be shifted to new posts. The GAD Services division has already collected details of employees who have worked in the same department for extended periods, and transfers will be based on this data. With transfer imminent, secretariat employees are speculating about which posts will be assigned to whom.

USCIRF report..

Continued from page 1

The USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan US federal government agency. It makes policy recommendations to the US President, Secretary of State, and Congress and tracks the implementation of these recommendations.

"This report highlights how, throughout 2024, individuals have been killed, beaten, and lynched by vigilante groups, religious leaders have been arbitrarily arrested, and homes and places of worship have been demolished," the USCIRF said. "These events constitute particularly severe violations of religious freedom," it said.

Beginning with the previous Manmohan Singh-led government, India has consistently denied visas to USCIRF members to visit the country, citing "interference" in its internal affairs, it added.

Bhatti's US, Japan..

Continued from page 1

and Caterpillar. The highlight was a virtual reality technology that enables mining operations from the outside in underground mines, ensuring both efficiency and safety. Bhatti urged SCCL CMD N. Balaram to procure high-productivity machinery and implement modern safety technology to make SCCL a hazard-free enterprise. Bhatti also visited the Hoover Hydropower Dam in the US.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

The caste contest

Haryana elections will be a tight contest. The BJP-JJP alliance breakup and Congress rebels have added uncertainty to it

As Haryana heads to the polls on October 5, 2024, the political landscape is marked by intense competition and shifting alliances. This election holds importance as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which had formed a government in 2019 with the support of Dushyant Chautala's Jannayak Janata Party (JJP), is now contesting alone. The breakup of the BJP-JJP alliance has left the BJP in a precarious position, governing as a minority until the upcoming elections. The ruling party, which is contesting without its former ally, the JJP, is focusing on its development agenda, highlighting its work on infrastructure, education and women's safety. However, the party faces challenges, especially in rural areas, where discontent over issues like agricultural reforms remains strong. The Congress is positioning itself as the main alternative to the BJP. Led by Bhupinder Singh Hooda, the party is banking on strong support in rural areas, especially among Jat voters and hopes to capitalise on dissatisfaction with the BJP government. Dushyant Chautala is attempting to redefine his party's narrative, distancing himself from the BJP's policies and advocating for farmer-friendly reforms.



Another unpredictable player is Aam Aadmi Party which is contesting in Haryana with renewed vigour. AAP is aiming to replicate its success in neighbouring Punjab. The party is focusing on issues such as healthcare, education and anti-corruption measures, appealing primarily to urban voters. A strong contender of yesteryears, Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) led by Abhay Singh Chautala has joined hands with Bahujan Samaj Party. But the agrarian sector remains a pivotal issue in Haryana, especially after the farmers' protests against the now-repealed agricultural laws. Farmers' resentment towards the government has not entirely subsided, and the opposition parties, particularly Congress and JJP, are using this to mobilise rural voters. Besides, Haryana has one of the highest unemployment rates in India. Both the BJP and Congress have promised to address the issue, with the BJP touting its industrial initiatives and the Congress proposing new employment schemes. But all said and done, it is the caste politics which decides who rules the State. The traditional Jat-non-Jat divide continues to shape Haryana's political landscape. The BJP, which has traditionally garnered support from non-Jat communities, faces the challenge of consolidating this base while the JJP and Congress focus on winning over Jat voters. Caste dynamics have always been a significant factor in Haryana's political landscape, deeply influencing voter behaviour and electoral outcomes. Jats, who make up approximately 25-30 per cent of Haryana's population, are the state's most politically influential caste group. The Congress, under Hooda, is attempting to bridge the gap between Jats and non-Jats by emphasising its rural-urban development plans but is plagued by rebels. The outcome of the elections will be favourable to the party which manages the complex caste matrix of the state well.

protests against the now-repealed agricultural laws. Farmers' resentment towards the government has not entirely subsided, and the opposition parties, particularly Congress and JJP, are using this to mobilise rural voters. Besides, Haryana has one of the highest unemployment rates in India. Both the BJP and Congress have promised to address the issue, with the BJP touting its industrial initiatives and the Congress proposing new employment schemes. But all said and done, it is the caste politics which decides who rules the State. The traditional Jat-non-Jat divide continues to shape Haryana's political landscape. The BJP, which has traditionally garnered support from non-Jat communities, faces the challenge of consolidating this base while the JJP and Congress focus on winning over Jat voters. Caste dynamics have always been a significant factor in Haryana's political landscape, deeply influencing voter behaviour and electoral outcomes. Jats, who make up approximately 25-30 per cent of Haryana's population, are the state's most politically influential caste group. The Congress, under Hooda, is attempting to bridge the gap between Jats and non-Jats by emphasising its rural-urban development plans but is plagued by rebels. The outcome of the elections will be favourable to the party which manages the complex caste matrix of the state well.

PICTALK



A man makes red handprints on a wall as part of a tradition on the first day of the 'Navratri' festival, in Ahmedabad PTI

Online gaming industry needs regulation and govt support

A balanced, collaborative approach between the government and the online gaming industry is essential for responsible and sustainable growth

The online gaming industry in India is experiencing rapid growth but is often misinterpreted as being synonymous with gambling. This misconception fuels concerns about problem gambling and social harm, leading to a negative narrative surrounding the sector. In reality, much of the harm stems from illegal offshore betting and gambling platforms, which further exacerbate this misrepresentation. Every industry influences society in various ways, and it is the responsibility of regulatory frameworks to strike a balance—supporting legitimate enterprises while effectively curbing illegal activities. Conflating online gaming with gambling risks undermining an industry that is growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 15.68 per cent on a base of USD 3.49 billion. This sector contributes significantly to job creation and tax revenues in India. With 83 per cent of the world's gamers, India boasts 568 million users and registered over 9.5 billion gaming app downloads in 2023. Real Money Games



alone contributed 60 per cent of their revenues to the Indian exchequer in FY 2023-24. Misunderstanding the online gaming industry as gambling could jeopardize its potential for economic growth and its contributions to national development. Regulators must prioritise cracking down on offshore and illegal businesses and apps that operate in violation of Indian law. Measures such as whitelisting legitimate platforms, and initiating legal actions against those facilitating illegal activities are crucial. Steps like freezing the bank accounts of operators and intermediaries, and working with financial institutions to block transactions tied to illegal gambling, are urgently needed. Practical enforcement challenges cannot be an excuse for inaction, as the

risks are significant. A coordinated effort involving the Ministry of Finance, Information Technology, Home Affairs, and Consumer Affairs is essential, with each department playing a critical role in enforcement and raising public awareness about the legal implications of supporting illegal operations. Without robust enforcement and heightened awareness, illegal gambling platforms will not only make Indian citizens vulnerable to gambling addiction but also siphon their hard-earned money into criminal networks. The profits from illegal gambling often fund organised crime, money laundering, and terrorism, with global examples linking gambling profits to drug trafficking and terrorist financing. This not only destabilises local economies but poses a serious threat to national security. As the government takes strict action against illegal gambling, it must also work closely with the legitimate gaming industry to differentiate between legal online gaming and illegal gambling. Such a partnership would not only help clear the negative perceptions but also sup-

port the industry's growth. This collaboration could further enhance the crackdown on illegal gambling through combined awareness campaigns and enforcement efforts. Finally, the government and the gaming industry must work together to develop a responsible gaming framework. This should include self-exclusion tools, age verification systems, game time monitoring, and partnerships with mental health experts. By promoting responsible gaming, the industry can ensure ethical practices, protect consumers from addiction, and foster a sustainable, well-regulated gaming ecosystem in India. A balanced approach that differentiates legitimate online gaming from illegal gambling, alongside stronger enforcement measures, is vital for the sustainable growth of online gaming industry. With govt and industry collaboration, responsible gaming practices can be promoted, ensuring the sector's positive contributions to economic growth and job creation.

(The writer is a partner at AP & Partners; views are personal)



ARJUN SINHA

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

FLOODS HITS BIHAR Madam—The rain in Nepal is wreaking havoc in Bihar. While 170 people have died in Nepal due to continuous heavy rains, floods and landslides, the terrible form of flooding is being seen in Bihar. In view of the flood, all 56 gates of Birpur Vairaj of the Kosi River and all 36 gates of Balmiki Nagar Vairaj of the Gandak River have been opened. This is not a disaster. It is a tragedy that

is repeated every year. Bihar floods are writing the story of new misery and devastation every year; it is a serious humanitarian crisis. But no permanent solution has been found so far. How long will people continue to bear this pain? People are losing their homes, land, and loved ones. How many more lives will be lost, and how many more dreams will be shattered? However, Bihar CM Nitish Kumar said that full attention is being paid to the flood at every level. All kinds of relief and rescue operations are being arranged. To stop this, the government should make immediate arrangements on a war footing. For which a permanent solution is needed so that this disaster is not faced in the future.

Anshu Bharti | Begusarai

KARNATAKA LAND SCANDAL Madam—Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife, BM Parvathi, said she would return the 14 plots she received in exchange for her undeveloped land.

BJP strives hard to imbibe 'integral humanism'

As the BJP marks Deendayal Upadhyaya's 108th birth anniversary, it faces the challenge of aligning his "Integral Humanism" ideals with modern governance



K S TOMAR

On the occasion of the 108th birth anniversary of Deendayal Upadhyaya, a founding figure of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh and the proponent of "Integral Humanism," the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) finds itself reflecting on how closely it has adhered to his visionary ideals. Upadhyaya's philosophy focused on a holistic approach to human well-being, emphasising decentralisation, indigenous culture, self-reliance, and ethical governance. Though the BJP has embraced these principles rhetorically, transforming them into practical realities remains a formidable challenge.

Economic Ideals vs Modern Policies: Deendayal Upadhyaya's vision of economic self-reliance and decentralisation stands in contrast to India's current globalised and capital-driven economic policies, particularly those introduced since the liberalisation reforms of the 1990s. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the BJP has focused on economic growth through increased foreign direct investment (FDI), free-market reforms, and privatisation. Critics argue that this approach clashes with Upadhyaya's idea of a self-reliant economy, which emphasises supporting rural and local industries, creating jobs at the grassroots level, and minimising dependence on foreign capital.

Balancing Indigenous Culture and Globalisation: Deendayal Upadhyaya advocated for the preservation and promotion of India's indigenous culture, even as the nation embraced modern advancements. Striking this balance has been a delicate task for the BJP. On one hand, the party emphasises cultural pride, nationalism, and traditional values, promoting initiatives like Ayurveda and yoga on the global stage. On the other hand, India's integration into the global economy, alongside the rise of modern lifestyle trends and technology, risks diluting the deeper cultural roots Upadhyaya sought to preserve. The BJP has been critiqued for veering toward an exclusionary

cultural nationalism, which may diverge from Upadhyaya's more inclusive vision.

Ethical Governance vs Corruption: A key tenet of Upadhyaya's philosophy was the need for ethical governance, marked by integrity, honesty, and service to the people. While BJP leaders, including Modi, have presented themselves as champions of clean governance, the party has faced allegations of corruption, crony capitalism, and favouritism toward large corporations. Such accusations, particularly regarding land acquisition policies and privatisation, have cast doubt on the party's commitment to Upadhyaya's ethical standards. **Inclusive Society vs Polarisation** Upadhyaya's vision of an inclusive society focused on addressing the needs of all communities, ensuring harmony across social and religious divides. However, the BJP has often been criticised for promoting divisive politics, particularly along religious lines. Reconciling Hinduva-driven politics with the ideals of inclusion and social harmony remains a central challenge for the BJP as it seeks to bridge the gap between rhetoric and reality.

Antyodaya - Uplifting the Last Person: One of



Upadhyaya's most important principles, Antyodaya, focuses on uplifting the most marginalised in society. The BJP has made significant strides in this area through its welfare schemes such as the PM Ujjwala Yojana (providing LPG to rural households), the PM Awas Yojana (affordable housing), and the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (improving sanitation). The BJP has adopted this principle through various campaigns, such as the global celebration of Yoga Day, the promotion of Indian languages, and the reassertion of India's historical achievements. **Political Decentralisation** A core aspect of Upadhyaya's philosophy was decentralising power, ensuring governance was closer to the people. The BJP's emphasis on cooperative federalism and policies such as GST and the creation of NITI Aayog are steps in this direction. Moreover, the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system and the Jan Dhan Yojana have empowered citizens by reducing middlemen and ensuring that subsidies and welfare benefits reach the people directly. Self-Reliance through Atmanirbhar Bharat; The Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) initiative, launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, resonates with Upadhyaya's emphasis on self-

reliance. The promotion of local manufacturing, domestic industries, and efforts to reduce dependence on foreign goods align with his philosophy. The "Make in India" initiative, a key aspect of this vision, has made strides in boosting domestic production and job creation. However, the globalised nature of modern economics makes it challenging to fully realize a self-reliant economy. **Striving toward Upadhyaya's Vision:** As the ruling party, the BJP's journey in adopting and implementing Deendayal Upadhyaya's ideals has been a mixture of successes and challenges. While considerable progress has been made in promoting nationalism, self-reliance, and Antyodaya, the party faces significant hurdles in achieving true economic decentralisation, upholding ethical governance, and fostering social harmony. The complexities of modern governance, global economic integration, and political strategies often pull the BJP away from Upadhyaya's pure vision. However, the ideals of Integral Humanism remain a guiding light, challenging the party to strike a balance between philosophical ideals and contemporary realities in their pursuit of a better India. (Writer is a political analyst and strategic affairs columnist based in Shimla; views are personal)



UNDER PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI, THE BJP HAS FOCUSED ON ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH INCREASED FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT (FDI), FREE-MARKET REFORMS, AND PRIVATISATION. THIS APPROACH CLASHES WITH UPADHYAYA'S IDEA OF A SELF-RELIANT ECONOMY

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DECLINE OF GANDHIAN IDEALS

Madam—Since the Mahatma was an epitome of confidence and possessed an international mindset, he didn't treat the hymns of the Scottish gem "Abide with me" as threat enough to get blown off his feet! Rather, he allowed the window of his mind to let in the breeze of all possible cultures around the globe, including the evergreen Henry Francis Lyte classic. It is indeed a matter of utmost disgrace to notice the closure of minds in the country of Mahatma Gandhi—the epitome of liberal values and humanitarian thoughts with an all-embracing mindset.

Not to forget Gandhi's cardinal call: "Recall the face of the weakest man whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything from it? Will it restore him to control over his own life and destiny? Will it lead to 'swaraj' for the hungry and spiritually starving millions?" Do the faces of any weak man get recalled today amidst the zealous trumpet of India being 'Viswaguru' (fast marching towards the status of "world's third largest economy") being beaten like a maniac! When none other than the Gandhians find themselves cornered and marginalised in the very state and den of Mahatma Gandhi himself (Sabarmati Ashram, Gujarat), rest assured about the fate of his values, ethics and humanitarian thoughts in the rest of the country!

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

FLOODS HITS BIHAR

Madam—The rain in Nepal is wreaking havoc in Bihar. While 170 people have died in Nepal due to continuous heavy rains, floods and landslides, the terrible form of flooding is being seen in Bihar. In view of the flood, all 56 gates of Birpur Vairaj of the Kosi River and all 36 gates of Balmiki Nagar Vairaj of the Gandak River have been opened. This is not a disaster. It is a tragedy that

India's triumph in Kanpur



Team India creates Test history on October 1. Kudos to Team India for defeating Bangladesh by 7 wickets on the fifth day of Kanpur Test and winning the Test series by

2-0. Team India has set a record of never losing to Bangladesh so far and has created a record on home ground by achieving a thrilling victory in the 18th series. With this extremely brilliant and powerful performance of Team India, India has reached the top position in the ICC World Test Championship table (WTC).

Yashasvi Jaiswal scored his second half-century with great skill and scored 51 runs to win the title of 'Player of the Match'. Bangladesh's so-called opening batsman Shadman Islam and former captain Mushfiqur Rahim were forced to kneel in front of Indian bowlers. India's next match with Bangladesh will be in the 3 T20 match series from October 6. It is hoped that Team India will be successful in maintaining its magical status.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

is repeated every year. Bihar floods are writing the story of new misery and devastation every year; it is a serious humanitarian crisis. But no permanent solution has been found so far. How long will people continue to bear this pain? People are losing their homes, land, and loved ones. How many more lives will be lost, and how many more dreams will be shattered? However, Bihar CM Nitish Kumar said that full attention is being paid to the flood at every level. All kinds of relief and rescue operations are being arranged. To stop this, the government should make immediate arrangements on a war footing. For which a permanent solution is needed so that this disaster is not faced in the future.

Anshu Bharti | Begusarai

KARNATAKA LAND SCANDAL

Madam—Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife, BM Parvathi, said she would return the 14 plots she received in exchange for her undeveloped land.

However, the return policy, seen as Siddaramaiah flipping, might actually be counter-productive. The Muda case pertains to allegations that compensatory sites were allotted to BM Parvathi in an upmarket area in Mysuru that had a higher property value as compared to the location of her land that had been "acquired" by the authority. Siddaramaiah, BM Parvathi, Mallikarjuna Swamy, and one Devaraju were named in an FIR registered by the Mysuru-based Lokayukta police on September 27. This came after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) initiated a probe against her, Siddaramaiah, and her brother, Mallikarjuna Swamy, in what has now become popular as the Muda scam. Parvathi, the wife of Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, has returned 14 plots of land to Muda. Thus, Siddaramaiah shot himself in the foot for gaining more wealth using power politics.

CK Subramania | Bengaluru

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

REBALANCING THE GLOBAL ORDER

The escalating missile strikes between Israel and Iran threaten regional stability in West Asia



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The escalating situation in India's extended neighbourhood is threatening internal security for the region. The recent elimination of several top Hezbollah commanders, especially the killing of its top leader Hassan Nasrallah, by Israel, and Iranian missiles raining on Israeli territory is likely to widen the crisis in West Asia. PM Modi realised the sensitivity of the situation and immediately made a phone call to their Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu. Indian PM's message to Israel was "the crucial need for preventing regional escalation and the safe release of all hostages, terrorism has no place in any form and manifestation and India stands ready to support early restoration of peace and stability." Last month on the sidelines of the Summit of Future in New York, the PM met the President of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas. A press statement released after the meeting read "The Prime Minister reiterated India's time-tested principled position on the Israel-Palestine issue, and called for ceasefire, release of hostages and return to the path of dialogue and diplomacy. He stressed that only a two State solution will deliver enduring peace and stability in the region. Recalling that India was one of the first countries to recognise Palestine, he conveyed India's continued support to Palestine membership of the UN." Even as the Indian PM was holding bilateral with several global leaders in the US, the newly appointed head of the interim government of Bangladesh Muhammad Yunus was getting a much-needed pat on his back from Western leaders. Yunus during his US trip met the US President Joe Biden, former President Bill Clinton, US Secretary of State, Canadian PM, President of the European Union, heads of the World



Bank and ADB. He topped it up by having an unusually warm meeting with Pakistan's PM, where he expressed the desire to deepen their bilateral ties and revive the regional body SAARC. For India, these ties could potentially lead Pakistan and China to use this newfound bonhomie with Bangladesh to push its subversive agenda against India. Almost on cue External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in his remarks at the Asia Society Policy Institute in New York spoke on rebalancing the global order. He said "Rebalancing a global order which started with 51 founding members of the United Nations, which has quadrupled in the last eight decades, where you not only have more independent countries in the world, but the economic, political and even demographic weight of individual members of the global order has shifted, shifted to a point where many of us believe that today we are actually at an inflection."

The minister carefully brought multipolarity and plurilateralism in same address while trying to define the evolving global order. He said "Today, we are looking really at a global landscape which is much more regional, which is, as I said, much more characterised by countries who have their strong interests and which have the ability to pursue that interest. And so a lot of what we see in terms of the world is really how does the politics of convergence of the world is really how does the politics of convergence play out. And a third word which would occur to me is 'plurilateralism'. It's a very ugly word, but it in a sense describes a world beyond bilateral relations but which are short of multilateral. That where countries form combinations based on these convergences and overlaps that I've talked about. And you have really this phenomenon of groups of countries coming together for often a limited agenda, sometimes in an agreed theatre to pursue their interests." The recent global events and India's measured stance on several of these reflect what the EAM spoke about in New York, and a rebalance is underway. (The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

How global powers exploit democratic ideals



V K BAHUGUNA

From the overthrow of governments to the double standards in addressing terrorism, democracy has been reduced to a fashionable tool of manipulation by global superpowers



One of the remarkable characteristics of the modern era is reflected in the progress of democracy, and the rise of nation-states. The modern era in the real sense started after the end of the Second World War with the establishment of the United Nations (UN) on October 25, 1945 at the end of the San Francisco conference which was attended by 50 countries and the UN Charter was adopted. The United Nations is the global diplomatic and political platform for ensuring international peace, progress and security. The democratic form of governance, freedom, equality and dignity of humanity is the cornerstone of the modern era. In this regard, world leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King played a very vital role in ending colonial rule in Asia, Africa and other such countries.

Since then world leaders swear by the power of the masses in democracy and the rule of the elected leaders. The UN Security Council assumes the role of overseeing the peace and security of the world, especially the five Veto yielding countries China, Britain, France, Russia and the United States yield enormous clout in the Security Council. However, the Veto power in practice and particularly is used by these powers for thwarting any issue if one of them does not like it due to their geo-political interests and international alliance.

More than 80 years after the establishment of the UN, the world is still in the grip of intense conflicts and the noble objectives of the UN for ensuring world peace and security are lost in the realpolitik of big powers which smacks of hypocrisy and inherent bias. There are several examples of the derailing of the true democratic edifice of the world's governments, especially in third-world countries by the United States and Western powers. A recent example is dethroning of Sheikh Hasina Wazed's government in Bangladesh a classical example of hypocrisy by America and its allies.

Similarly, in dealing with terrorism the white race has double standards. I can kill



MORE THAN 80 YEARS AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UN, THE WORLD IS STILL IN THE GRIP OF INTENSE CONFLICTS AND THE NOBLE OBJECTIVES OF THE UN FOR ENSURING WORLD PEACE AND SECURITY ARE LOST IN THE REALPOLITIK OF BIG POWERS WHICH SMACKS OF HYPOCRISY AND INHERENT BIAS

my terrorist anywhere in the world like America did to Osama Bin Laden and Khalistani terrorists and protagonists are provided with a platform to bash up India recently when the American President and Bill Clinton former President hosted and hailed Muhammad Yunus as a saviour of democracy and human rights a few weeks ago with the promise of full support. Mr Yunus heads the puppet interim Government of Bangladesh as Chief Advisor. The world is asking America the lone super power is it permissible to oust a government by engineering well-orchestrated violent agitation. When the Indian Prime Minister was in the USA last month the Khalistani leaders were hosted by the white house. Every such thing is done in the name of democracy.

If this is allowed at the international level then any government can be ousted by the frustrated opposition in league with foreign powers. Is it, not neo-colonialism being practised under the nose of the United Nations itself? Though the Hasina government might have committed some blunders after all, it was an elected government and the world should not support such illegal seizure of power by students origin well-planned violent agitations. United States, China and the Western block have been supporting such regimes routinely in African countries and Pakistan and Bangladesh for the past several decades.

The anger against such hypocrisy of world leaders is growing and if the modern era has to survive the third world war which in any case is undergoing a different pattern in Europe and the West Asia, the people have to junk this system of the United Nations which is becoming a talking machine, a burden on resources and sub-serving the

geo-political undemocratic stance of powerful countries making a mockery of the lofty UN Charter. The democracy Western leaders in UN practice can aptly be termed as 'Fashionable Democracy'. This fashionable democracy is a tool to perpetuate and support all kind of undemocratic regimes that comes to power in the name of democracy, human rights and liberty. These lofty goals are being pooh-poohed by the powerful countries. There are talks about deep states interfering in the affairs of the countries to upset the ruling regimes that do not fall in line. In this regard, the non-state actors play a significant role though the national governments may not be promoting it directly but in the name of democracy, many outsiders do influence the government.

The Indo-US relations built steadily after the end of the cold war during the last 25 years are a shining example of two democratic governments ensuring a global alliance of strategic importance to thwart the attempts of Chinese ambitions to browbeat other countries in the Asia-Pacific region. But the Cold War psychology of the white house is still promoting countries inimical to democratic values in the Indian sub-continent especially Pakistan which is ruled by the Army with a proxy government.

This may derail the India-USA strategic relationship. Even Sheikh Hasina opined that her government was toppled after she refused to part with San Martin Island to the United States. China instead of supporting India, with which it has cultural affinity as well as trade interests, supports and aids Pakistan and has been fomenting trouble in the North-East and Ladakh for a long time with its expansionist vision and is a poten-

tial threat to world peace. Thus, it is a clear indication that the geopolitics of the world needs a serious rethink. If one analysis the sequence of events over the past 80 years or so the main reason for such behaviour of powerful countries is due to the patently undemocratic nature of assigning the Veto power to winners of the Second World War.

As for democracy, I would appropriately call it fashionable democracy to fool the people around the world in the name of democracy and liberty and this disease is also spreading in most of the countries all over the world including India where democracy has given way to Dynastic Democracy. The state of present day democracies was aptly forecasted by Socrates the ancient Greek Philosopher who said more than 2000 years ago that 'Democracies would elect Demagogues'. India is a glaring example of such leaders in states who pander to this and skilfully use democracies to perpetuate their family interests in power games and practising vote bank politics.

The Father of Athenian democracy was Cleisthenes who lived from 570 BC to 508 BC and who as Chief Magistrate successfully imposed democracy in the Athens assembly against the nobles hence is appropriately called as Father of World Democracy must be weeping in his grave seeing how democracy is being run by the world leaders and thus people of the modern era in the 21st Century. Is it, not food for thought for all of us who believe in true democracy because there is no alternative to true democracy like the ancient Indian panchayats system? At least India should reform from within and then lead the rest of the world. (The writer is a former civil servant; views are personal)

One Nation, One Ration: Revolutionising food security with 24/7 grain ATMs

These grain ATMs are a major step in India's fight against hunger. Biometric authentication and Aadhaar-linked portability ensures streamlined distribution

Since June 1, 2020, under the Modi administration, the 'One Nation, One Ration Card' system has been implemented across India, marking the beginning of a revolutionary scheme. Its purpose is to provide food grains to the poor, particularly those who migrate from one state to another, through a single ration card.

Initially, the system was launched in two clusters comprising four states (Andhra Pradesh-Telangana and Maharashtra-Gujarat). Even then, work was underway on inter-state ration card portability in other states. The government claimed that the common people would benefit most from this scheme.



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

Previously, ration cards were issued by the government to provide food grains and other rations to the poor at subsidised rates. However, when workers moved to another state, they often lost access to these benefits, particularly in more developed states like Gujarat. With this new system, that issue is resolved, adding another significant chapter to this revolutionary initiative.

Union Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution, Nimuben Bambhaniya, recently inaugurated Gujarat's first grain ATM in Bhavnagar, facilitating 24/7 ration distribution under the Central Government's Public Distribution System (PDS). The grain ATM, called Annapoorti, was installed in the Karchaliapara area of Bhavnagar city to free the poor from India's outdated, bureaucratic ration distribution system. According to Minister Bambhaniya, the grain ATM represents a global success story. She expressed pride in the Annapoorti scheme, a globally awarded solution developed in India, which is set to be operational in multiple states. Based on a year-long pilot program, the Annapoorti technology, developed by WFP India, is an important step toward improving food security and ensuring that people receive their rations efficiently and accurately. The new system allows people to obtain their ration from any PDS shop, reducing dependence on shop owners and minimising corruption.

After the 'One Nation, One Ration Card' system, the biggest beneficiaries of grain ATMs will be migrant laborers and disadvantaged communities who live outside their home states for extended periods or are unable to reach grain shops. For



instance, if someone from Bihar or Uttar Pradesh trav-

els to Delhi or Mumbai for work, they will be able to easily access ration from PDS shops or ATMs in those cities. The 2011 census reported that about 4.1 crore people had migrated to other states for work. The Aadhaar numbers of family members on over 85 per cent of the country's ration cards are registered, enabling them to use the ATM system. India runs one of the world's largest food-based safety nets, providing subsidised grains to around 813 million people every month through a network of over 500,000 fair price shops (FPS). This initiative is key to the partnership with the United Nations World Food Programme to enhance food

security. ATMs will be installed across the state, offering 24/7 access to food grains under the National Food Security Act. The Annapurna Yojana allows anyone with a valid PDS ration card, regardless of their state or union territory, to access their entitlements. The ATM can deliver up to 50 kg of grain in just five minutes, reducing waiting time by 70 percent. Once biometric authentication with an Aadhaar card is complete, users will have continuous access to their entire ration. The modular design of the ATM allows for easy assembly based on the available space. Additionally, Annapoorti is energy-efficient and can be connected to solar panels for automa-

tic refilling. The grain ATM is designed to distribute wheat and rice and includes a tank with a capacity to hold 2,500 kg of grains, according to an official release. Officials explained that individuals covered under the National Food Security Act can visit the grain ATM at any time, punch in their ration card, authenticate their identity using the fingerprint scanner, and collect their monthly ration. However, there is speculation that the grain ATM in Bhavnagar could also be used to attract migrant voters in the upcoming assembly elections. (The writer is a senior journalist; views expressed are personal)

IN BRIEF



Hyundai Motor India may launch its Rs 25,000-cr IPO

Hyundai Motor India Ltd, the Indian arm of South Korean automaker Hyundai, is expected to launch its much-awaited Rs 25,000-crore initial share-sale for public subscription on October 14, people familiar with the development said on Thursday. This would be the largest initial public offering (IPO) in India after LIC's initial share sale of Rs 21,000 crore. According to the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) filed in June, Hyundai Motor India's proposed IPO is entirely an Offer-for-Sale (OFS) of 142,194,700 equity shares by promoter Hyundai Motor Company, with no fresh issue component. Sources had previously stated that the South Korean automaker is looking to raise at least USD 3 billion (about Rs 25,000 crore) through an initial share sale. This development marks a significant milestone for the Indian industry, as it is the first automaker's initial share sale in over two decades, following Japanese automaker Maruti Suzuki's listing in 2003.



BoB to sell Oman operation to Bank Dhofar

State-owned Bank of Baroda (BoB) on Thursday said it proposes to sell its Oman operation to Bank Dhofar as part of rationalisation of foreign operation. The bank has accorded approval for accepting the offer for acquisition of the banking business of Bank's Oman territory operations by Bank Dhofar on a going concern basis. BoB said in a regulatory filing. This is subject to approval from concerned regulatory authorities. The total business of BoB operation in the country was 113.35 million Omani Rial while the net worth stood at 25.54 million Omani Rial. The bank has been rationalising its foreign operations based on a comprehensive evaluation framework. The wholesale branch in China was closed during 2020-21, and the entire stake in the wholly-owned overseas subsidiary at Trinidad and Tobago was divested by way of sale to Ansa Merchant Bank Ltd.



Goyal meets biz leaders in US to seek investments

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has held a series of meetings with US business leaders in New York to seek investments in India. He met Chief Operating Officer of BlackRock Robert Goldstein, Chairman and CEO of Systems Technology Group Anup Popat, CEO of Tillman Holdings Sanjiv Ahuja, chief executive officer of C4V Shaillesh Upreti, and Janus Henderson Investors CEO Ali Dibadj. During the meetings, Goyal discussed opportunities for collaboration to position India as a global manufacturing hub and invited the investors to increase their commercial and trade footprints in India, the commerce ministry said. In another meeting, the minister emphasised the government's commitment to improving ease of doing business, infrastructure development, IPR (intellectual property rights) reforms, and prioritising manufacturing sectors through appropriate incentive schemes.

CROSS-BORDER ELECTRICITY TRADE

India, Nepal Bangladesh sign tripartite agreement

PNS ■ KATHMANDU

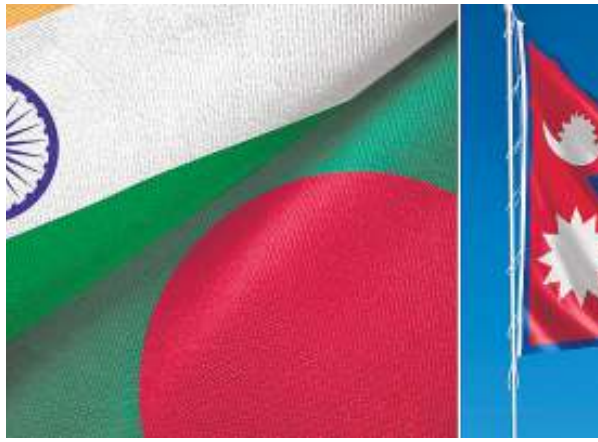
Nepal, India and Bangladesh on Thursday signed a long-awaited tripartite agreement to facilitate cross-border electricity trade, officials here said.

As per the agreement, Nepal will export its surplus electricity to Bangladesh via India annually during the rainy season, from June 15 to November 15. Nepal will use India's transmission line to distribute electricity through its territory to Bangladesh.

In the first phase, Nepal will export 40 MW of hydroelectricity to Bangladesh via Indian territory.

The rate per unit of electricity has been fixed at 6.4 cents. From the export of electricity, Nepal will make an annual income of around USD 9.2 million, Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) officials said.

The agreement was originally scheduled for July 28, which was postponed due to political turmoil and a change of government in Bangladesh.



Muzaffarpur.

On December 6, 2023, Bangladesh's Cabinet Economic Affairs Committee approved to import 40 megawatts of electricity from Nepal.

The agreement was originally scheduled for July 28, which was postponed due to political turmoil and a change of government in Bangladesh.

According to sources at the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, meetings at the energy secretary and joint-secretary levels were held in Kathmandu on Tuesday and Wednesday to prepare for the agreement.

The MoU was signed in Kathmandu between NEA Executive Director Kulman Ghising, NTPC Vidyut Byapar

As per the agreement, Nepal will export its surplus electricity to Bangladesh via India annually during the rainy season, from June 15 to November 15. Nepal will use India's transmission line to distribute electricity through its territory to Bangladesh

Nigam CEO Deino Naran, and Bangladesh Power Development Board Chairman Mohamad Rizwan Karim, Nepal's Ministry of Energy officials said.

Nepal's Energy Minister Dipak Khadka and his Bangladesh counterpart Sayeda Rijwana Hasan were also present on the occasion, the officials said.



Google, CleanMax to add clean energy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Tech giant Google and Brookfield-backed company Clean Max Enviro Energy Solutions (CleanMax) have collaborated to develop 125.4GW renewable energy capacity.

Under this agreement, CleanMax will develop a 125.4 MW hybrid project, consisting of 66 MW solar generation capacity in Rajasthan and 59.4 MW of wind generation capacity in Karnataka, a statement said. "This collaboration with Google not only sets a new standard for environmental leadership but also illustrates our shared commitment to making a real difference in the fight against climate change," Kuldeep Jain, Managing Director of CleanMax said.

According to the statement, these projects will be connected to the national grid of India and will support the decarbonisation

of Google's cloud services and offices across India, aligning with Google's goal to run on 24/7 carbon-free energy on every grid where it operates by 2030.

"We believe in the power of meaningful strategic collaborations to drive true impact and transition to resilient low-carbon systems to continue operating our businesses sustainably," Giorgio Fortunato, Head of Clean Energy & Power for Asia Pacific at Google said.

These projects are expected to start commercial operations from Q4 2025 and will generate an estimated 350,000 million kWh of carbon free energy annually, reducing CO2 emissions by approximately 250,000 tons each year.

This is equivalent to planting 14.7 million trees annually, and underscores the project's vital impact on mitigating climate change, it stated.

Morgan Stanley, Citigroup buy HDFC Bank shares worth Rs 755 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Morgan Stanley and Citigroup on Thursday bought shares of private sector lender HDFC Bank for over Rs 755 crore through open market transactions.

According to the block deal data available on the BSE, New York-headquartered financial services companies Morgan Stanley and Citigroup through their affiliates purchased 43.75 lakh shares of the Mumbai-based bank.

The shares were picked up at an average price of Rs 1,726.2 apiece, taking the combined transaction value to Rs 755.29 crore.

These shares were sold by BNP Paribas' arm BNP Paribas Financial Markets through two separate block deals at the same price on the BSE.

Corporate India likely to offer 9.5 pc salary hike: Survey

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Salaries in India are projected to increase by 9.5 per cent in calendar year 2025, mainly driven by a positive business outlook across several sectors, a survey said on Thursday.

According to global professional services firm Aon plc's '30th Annual Salary Increase and Turnover Survey 2024 and 2025', overall salaries are projected to increase by an average of 9.5 per cent in 2025, compared to an increase of 9.3 per cent in 2024.

Engineering and manufacturing and retail industries are likely to see double-digit salary increases at 10 per cent, followed by financial institutions at 9.9 per cent, indicating the strategic importance employers place on talent in

the current economic landscape.

Although the year started on a cautious note for the technology sector, global capability centres and technology products and platforms expect a more optimistic salary increase at 9.9 per cent and 9.3 per cent, respectively, while the technology consulting and services projected increments at a lower end of 8.1 per cent, it added.

"Despite evolving global economic challenges, our study indicates a positive business outlook across several sectors in India. This sentiment continues in many of the domestically-driven sectors illustrated by the projected increments in the manufacturing, life sciences and retail industries," Aon partner and head of reward solutions in India Roopank Chaudhary said.

Jamaica looks to replicate India's UPI success

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Jamaica is looking to replicate India's success in digital payments, leveraging technological advances New Delhi has made in digital payments, the Caribbean island nation's Prime Minister Andrew Holness said on Thursday.

On his first visit to India, Holness held a roundtable discussion with Digital India Foundation (DIF) officials and policy makers to understand the architecture needed.

"Jamaica has established as part of its development goals to become a digital society and we have already established our national identification system which is similar to your Aadhaar system here," Holness said.

He said his country is "trying to develop strong partnerships with Indian technology particularly the public infrastructure and the unified payment interface (UPI)."



The roundtable was to discuss how India's digital public infrastructure and UPI infrastructure could assist Jamaica to make it a digital economy, he said.

During the visit, an agreement for cooperation in digital public infrastructure and linking online payment system was also signed.

"We are hoping we will be able to do it very quickly but it's a process the building of the partnership is the first phase," he said.

Talking about his visit,

Holness said India is an amazing country diverse but unified and very innovative.

"I think India is doing an amazing job and Jamaica wants to make a partner with India in these areas," he said.

Calling India the pharmacy of the world, he said Jamaica was looking for increased collaboration in healthcare, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, security and defence and technology.

Another agreement signed was for joining the Global Biofuels Alliance.

Sensex plunges 1,769 pts to 3-week low Investors lose Rs 9.78 lakh cr in single day

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark BSE Sensex tanked 1,769 points to slide to a three-week low on Thursday as a spiralling conflict in West Asia triggered selling in oil, banking and auto shares, wiping out Rs 9.78 lakh crore investor money in a single day.

Falling for the fourth day running, the BSE Sensex tumbled 1,769.19 points or 2.10 per cent to settle at 82,497.10, its lowest closing level since September 11.

During the day, it plummeted 1,832.27 points or 2.17 per cent to 82,434.02. As many as 29 Sensex scrips closed in the red while only one stock ended in the green.

Market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies dropped



by around Rs 9.78 lakh crore to Rs 4,65,07,685.08 crore (USD 5.54 trillion).

The NSE Nifty slumped 546.80 points or 2.12 per cent to 25,250.10 with 48 of its constituents ending lower.

Continuous foreign fund outflows and rising crude oil prices dented investors' sentiment, analysts said.

From the 30 Sensex firms, Larsen & Toubro, Reliance

Industries, Axis Bank, Asian Paints, Tata Motors, Bajaj Finance, Maruti, Bajaj Finserv, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Titan, Adani Ports and HDFC Bank were the major laggards.

JSW Steel emerged as the only gainer. "The domestic market took a sharp downturn following Iran's launch of ballistic missiles at Israel, sparking fears of retaliation and escalation in

the war," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said.

"New SEBI regulations for the F&O segment have raised concerns about reduced trading volumes in the broader market. Lastly, with attractive valuations in China, FIIs have redirected their funds, adding pressure on Indian stocks," Nair added.

The BSE midcap gauge tumbled 2.27 per cent and smallcap index dropped 1.84 per cent.

All indices ended lower. Realty tanked 4.49 per cent, while capital goods (3.18 per cent), auto (2.94 per cent), services (2.87 per cent), industrials (2.75 per cent) and oil & gas (2.52 per cent) were among the major losers.

Gold, silver rebound on strong festive demand

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold and Silver prices rebounded on Thursday due to fresh demand from stockists and retail consumers for the ongoing festival.

The precious metal rose Rs 200 to revisit the all-time high level of Rs 78,300 per 10 grams, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

It had closed at Rs 78,100 per 10 grams on Tuesday. Silver also jumped by Rs 665 to Rs 93,165 per kg from Rs 92,500 per kg in the previous close.

Additionally, gold of 99.5 per cent purity climbed by Rs 200 to reclaim its all-time high of Rs 77,900 per 10 grams. The metal had finished at Rs 77,700 per 10 grams on Tuesday.

The commodity markets were closed on Wednesday on account of Mahatma Gandhi Jayanti.

Traders said the sentiment turned better on rising demand at the beginning of 'Navratri', an auspicious week in Hindu mythology for purchasing new things particularly precious metals.

"A possible increase in jewellery demand amid peak festival season and a weak Indian rupee also aided the commodity in the domestic market," Hareesh V, Head of Commodities at Geojit Financial Services, said.

Meanwhile, in futures trade, gold contracts for December delivery declined Rs 440 or 0.58 per cent to Rs 75,950 per 10 grams on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX).

However, silver climbed Rs 225 or 0.25 per cent to trade at Rs 91,600 per kg on the MCX.

In the Asian trading hours, Comex gold is trading 0.17 per cent lower at USD 2,665.20 per ounce.

"Gold traded with a modest loss on Thursday, as an uptick in the US dollar and Treasury yield weighed down on precious metals," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

Silver was quoted 0.36 per cent lower at USD 31.81 per ounce globally.

"For bullion market mood remained downbeat on Thursday as US equities traded in the red on Wednesday, amid an escalation in the Middle East suggests that Israel is likely preparing for a response to strikes by Iran which indicates that precious metal prices could still find supports at lower levels.

"Further, investors to track US jobs data, including jobless claims, to release later on Thursday which could provide some direction for the yellow metal rates," Maneesh Sharma, AVP - Commodities & Currencies at Anand Rathi Shares and Stock Brokers, said.

'Committed to playing big role in digital revolution in India'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Google sees India as "a very important market" both from users and research and development perspectives, India MD Roma Datta Chobey said on Thursday asserting that the global tech giant is geared up and fully committed to playing a significant role in India's digital revolution.

In an interview with PTI, Chobey said Indians are adopting and adapting AI in a big way, and added that the company is sharply focused on leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) to democratise information and opportunities and keen to play a significant role in developing a thriving AI ecosystem here.

The Google India top boss also outlined the company's big bets in the country in areas such as AI, payments and device manufacturing.

To a question on regulatory structures that are taking shape in India, she said that Google believes that AI should be regulated, in a way that ensures user benefits and fosters innovation.

"Google believes in regulations...we believe that technology should be regulated and regulated well, because it is nuanced. We believe AI should be regulated in a way that takes care of the user benefit...At the same time innovation should thrive, so it is a balance that needs to be struck," she said.

Job market clocks 6 pc growth, buoyed by recovery in IT hiring: Report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

White-collar hiring activity witnessed a 6 per cent growth in September compared to the same month last year, mainly driven by a recovering IT sector, a report said on Thursday.

The Naukri JobSpeak Index reached 2,727 points in September, marking a 6 per cent year-on-year (YoY) growth, it said.

This positive trend was largely driven by a resurgent IT sector, which demonstrated 18 per cent YoY growth in hiring activity.

Non-traditional IT hubs



showed significant growth, potentially indicating a geographical diversification trend.

Jaipur led the pack with a 47 per cent YoY increase in IT roles, followed by Kolkata at 32

per cent, the report said.

The IT sector also saw a 35 per cent YoY growth in hiring for professionals with over 16 years of experience. Unicorns and foreign MNCs were key

drivers of this growth, with 16 per cent and 14 per cent YoY increases, respectively, it added.

Sectors such as FMCG (23 per cent) and oil and gas (13 per cent) also exhibited strong growth, said the report.

Mumbai and Bengaluru emerged as key drivers, with FMCG roles growing 49 per cent and 43 per cent, respectively, in these cities, it said.

The oil and gas sector also demonstrated robust growth, with a 13 per cent YoY increase in hiring, the report said, adding that Ahmedabad stood out in this sector, witnessing a remarkable 54 per cent YoY growth.

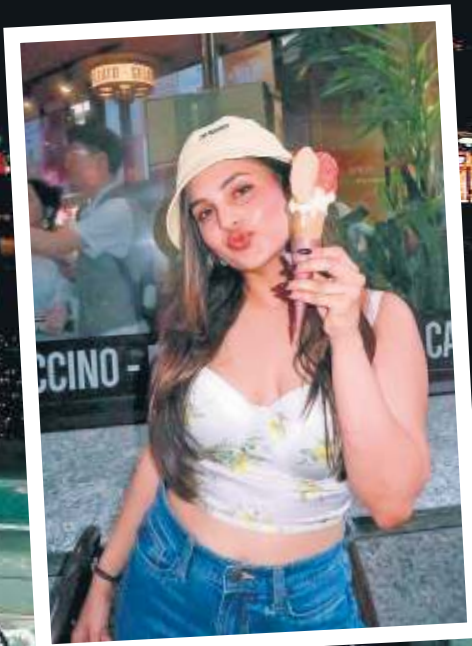
GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA PANCHAYATI RAJ ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT SHORT TENDER NOTICE

NT No. TQ/5/2024-25 Date: 01-10-2024

Total Number of works (2) with an estimated cost of Rs. 20 lakhs Tender Application from 03.10.2024 upto 09.10.2024 5.00 p.m. Tender schedules can be had on 10.10.2024 from Office of the Executive Engineer, PR Division, Ibrahimpatnam, Rangareddy District and participate on 11.10.2024 upto 3.30 p.m from date of issue. Other details can be had from Office of the Executive Engineer, PR Division, Ibrahimpatnam PR District. email id: esppr@gnsl.com. Office phone number: 9449041980. Sd/- Executive Engineer, PR Division, Ibrahimpatnam R.O.No. 4864/PPCL/ADVT/110204-25, Dt. 03.10.2024 Rangareddy District.

FROM HIGH FASHION TO HIGH DRAMA

Ramya Pasupuleti was at a 23-day whirlwind trip across Europe and here today, she takes *The Pioneer* through in-and-around everything from her latest travel



TRAVELOGUE

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Ramya Pasupuleti's love for travel isn't just a hobby; it's an evolving story of her deep-rooted desire for simplicity, elegance and the allure of new experiences. Fresh off a 23-day whirlwind trip across Europe, she shares not only the stunning landscapes and rich cultures she immersed herself in but also the unexpected adventures that made the journey truly memorable.

"My trip to Venice, well, it actually started with our time in France, particularly Paris," Ramya begins, eyes lighting up with excitement. "There's something about European cities that charms you instantly—the tiny apartments with a minimalist touch, the winding streets and the small spaces that feel like home."

Though Venice was a highlight, the journey across Italy and France had many moments to cherish. "We ventured through so many places—Florence, Milan, Venice and even made it all the way down to Sicily. Exploring Sicily was an unforgettable experience. We were chasing clean beaches, away from the crowded tourist spots. We asked our Airbnb host for recommendations and he pointed us towards this hidden gem. It took us multiple trains and quite a bit of walking, but it was worth it. We got there late, just before everything started closing, but watching the sun dip into the sea was magical."

But not everything went as smoothly as planned. Her adventures are peppered with hilarious mishaps, from their almost-missed Tomorrowland concert to a bizarre pizza incident that left them laughing well into the night. "We were supposed to go to Belgium for Tomorrowland, but the logistics didn't work out. Italy had us in its grasp and the thought of travelling back and forth was just too exhausting. So, we stayed and decided to soak in the beauty of Italy instead," she chuckles.

Then came the infamous pizza story. "We ordered what we thought was a chicken pizza, but when it arrived, it didn't look quite right. Turns out, it was donkey meat! We freaked out, asked them to change it and they just removed the donkey pieces and added chicken on top. The smell was still there! I barely took a bite," she recalls, shaking her head at the absurdity. "That was a 30 euro pizza and I could only manage one bite!"

While Italy offered an array of mishaps, Florence proved particularly tricky. "We lost both of our suitcases during a layover in Rome. Can you imagine? All our shopping from Paris was in there—luxury bags, clothes, everything! We spent the day without luggage, just waiting, but eventually, we got the bags back. That moment when we saw our suitcases... pure happiness."

Despite the challenges, she fondly remembers every twist and turn. "Every day brought something new. We had planned our trip in such a way that we were constantly on the go and although it was hectic, we embraced the chaos." When asked about her time in Venice, her face lights up again. "Ah, Venice! People always ask if it smells bad, but I honestly didn't notice anything. The city is beyond beautiful—the canals, the food, the atmosphere. It was our last stop on this incredible journey, so there was a bittersweet feeling. We knew our adventure was coming to an end, and that made everything feel even more special."

Her travel memories extend beyond just the scenic beauty. Her cultural observations brought a new perspective to her European travels. "One thing that stood out to me was the level of safety. In Paris, we were constantly warned about pickpockets and we clutched our bags as if they were babies! I don't think I've ever held

onto my bag so tightly, not even in Hyderabad. It's funny how those warnings can get to you, but thankfully, we were safe."

And what's a trip to Europe without indulging in the local cuisine? Though her food experiences were mostly delightful, they also came with their fair share of surprises. "By the end of the trip, I was so tired of bread and pasta," she laughs. "Food is a big part of any trip, and while we had some amazing meals, there were definitely moments that tested our adventurous spirit!"

As she reminisces about her 23-day European adventure, one thing becomes clear: travel, for her, isn't just about visiting new places. It's about discovering new aspects of herself, collecting memories—both perfect and imperfect—and laughing at the mishaps along the way. "Europe has a charm that I'll never forget, but at the end of the day, home is where the heart is. And for me, that's always going to be Hyderabad."

"When I say that Taormina is more fashionable than Paris or Milan, I mean it!" she exclaims with a playful smirk. "It's all so classic—you know, really classy. The crowd was clean, chic and everyone was carrying their Hermès and Birkins like it was a fashion runway." She lets out a soft chuckle, reminiscing about her recent Italian escapades. "But... then came the bedbugs," she adds, her voice dipping into a more dramatic tone.

Yes, you heard that right. Bedbugs. In Taormina, of all places. "I woke up one morning, covered in red spots and freaked out! I clicked a picture, threw it on Google Lens and guess what? Bedbugs! Oh no." She rolls her eyes, recounting the whole ordeal. "And in Europe, none of these hosts will ever admit to having bedbugs. I mean, can you imagine the scandal? So, they kept denying it, but yeah, that's what happened. A little souvenir from Taormina, I guess."

She laughs it off, as if it were a funny anecdote she'll be telling at dinner parties. "Europe is beautiful, but yeah, it comes with its share of challenges. Never say I didn't warn you!"

But Taormina was just the beginning. "Oh, and Capri," she sighs, this time sounding completely exasperated. "We went from Sorrento to Capri and let me tell you, it was one of those days. We didn't know there was this chairlift thing to take us uphill, so what did we do? We walked! In the blazing heat! For 50 minutes uphill!" she says, wide-eyed with the memory. "I think it was even more than 50 minutes. We were done. Completely done with Capri at that point."

But don't think she gave up. "After finally reaching the top, we saw all the luxury shops and that sort of cooled us down. We thought, okay, we made it. Time to shop!" Just as they started to feel victorious, a new problem cropped up. "The last ferry back to Sorrento was at 6:30, and we reached the port at 6:40. No more ferries. I was like, What now?"

That's when Naples came into play. "We were told we could catch a ferry to Naples and then a train or bus to Sorrento. But everyone kept saying Naples is dangerous, that people would kill us or something. I was freaked out!" she admits with a nervous laugh. But hunger took over, and the thought of a famous Napoli pizza tempted them into the city. "We decided, okay, let's at least grab a pizza. But when we got there, there was this massive line and time was ticking. Google said the last train was at 9:00 and we had no idea how we'd make it back."

And speaking of travel, who would she hypothetically love to jet-set with from her own circle? "You know, I find it weird to think about traveling with someone from my fraternity. For me, it takes a real comfort level to travel with anyone."

When love meets mortality

TEJAL SINHA
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Zee5's *The Signature* marks Anupam Kher's 525th film. The film centers around the tragic tale of an ordinary man, discovering his wife's terminal illness.

PLOT

Arvind's wife collapses at the airport right before their highly anticipated overseas vacation, leading him to use up all his money to try and rescue her, despite his limited finances. With his children keeping their distance and declining financial assistance, Arvind seeks support from trusted friends and former acquaintances who come to his aid during his challenging circumstances. To compound his emotional distress, he faces a heartbreaking ethical quandary regarding signing the DNR form. Will he release his grip or cling to the belief that his love can conquer mortality? What option will he select, and what price will he pay?

ANALYSIS

The movie showcases Arvind's deep affection for his wife and emphasises the compromises we make for our loved ones. The *Signature* explores the concept of loving someone through difficult moments.

The Signature delves into emotional challenges stemming from unforeseen issues, going beyond just illness and family troubles. The film explores the difficult decisions families have to make when love and money become entangled, as Arvind faces resistance from his children about selling their shared house to cover their mother's care. The film also depicts true strength. Even with the heavy responsibilities Arvind bears, he remains steadfast in his determination to rescue his wife. Even in the face of difficult obstacles, his optimism displays the resilience of the human soul. Audiences who enjoy films delving into love, sacrifice and resilience will have *The Signature* etched in their memory long after the movie ends.

PERFORMANCES

It's beyond a doubt that Anupam's character is not just relatable because of his hardships but also the relatability that he brings through his emotions. Kher is always a delight to watch and yet again, he wins our hearts. The love Arvind has for his wife is commendable. Anupam Kher shines in powerful roles, delivering a standout performance as Arvind in *The Signature*. In his role as a middle-class man coping with his wife's illness, Kher portrays the character with genuine sincerity and complexity. He demonstrates the calm power of a man who has to make difficult decisions while maintaining optimism. In the movie, Kher portrays Arvind's inner struggle with potentially losing his spouse. From attempting to rescue her to considering her end-of-life treatment, Kher's portrayal comes across as genuine and genuine. The way he portrays a man torn between optimism and hopelessness in *The Signature* appeals to fans of stories driven by characters.

Despite having minimal on-screen presence, Neena Kulkarni's character Madhu is still significant. Madhu's illness is felt by the audience throughout the movie, shaping the storyline. Mahima Chaudhary portrays the character Ambika, a supportive figure for Arvind in difficult situations. Adding layers to her performance, she navigates her own emotions while assisting Arvind in making tough decisions. During the crisis, Annu Kapoor, portraying Arvind's companion, contributes warmth and companionship. The cast collaborates to portray emotions that bring the story's emotional depth to life.

Meanwhile, not to forget, Ranvir Shorey's character, though with less screen time, highlights a very important message as a patient's husband. For the message that he highlights through his character, you will have to watch the film today.

Talking of the other cast, including Manoj Joshi, Sneha Paul, Sangeeta Jain, Kevin Gandhi and Varun Sethi, have contributed significantly.

TECHNICAL ASPECT

Cinematographer Krishna Soren's work is nothing sort of commendable, making the visuals relatable to the message around the film. The visual storytelling enhances the tension, making each turn feel real. The beginning and ending scenes stand out, surrounding the plot with a visual flair that intensifies the story's suspense and emotional resonance.

Directed by: Gajendra Ahire

Produced by: K. C. Bokadia and Anupam Kher Studio

Cast: Anupam Kher, Neena Kulkarni, Mahima Chaudhry, Ranvir Shorey, Annu Kapoor, Manoj Joshi, Sneha Paul, Sangeeta Jain, Kevin Gandhi and Varun Sethi

Cinematography by: Krishna Soren

Streaming on: Zee5

Rating: 4/5

REVIEW



VERDICT

The Signature tells a poignant story of a family facing love, sacrifice, and resilience. It is a strong contender for one of the most unforgettable films of the year due to its powerful narrative and impressive supporting cast. Begin a voyage that prompts reflection on the importance of family and the actions we take for our loved ones. This movie is essential viewing for those who enjoy dramas and seek a film suitable for the entire family to watch together.

Eat less red meat, lower your diabetes risk



The link between diet and diabetes has been a topic of extensive research, with red meat consumption emerging as a potential risk factor for developing Type 2 diabetes. According to a recent analysis of 31 study cohorts published in *The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology*, regular consumption of red and processed meat is linked to an increased risk of type 2 diabetes. Red meat, including beef, pork and lamb, is rich in saturated fats and heme iron. These components can contribute to increased insulin resistance and inflammation, key factors in the development of diabetes. If left untreated, it can result in serious complications such as heart disease, stroke, and kidney issues.

Dr. Meghana Pasi, Head MyThali Program of Arogya World shares, "The processing of meat contains added preservatives and nitrates which can exacerbate oxidative stress, inflammation and pancreatic damage, further increasing the risk of insulin resistance. The American Diabetes Association and other health organisations recommend limiting red meat intake to

lower diabetes risk. Dietary guidelines recommend consuming no more than 455 grams of red meat per week, ideally limiting intake to three or four servings. Substituting red meat with leaner proteins like poultry, fish, or plant-based options such as legumes, nuts, and tofu can improve overall diet quality. Plant-based diets, including whole grains, fruits, and vegetables, have been associated with improved insulin sensitivity and a lower risk of diabetes."

This balanced approach can help reduce reliance on meat, lower saturated fat intake, and encourage healthier eating habits, potentially lowering the risk of type 2 diabetes and promoting overall health.

Meanwhile, Dr. Bhawna Attri, Consultant - Endocrinology, Sarvodaya Hospital highlights, "While results from observational studies have suggested an association of red meat intake with T2D incidence, the results of various meta-analysis of RCTs (randomised controlled trials) did not show any effect of red meat on glycemic and insulinemic biomarkers associated with the devel-

opment of T2D. There was no significant effect of diets containing red meat, compared to diets with little or no red meat, on fasting glucose, fasting insulin, postprandial insulin, insulin sensitivity, HOMA-IR, HbA1c, pancreatic beta-cell function, or GLP-1. Individuals with metabolic dysfunction and pre-existing risk factors for T2D may respond differently to red meat intake, as evidenced by an increase in fasting glucose in the subset with metabolic dysfunction and this deserves further investigation. It is possible that red meat intake may be impacting pancreatic alpha- or beta-cell function or hepatic glucose production, which could increase fasting glucose. Compounds in red meats, such as iron, have been shown to enhance formation of reactive oxygen species, which could plausibly affect pancreatic beta-cell function. Additionally, iron in the liver may impact hepatic insulin extraction, possibly increasing hepatic glucose production."

This discrepancy between studies may partially be explained by other factors associated with red meat intake that may increase the risk for T2D, resulting in residual confounding. Compared to individuals who consume less red meat, those that consume more red meat also tend to be more inactive, eat fewer fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, are more likely to be current smokers, drink alcohol, and have a higher mean BMI. Many observational studies do not differentiate between unprocessed and processed red meat but those that do tend to find a stronger association of processed meat to risk of T2D. Additional studies are needed on processed meats to further elucidate if other processing constituents, such as sodium or nitrates, may be contributing to risk of T2D. It is also possible that mechanisms other than those investigated, or that require exposure over longer periods, could contribute to the observed associations between red meat intake and T2D incidence. These findings reinforce the importance of and need for more high-quality RCTs to provide data relevant to determining whether the association between red meat intake and risk of diabetes is causal.

what's brewing?



PARTY
Photos by- SV Charly

GET READY FOR DOSE OF FESTIVE CHEER WITH ENTERTAINING OCTOBER LINEUP!

The festive season is around the corner and what better way to enhance your entertainment plan than with some binge-worthy content. As you enjoy more time with your family, JioCinema Premium's line-up for October is sure to provide everything you are looking for!

The Baap of all reality shows, *Bigg Boss*, returns for Season 18 on 6th October with Salman Khan as its host. *Bigg Boss Kannada 11* will continue to offer an exciting experience with its simulcast premiere, complete with a range of interactive features on the platform.

The international line-up promises to be equally exciting with the premiere of *Suits in Hindi* on 11th October. Set at a fictional law firm in New York City, the Patrick J Adams and Gabriel Macht starrer will keep you hooked from the start. Tighten your seatbelts for some interesting business pitches on 19th October with the 16th season of *Shark Tank*. The Australian post-apocalyptic movie *Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga* is a spinoff prequel to *Mad Max: Fury Road* and acts as an origin story for Furiosa, essayed by Anya Taylor-Joy. The movie premieres on 23rd October.

The Colin Farrell starrer *The Penguin* will continue to enthrall the audience with weekly episode premieres every Monday at 6:30am.

The diverse movie premieres include the Aditya Seal and Sunny Sharma starrer *Amar Prem Ki Prem Kahani*, releasing on 4th October. Written and directed by Hardik Gajjar, this movie is about Amar Mehta, a businessman whose life turns topsy-turvy when he comes across Prem Kapoor, with whom he locks horns almost immediately. *The Miranda Brothers*, directed by Sanjay Gupta and starring Harshvardhan Rane and Meezan Jaafri, is a sports drama about two brothers on opposing ends of the football scene and will release on 25th October.

As part of the kids' lineup, new episodes of *Chikoo and Bunty* will be available on the app before TV, starting October 11th. Everyone's beloved *Motu Patlu* is back with a mini movie, which will start streaming on 21st October, before its TV telecast.



Mohna Sai Akula (Amar), a space enthusiast from Telangana, has been officially appointed as the LunAres Ambassador for India by the LunAres Research Station, an international leader in analog space missions. This prestigious role involves representing the LunAres mission, advocating for space research, and fostering collaborations between the Indian and international space communities.



A group of 21 students from the Embassy of India School in Moscow, recently took part in an educational career orientation initiative that offered a deep dive into the fields of biotechnology and medicine. This landmark opportunity, part of the Moscow City Tourism Committees City of Discoveries project, marks the first time English-speaking students from India have experienced this advanced program.

At the Race2win.com Deccan Derby 2024, the Hyderabad Race Club was treated to an amazing spectacle as the worlds of high fashion and horse racing merged in a grand celebration. India's renowned design team, Shivan & Narresh, created a stunning amalgamation of beauty and athletics when they introduced their avant-garde festive collection to the racetrack for the first time ever in Hyderabad.



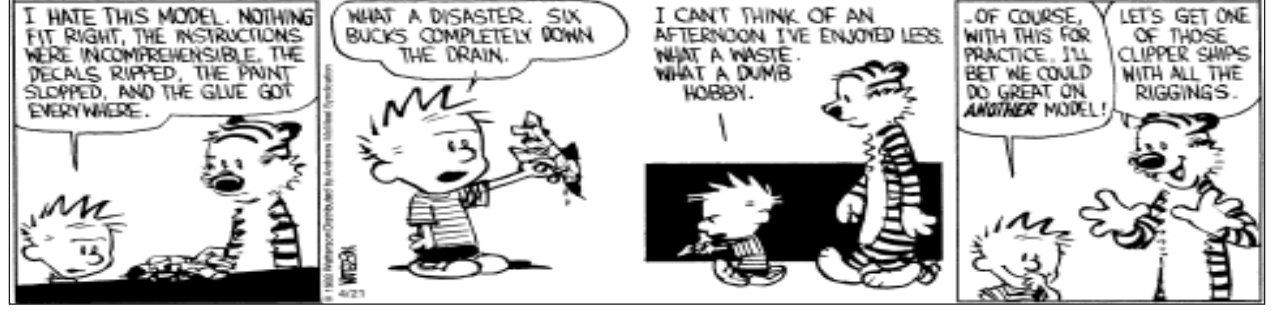
Froops Ice cream-Real fruit-real ice cream revealed its brand new store in Begumpet bringing its exclusive, authentic and real flavours made with real ingredients! Director Aryaman Shah, on this occasion, launched their new fruits flavours.

FUN

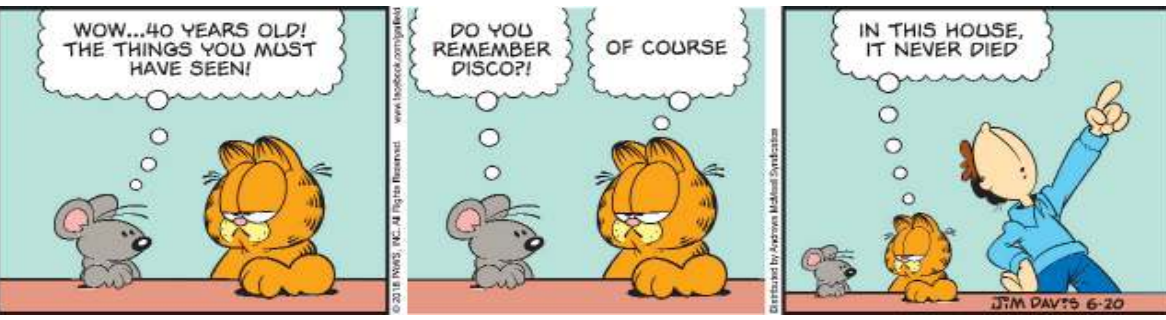
ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



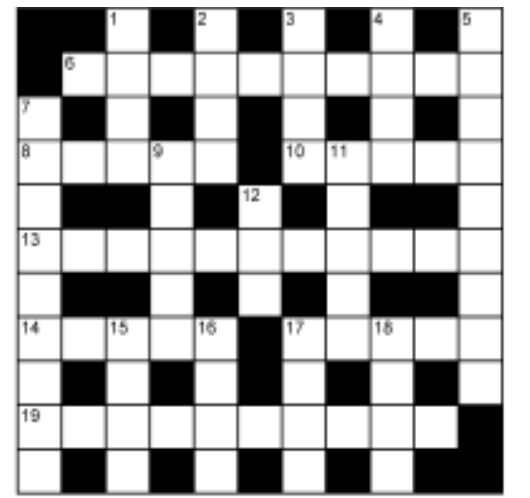
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



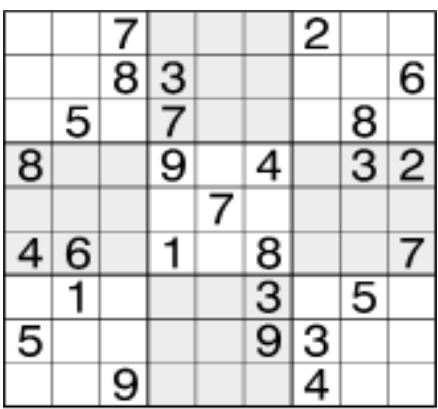
CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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6	5	2	9	1	3	8	7	4
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Rules

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

ACROSS

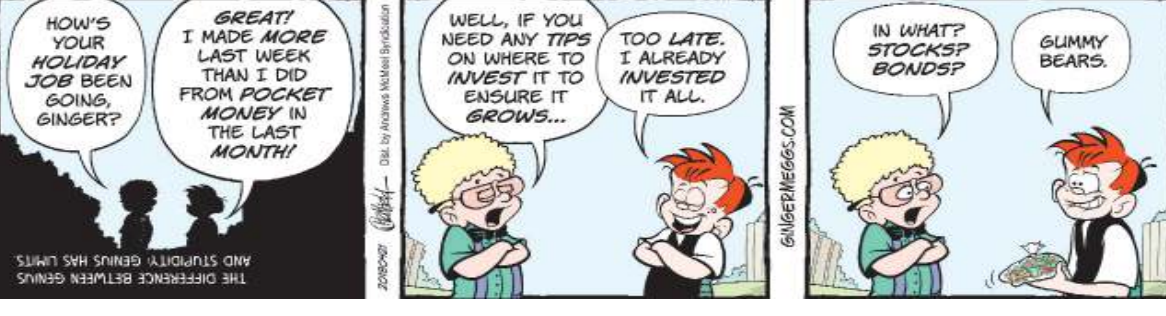
- 6 Below
- 8 Frequently
- 10 Water vapour
- 13 Snapshots
- 14 Words that name
- 17 An item of furniture
- 19 A surgeon performs these
- 9 Devoured
- 11 Give a lesson
- 12 How old someone is
- 15 Second-hand
- 16 The line where two pieces of cloth join together
- 17 A metal piece of money
- 18 A female relative

DOWN

- 1 A hair tangle
- 2 A blood vessel
- 3 Comes to a finish
- 4 A strong metal box for storing valuables
- 5 A branch of science
- 7 Friend



GINGER MEGGS



'Mr Bachchan was the one that actually backfired'

TG VISHWA PRASAD, WHO PRODUCES MULTIPLE FILMS, DISCUSSES HIS NEXT FEATURE AND THE CURRENT STATE OF THE INDUSTRY!

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
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The film *Swag*, produced by Producer TG Vishwa Prasad of People Media Factory, has hit theatres today. Ahead of the release, the producer spoke about the film and said that when Sree Vishnu is there in a project, people would either witness an entertainment or content-based one. "In *Swag*, you can witness a different Sree Vishnu and the characterisation. There are a lot of get-ups of him and the story has a mix of entertainment and emotion. It's a very rare kind of subject to do and I assure everyone that *Swag* is an interesting movie," said Vishwa Prasad. The producer was all praises for director Hasith Goli for narrating a subject like this, in just two and a half hours! "There are a number of characters in the film that every one has established in the first half; on the other side, you have to run the emotional side and also keep the audience engaged. Apart from all these, there is a strong message delivered, which is not easy, but director Hasith did a good job," said Vishwa Prasad about the director. Earlier, Sree Vishnu and director Hasith had worked together in *Raja Raja Chola*. With talks claiming that *Swag*, is a prequel to the film, the producer shares, "I don't think there is a connection between these two films. *Raja Raja Chola* had a king's character but with *Swag*, I don't think it's anywhere related." The first half, he says, is established with four characters from different time periods, right from the young character to the old. "There's a lot of entertainment in this film. The main story is revealed before the interval," he said. Meanwhile, the second half, he reveals is all about emotions! "One wouldn't get disoriented in any way as the film offers a different kind of suspense in the film."



The lead actor recently revealed that People Media Factory is experiencing a downturn! However, he believes that with *Swag*, they will soon get back on track. On this, he shared, "The production house has not slowed down; we have produced both content and commercial-based films. We created movies such as *Goodachari*, *Oh! Baby*, *Nissabdham* and *Karthikeya 2*, which began conversations and are relevant to date." He further expressed, "It was unfortunate that *Eagle* backfired. However, the one that had actually backfired was *Mr. Bachchan*."

The producer said that movies like *Indrudu Chanduru*, *Michael Madana Kamaraju* and *Swag* will be remembered for a long time.

He further said that he never directly listens to the story from the director, as it is his team who sorts it out first. "Our production house collaborates as a team to develop each story. They provide me with comprehensive reports covering the unique selling point (USP), film duration, mood graph and key character analysis," he said about how he looks at those films. He added that 70 to 80 percent of films are developed at his production house only!

Talking about the number of movies by the production house, he said that one will not be seeing any routine film in those ones.

Vishwa Prasad spent many years in the USA. Speaking of the observation around the production style there and here, he gave a shocking answer! "I don't watch any English movies. It's not because of language issues, but because of the phobia where we don't understand. I've rarely watched films like *Titanic*."

There are many Americans working under me, but as a businessman, I have deep expertise about what their project module is like. Every industry is different and the people you deal with are also different. We bring good practices; we are reasonably ahead of adapting those good practices," he said. "There is a market for 60 to 80 percent non-theatrical amounts because of OTT and other digital platforms, but now it is uncertain. So, with this, there is no business guarantee for every film; the pace of the films are reducing," he said.

He added that his people are concentrating more on the quality of the film! At the moment, he wants to also concentrate on doing web series. "During pandemic, we came up with a few projects, but we had to scrap some projects and some released on Youtube channels. It's a huge setback, but now we are focusing on web series. We are looking for good content," he said.

Film fraternity rallies together amid Surekha's controversial comments!

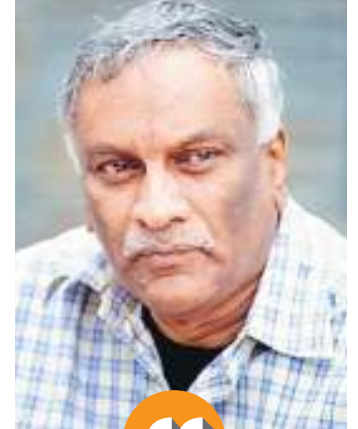
Post the comment made by Telangana minister Konda Surekha, the Telugu film industry has been irked over the derogatory comments. Though the minister had retracted her comments, the industry has been standing in support. In no time, the hashtag 'Film Industry will not tolerate' had gone viral on X



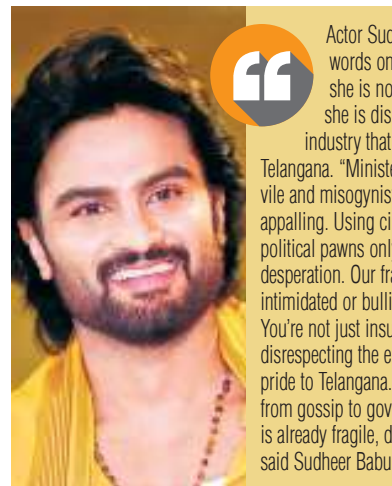
Superstar Mahesh Babu, in a strong-wording message, said he was anguished by the unacceptable remarks and language used by a woman minister on another. He added that these comments are cheap and baseless. He strongly condemns it. "Extremely pained by the comments made by Minister Konda Surekha on fellow members of our film fraternity. As a father of a daughter, as a husband to a wife and as a son to a mother, I am deeply anguished by the unacceptable remarks and language used by a woman minister on another woman," said Mahesh. The actor added that freedom of speech shouldn't hurt others' sentiments. "Freedom of speech can be exercised as long as it does not hurt others' sentiments. I strongly condemn the cheap and baseless comments made and request people in the public domain to refrain from making the film fraternity a soft target. The women of our country and our film fraternity should be treated with the utmost respect and dignity," he said.



Megastar Chiranjeevi responded on Thursday and said that the film industry has become a soft target. "I am extremely pained to see the disgraceful remarks made by an honourable woman minister. It is a shame that celebs and members of the film fraternity become soft targets as they provide instant reach and attention. We as the film industry stand united in opposing such vicious verbal assaults on our members," said Chiranjeevi. He asked the minister to withdraw these malicious remarks. "No one should stoop to this level for scoring political points by dragging unconnected people and more so women into their political slugfest and making distasteful fictional allegations. We choose our leaders to make society a better place to live in and not contaminate it by lowering the discourse. Politicians and people in honourable positions should set better examples. Trust the concerned will make amends and withdraw these malicious remarks immediately," said Chiranjeevi.



Talking about the incident, producer and director Thammareddy Bharadwaj said that the minister should not come out with names. "In her comments, the victim is a woman and according to the guidelines, one should not tell the names of the victim openly. Konda Surekha is in a responsible position and how come she comes out with the victim names? Instead of making baseless comments, if she has any proof, she should come out with them," said Thammareddy. He added that Nagarjuna should go legally. "I personally feel that Nagarjuna should definitely go legally against her remarks, and he should file a defamation case on her remarks as she dragged their family into it," said Thammareddy. He also speaks about the phone-tapping issue. "There are reports that many film celebrities' phones are tapping and that report too should come out," he said.



Actor Sudheer Babu, using strong words on the Minister, said that she is not just insulting women; she is disrespecting the entire industry that brings pride to Telangana. "Minister Konda Surekha, your vile and misogynistic comments are appalling. Using cinema personalities as political pawns only showcases your desperation. Our fraternity won't be intimidated or bullied by your cheap tactics. You're not just insulting women, you're disrespecting the entire industry that brings pride to Telangana. It's time to shift focus from gossip to governance. Your reputation is already fragile, don't tarnish it further," said Sudheer Babu.



Jr NTR, in his strong statement, said that the industry will not sit quietly while others make baseless allegations against them. "Konda Surekha, dragging personal lives into politics is a new low. Public figures, especially those in responsible positions like you, must maintain dignity and respect for privacy. It's disheartening to see baseless statements thrown around carelessly, especially about the film industry. We will not sit quietly while others make baseless allegations against us. We should rise above this and maintain respect for each other's boundaries. Let's ensure our society does not normalize such reckless behavior in democratic India," said Jr NTR in his statement against Surekha's remarks.

Priyamani, Gautam Menon also roped in for *Thalapathy69*

The upcoming film of Tamil Superstar Vijay is expected to be even larger. Pooja Hegde and Mamitha Baiju have been revealed as the female leads by the producers. Anirudh Ravichander, a top music director, is composing the music. Additionally, Bollywood actor Bobby Deol is also present in the movie, adding a pan-Indian touch to it. Currently, the producers

have revealed that director-turned-actor Gautham Menon will play a significant part in the movie! The producers revealed his name on social media on Thursday, boosting the film's popularity. Besides Gautam Menon, they also brought on board the skilled Priyamani for a different significant position. Priyamani is recognised by Telugu, Tamil, and Hindi audiences for her

work in movies across all these languages.

The producers revealed that Narain, who had a role in the recently premiered film *Devara* starring Jr NTR, has joined the cast. Although Narain appeared in some Telugu movies, he is better known in the Tamil film industry. He is cast in Vijay's 69th film and has a significant role.



Priyanka Mohan escapes unhurt in terrible accident!

Priyanka Mohan gained popularity for her role as the female protagonist in the recent film *Saripodhaa Sanivaaram* alongside Nani. According to reports, the film directed by Vivek Athreya is a hit. The actress is sought after and like many others, she also agreed to attend a shop opening. The actresses are participating in new store launches to earn significant amounts of money. They stay at the event for almost an hour and they have the potential to earn a few lakhs of rupees from it. Priyanka Mohan is currently in Thorur, a town in Telangana, which is situated 50 kilometers away from Warangal. The actress was present to open a shopping mall, but the event concluded with a terrifying incident. Fortunately, she was unscathed and quickly got into her car and drove away from the location.

The stage constructed by the organisers for this event was filled with numerous individuals. According to reports, three people were injured when the stage collapsed suddenly. According to the report, Jhansi Reddy, a Congress leader, was also present on the stage and she sustained an injury. The video of the stage collapse is circulating on the web and it is quite terrifying to see. The report mentioned that the actress is fortunate to be safe and headed back to Hyderabad.

Meanwhile, a picture of the actress along with Jayam Ravi has been going viral, claiming that both the actors have gotten engaged in an intimate wedding. They have not gotten married. The actor, who is currently in the process of getting a divorce from his wife Aarti, is preparing for the release his upcoming film *Brother*. The film also stars Jayam Ravi and Priyanka Mohan. The 'wedding photo' is from the film!

'JANAKA AITHE GANAKA WILL BE AN ENTERTAINING FILM'

Versatile actors Suhas and Sangeetha are the hero and heroine of the movie *Janaka Aithe Ganaka*. Presented by Sirish and produced by Harshit Reddy and Hansita Reddy under the banner of Dil Raju Productions. This movie is going

to release on October 12th on the occasion of Dussehra. Posters, songs and teasers released from the film so far have created a good buzz among the audience.

In an event organised on Thursday, Dil Raju said, "We will

be organising a public show in Vijaywada on October 6 and then a show in Tirupati on 8. I released *Happy Days* and *Shatamanam Bhavati* earlier in overseas. With the same sentiment that even now I am releasing this movie overseas on

October 10. It will premiere here on 11 and will be released grandly on 12. We are done with all of the work regarding the non-theatrical business, Hindi dubbing and more. Our movie is full of entertainment and will entertain everyone."



INDIA NEED TOP GUNS FIRING IN UNISON AGAINST NEW ZEALAND

PTI ■ DUBAI

A stellar effort by senior stars would be mandatory when India take on New Zealand in their opening Group A match of the women's T20 World Cup here on Friday, aiming for a strong start in their quest to wipe off the memories of past near-misses. Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, who in all likelihood, will be appearing in her last T20 World Cup, has been witness to several near misses and disappointing moments from close quarters, including India's capitulation to Australia in the final at Melbourne in 2020. As has been in the past, this Indian line-up is rich in talent and, arguably, only Australia have a similarly well-oiled unit. But the reigning champions have six titles in their cabinet, and India's is still dust-laden. So, what pegs India back in global events? It seems more a case of mental fragility at clutch moments, and the Women in Blue tried to address that during a preparatory camp at the NCA (National Cricket Academy) with a few counselling sessions. But such external measures can only be of limited help in big tournaments, as it boils down entirely to flawless execution of strategies on a given day. In that context, India will not get a

better opponent than New Zealand, which is not a fancied side like its Trans-Tasman neighbour. But the two-time runners-up are as tough as nails. A victory against them could well be counted as a sign of being in fine shape — tactically and mentally — and that's a pre-requisite for India in a group that also has Australia, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. To start with, India will require heavy contributions from their top guns — the 35-year-old Harmanpreet, Smriti Mandhana, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma and Deepti Sharma. Among them, Shafali and Mandhana have been in excellent touch, making runs in their last international outing in the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka in July even though India lost to the hosts in the final. In fact, Mandhana's last five T20I innings include three fifties. But Harmanpreet and Shafali have been a tad underwhelming and the duo finding range is imperative for India's charge at the top and middle order. It is critical to India's chances as the pitches in the UAE, going through a harsh heat wave, might not be a treasure trove of runs, particularly deep into the tournament. However, the expected weariness of the track, in one way, will cater to India's strengths in the bowling department — spin.



They have only three pacers in their squad — Renuka Singh, Pooja Vastrakar and Arundhati Reddy. In all likelihood, India will only play two of them, while depending on a plethora of spinners in their line-up. India have exceptional variety in that department. The attack will be marshalled by off-spinners Deepti and Shreyanka Patil, leg-spinner Asha Shobhana and left-arm spinner Radha Yadav.

But the Kiwis have a good blend of experienced and young players, who can lift them above such obstacles. Their talismanic skipper Sophie Devine, experienced all-rounder Suzie Bates along with veteran pacers Lea Tahuu and Leigh Kasperk form the crux of this New Zealand side. Add the exciting young all-rounder Amelia Kerr to the mix, and they have the wherewithal to spring a surprise or two in this tournament. But beyond them, the Kiwis are a bit green behind the ears and that could be their Achilles Heel.

TEAMS:
India: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Deepti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh, Yastika Bhatia (subject to fitness), Pooja Vastrakar, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh Thakur, Dayalan Hemalatha, Asha Shobhana, Radha Yadav, Shreyanka Patil (subject to fitness), Sajana Sajeevan
Travelling reserves: Uma Chetry (wk), Tanuja Kanwer, Saima Thakor.
New Zealand: Sophie Devine (c), Suzie Bates, Eden Carson, Izzy Gaze, Maddy Green, Brooke Halliday, Fran Jonas, Leigh Kasperk, Melie Kerr, Jess Kerr, Rosemary Mair, Molly Penfold, Georgia Plimmer, Hannah Rowe, Lea Tahuu.



Khushi seals dramatic bronze, takes India's tally to 15 at ISSF Jr Worlds

PTI ■ LIMA (PERU)

Khushi secured a hard-fought bronze in the women's 50m rifle 3 positions at the ISSF Junior World Championship here, dramatically qualifying for the final before rallying to claim the third spot. Her medal on Wednesday took India's tally to 15, including 10 gold, one silver, and four bronze medals, keeping the country at the top

of the standings. The youngster shot 447.3 in the final to finish behind Caroline Lund of Norway who won silver with 458.3. Caroline's compatriot Synnoeve Berg won gold with 458.4. However, Khushi's path to the podium was far from easy. She narrowly made it to the medal round, rallying brilliantly in the final standing position in qualifying to clinch the seventh spot with a score of 585. It got so tight that there were four others on the same score. However, Khushi and Italian Anna Schiavon clinched the final two qualifying spots, scoring 29 inner-10 shots, while two Swiss athletes — Alexa Tela and Emely Jaeggi — managed 27. Khushi finished ahead of Anna on countback. In the eight-woman final, Khushi was fourth at the end

of the first two positions — Kneeling and Prone. A strong finish in the Standing position allowed her to pip Norwegian Pernille Nor-Woll after the 40th shot to move up to third. Synnoeve and Caroline were having their own battle for top-two throughout the 45-shot final. Khushi wobbled again on the 41st shot with 9.1 which put her back down to fifth, but a brilliant 10.7 in the 42nd and 10.4 in 43rd ensured the bronze. In the team competition in junior women's 3P, the trio of Sakshi Padekar, Melvina Joel Gladson and Prachi Gaekwad, finished fifth with a tally of 1757. Anoushka Thakur also shot 585 in qualification, but 26 hits in the inner-10 ring meant she ended 11th. Sakshi, Melvina and Prachi finished 24th, 32nd and 41st respectively.

Biggest challenges for India in Women's T20 WC will be Australia, SL: Harbhajan

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's World Cup-winning spinner Harbhajan Singh said the Harmanpreet Kaur-led side will face a tough challenge from Australia and Sri Lanka in the ICC Women's T20 World Cup. The global showpiece gets underway in the UAE from Thursday, and India are placed in Group A alongside Australia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and New Zealand. "I think India needs to be very careful when playing against Australia. Looking at this group, India has Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. But one match that I think will be a little tough is the India-Australia match," Harbhajan told Star Sports. "Australia is a good team, even though these matches are being played in Dubai, on subcontinent pitches that might not suit them as much as their home conditions. But Australia, no matter where they play, are hard to beat. So,

the biggest challenge for India may be Australia," he said. Harbhajan's fears were not entirely misplaced as the Australia have beaten India 23 times in 32 T20Is with the 'Women in Blue' winning seven of them. However, the 44-year-old warned India of another potential hazard on its way - Sri Lanka. The Islanders had recently trumped India in the Asia Cup final with Chamari Athapaththu and Harshitha Samarawickrama producing match-winning efforts. "Sri Lanka, too, after their recent series win against India, will be confident when they play against India. So, that will also be a good contest." But Harbhajan had little doubts that India have the skill sets to land their maiden ICC title. "Team India will be the team to beat in this tournament. They have both experience and youth. Harman (captain Harmanpreet Kaur) is in good

form, Smriti (Mandhana) is in good form, and Deepti (Sharma) is an unbelievable spinner. "They are a very capable team and have been playing very good cricket. The unit looks solid. If India plays good cricket overall, I believe they will win this tournament," he noted. The off-spinner, who has 711 international wickets, also advised the Indians to take it one match at a time, without succumbing to the big-moment pressure. "You have to try to give your best and not take pressure. At this stage, the only thing that matters is to know yourself, and play as a unit. Results will follow. "Don't think about the big picture; just take small steps with each match and focus on the process. I hope if they follow these things, our team will perform very well," he added. India open their campaign against New Zealand on Friday.

Weight management is athlete's responsibility: Mary Kom

PTI ■ MUMBAI

No stranger to the physical toll of weight management during a competition, six-time world champion boxer M C Mary Kom Thursday waded into the debate surrounding wrestler Vinesh Phogat's Olympic heartbreak for being 100gm over, saying that to be within the prescribed limit is an individual responsibility. The 42-year-old mother of four, who is India's only woman boxer with an Olympic medal (a bronze in London, 2012), was in the city to promote Utkarsh Small Finance Bank, which named her as its brand ambassador. Speaking for the first time on Phogat, who was disqualified on the day of her 50kg finals in the Paris Games for being marginally over the prescribed limit, Mary Kom said weight management is an athlete's responsibility. "I felt so disappointed in the sense that I have also done the same (weight management) for the last so many years. Weight is important, that is my responsibility. I cannot blame anyone," she said. "I do not want to say this in her case. I am saying this in my case only. If I do not cut the weight properly then how will I play? I am there to win a medal and that is what I think," she continued.

Mary Kom, in the past, has spoken about her weight cut routines and how difficult the process can be. The Manipuri started out as a pin-weight (46kg) category boxer before settling for the flyweight (51kg) division in her amateur career. Phogat, who was being seen as gold medal contender in Paris, skipped meals and fluids, worked out an entire night and also cut her hair to be within the requisite category but the effort fell short eventually. She challenged her disqualification, calling the rules inhumane, but her appeal was rejected by the Court of Arbitration for Sport. The wrestler retired to join politics after the heartbreak and is contesting the Haryana assembly elections on a Congress ticket. **WANT TO DISCUSS INDIAN BOXING WITH SPORTS MINISTER:** Mary Kom was also quizzed about India's boxing campaign in Paris and she was still perplexed by how poor the performance was. She said she wants to have a meeting with the national federation and sports minister Mansukh Mandaviya to understand "what is lacking" and clear her "doubts". The Indian boxing contingent, which included two reigning world champions in Nikhat Zareen and Lovlina Borgohain, cut a sorry figure



in the Games and failed to win even one medal. "We know what the result was, it was so, so bad. I want to know what is lacking," said the Manipuri, who became the first Indian woman boxer with an Olympic medal when she won bronze in the 2012 London Games. One of the most successful athletes in the history of Indian sports, Mary Kom felt the boxers got all the logistical support they needed but she does have some "doubts" regarding how their training was managed by the Boxing Federation of India. "I will meet the boxers too if the

situation demands. If the sports minister has the knowledge (about the issues) I want to discuss that also," she said. Refusing to share her exact concerns, Mary Kom said she would rather discuss them in the meeting with Mandaviya and BFI brass. "The federation has provided all the coaches. But I have a few doubts as well. But what is the point in saying them now, the Olympics are done. Now there is no point in saying all that, but I want to discuss it with them in the meeting," said the former Rajya Sabha MP. "(The) sports minister is doing whatever he can do from his side, infrastructure, facilities or whatever (other) needs are there. But how did the federation handle the training? Was it done systematically or not? What happened exactly, I do not know," she wondered. "If I do not meet them and not discuss, how will I know about them?" Mary reiterated that she wants to participate in professional boxing "I have not retired yet but I want to compete. I am trying to get opportunities, waiting for my chance to fight pro. I just want to come back." "I can continue for another three-four years, that is my will. I have the passion and hunger. I want to continue," she added.

Lionel Messi, Inter Miami win MLS Supporters Shield with 3-2 win at Crew

AP ■ COLUMBUS (OHIO)

Lionel Messi and Inter Miami have another trophy, along with home-field advantage throughout the Major League Soccer playoffs. Messi scored twice in the final minutes of the first half, goalie Drake Callender stopped a penalty kick in the 84th minute and Inter Miami beat the defending MLS Cup champion Columbus Crew 3-2 on Wednesday, wrapping up the Supporters Shield given annually to the team with the best regular-season record. It was Messi's 46th major trophy won for club or country, extending his record for the most by any men's soccer player in history. And it is the second he has won with Inter Miami, this Supporters Shield being added to the Leagues Cup trophy the Herons claimed shortly after Messi joined the club in 2023. "We knew this was a group that could fight for this," Messi said. Luis Suarez also scored for Inter Miami, which will open a best-of-three first-round playoff series in the final weekend of October. If the team wins that series, it would have the right to host every match it plays the rest of the season - an Eastern Conference semifinal (scheduled for

Nov. 23 or 24), the East final (Nov. 30 or Dec. 1) and the MLS Cup final on Dec. 7. "We have a nice opportunity to go down in history... And now we think about what is coming," Messi told Apple TV after the match. "We have a great advantage in that we play all the games at home, which was what we were looking for. I think that we are very, very strong at home." Also still within reach for Inter Miami: the best MLS regular-season mark ever. Wednesday's win pushed Inter Miami's record to 20-4-8 this season, giving it 68 points. If the club wins its final two matches - Saturday at Toronto and Oct. 19 at home against New England - it would finish with 74 points. New England has the single-season points record, finishing with 73 in 2021. Messi opened the scoring in the 45th minute, taking a long pass from Jordi Alba - his longtime teammate at Barcelona, the club with which Messi won 35 of his trophies - and splitting two defenders before somehow getting the ball past Columbus goalkeeper Patrick Schulte for a 1-0 lead. And about five minutes into first-half stoppage time, Messi struck again on a free kick from about 30 yards out.



Schulte seemed fooled, and Messi squeezed the ball between the goalie and the near post for a 2-0 lead. "Dominant," Inter Miami coach Gerardo "Tata" Martino said. Diego Rossi scored in the first minute of the second half for Columbus to cut the lead in half, but it didn't take long for Inter Miami to restore the two-goal cushion. Almost immediately after play resumed, Schulte was upended by one of his own defenders and Suarez sent a header into an empty net for a 3-1 edge. Juan "Cucho" Hernandez's penalty kick in the 61st minute got Columbus within 3-2. But once again, the momentum didn't last for long. Rudy Camacho was sent off for his second yellow card in the 63rd minute, meaning the Crew had to play with 10 men the rest of the way. Didn't matter. Columbus still created some big chances down the stretch. A deflected ball in the 76th minute got across the box and onto the right foot of Mohamed Farsi - but his shot was blocked by Callender, who was perfectly positioned to protect the lead. Then came more drama, when Inter Miami was called for its second handball inside the box - an automatic penalty kick - of the

second half. Hernandez picked the left side of the net, but Callender made the save look almost easy. That save helped finish what Messi started. It was the fifth two-goal game of the MLS season for Messi, who now has 17 goals in 17 league matches this season. He's missed 15 of Inter Miami's MLS matches in 2024, either because of commitments to Argentina's national team or the two-month absence that he needed to recover from a badly injured ankle - an injury that happened during his nation's run to the Copa America title in July. Inter Miami, in MLS play this season, is now 10-1-6 with Messi in the lineup. "Throughout the year we had many injuries, where we couldn't all be together... But the group was getting the most out of every tough game," Messi said. The Crew and the LA Galaxy entered Wednesday still with a mathematical hope of passing Inter Miami in the race for the Supporters Shield, and Cincinnati was nine points back with nine points still possible. But now, they're all playing for second. "Dec. 7 is what we want," Martino said, referring to the date of the MLS Cup final.