

Expanding the Cabinet as well as appointing the TPCC Executive Committee will be done soon. The BRS is using social media without any social sense. The BRS's social media wing has been spreading lies against the government through social media. This campaign will give temporary happiness to the BRS, but in the long run, it will certainly harm the BRS



- B. Mahesh Kumar Goud, TPCC chief

'Turn towards Indian talent for sourcing workforce'

BANKS MUST RIDE ON ADVANTAGES OF AI AND BIGTECH: SHAKTIKANTA DAS

Navigating chaos, cinema and conflict: NEW ROLES

DON'T MISS...

Passengers face shortage ...

Passengers from across the State faced shortage of buses and extra charges on special buses for Dasara festival. Almost everyone who travelled a day before and a day after the festival faced this experience. Former minister T Harish Rao took to X and said that it is very sad that the TGSRTC is collecting extra charges from people who went to celebrate Bathukamma festival at their home. "Without increasing the number of buses, increasing the ticket prices and taking away the festival joy from the people ...

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Sex determination tests go ...

The sex determination tests are reportedly going unchecked in the district. In fact, the district has emerged as the breeding ground for conducting such tests. The tests are being carried out clandestinely and the female fetuses are being aborted if the test results indicate that the fetus is not that of a baby boy, it is alleged. The tests are being done at the doorsteps of the pregnant women by some diagnostic laboratories visiting the patients along with their mobile kits, reports ...

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Exports to be major job creator for...

US-India Strategic Partnership Forum President and CEO Mukesh Agni on Monday emphasised that exports are going to be a major job creator for India as the country moves towards becoming a US\$ 5 trillion economy. Agni, who was speaking at an event organised by the USISPF, also stressed that India and the US should continue to strengthen their economic engagements and increase the bilateral trade to US\$ 500 billion going forward. He said creating nearly 1.2 million jobs per month is going to be a...

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It may have been different if we...

A disheartened India head coach Amol Muzumdar rued the missed opportunities that could have altered the game's outcome after his team's hopes of reaching the women's T20 World Cup semifinals were dashed by a loss to Australia. In a bid to control their own destiny, the Indian team delivered a lackluster performance on the field, ultimately resulting in a nine-run loss to defending champions Australia in their must-win game on Sunday. "I think we were right in the game, right till the last over. Just that..."

-SPORTS

NIJJAR MURDER ROW WORSENS

India recalls top envoy from Canada

Expels 6 Canadian diplomats

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Monday expelled six Canadian diplomats and announced withdrawing its high commissioner and other "targeted" officials from Canada after strongly dismissing Ottawa's allegations linking the envoy to a probe into the killing of Sikh extremist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, in a major downturn in already frosty ties between the two nations.



External Affairs (MEA). Wheelers was bluntly told that baseless "targeting" of the Indian envoy and other officials was "completely unacceptable". The Washington Post, quoting unnamed Canadian officials, reported that Canada on Monday ordered six Indian diplomats to leave the country, including Verma and the top consular official in Toronto.

India's decision to recall High Commissioner Sanjay Verma and some other diplomats came shortly after the Canadian Charge d'Affaires Stewart Wheelers was summoned to the Ministry of

In a late evening statement, the MEA said India has asked six Canadian diplomats including Charge d'Affaires Wheelers and Deputy High Commissioner Patrick Hebert to leave India by or before 11:59 pm on October 19.

AMEENPUR DEMOLITION

HC issues notices to HYDRAB



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Justice CV Bhaskar Reddy of the Telangana High Court issued notices to revenue officials and police officials on Monday regarding a demolition conducted at Ameenpur on September 22.

Continued on Page 5



IAS OFFICERS CHALLENGE DOPT DECISION

Reach out to CAT

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Four IAS officers Vakati Karuna, Vani Prasad, Amrapali Kata, and Srijana Gummalla have approached the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) challenging the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) decision to assign them to the Andhra Pradesh cadre.

The DoPT's orders also affect IPS officers like Anjani Kumar, Abhilash Bist, Abhishek Mohanty who have been assigned to the Andhra Pradesh cadre

Earlier, these officers held a meeting with Chief Secretary Shanti Kumari at the Secretariat. After extensive discussions, they decided to take the matter to the CAT. All four officers are women, with three hailing from Telangana and one

from Andhra Pradesh. This challenge follows the DoPT's recent rejection of 11 IAS officers' requests to remain in the Telangana

cadre. The DoPT's orders also affect IPS officers like Anjani Kumar, Abhilash Bist, Abhishek Mohanty who have been assigned to the Andhra Pradesh cadre.

This issue stems from the 2014 division of IAS and IPS officers between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The division of officers remains a contentious issue, with several officials taking legal action against the Centre.

The DoPT, after considering the recommendations of the Khandekar Commission set up in March 2024, reissued its orders and mandated a report from Andhra Pradesh by mid-October. Consequently, many officials are challenging these orders through the CAT. Ronald Rose also went to CAT.

CM assures full support to Foxconn

Visits company's facility in Kongarakalan, seeks investments

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy accompanied by Minister Sridhar Babu visited the Foxconn facility in Kongarakalan on Monday. During the visit, the Chief Minister held discussions with the representatives of Foxconn to review the company's progress and other related matters.



The CM asked Foxconn to

explore opportunities for growth in Telangana and promised full support from the government to ensure the company's success.

Cabinet expansion soon, says Mahesh

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Cabinet will be expanded and the TPCC Executive Committee will be appointed soon, TPCC President B. Mahesh Kumar Goud said. Speaking to the media on Monday at the party office in Nizamabad, Mahesh said that local body elections will be conducted as soon as possible after the caste census.

been given to the DCC President. Criticising BRS's social media wing, he said that the BRS uses social media without any social sense. The BRS's social media wing has been propagating lies against the TG government and ministers. This campaign will give them temporary happiness but in the long run, it will certainly harm the BRS, he said.

Continued on Page 5

CM, Mahesh to attend CWC meeting 2



KTR and Congress spar over Radar Station

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao encountered an uncomfortable situation on Monday during his visit to pay tributes to Professor Saibaba at Maulani in Hyderabad.

KTR, who was present to offer condolences to the family and pray for the late Professor's soul, encountered slogans from the crowd which chanted, "Go back KTR."

The incident, which occurred while KTR was paying respects to Saibaba's body, led to questions being raised by some individuals in the crowd. They reportedly asked, "What did the BRS do when Saibaba was imprisoned for 10 years?" They also expressed scepticism about BRS leaders coming to pay tributes now.

KTR left the premises soon after the incident. According to BRS insiders, the slogans were not raised by civil rights activists but by followers of Mainampalli Hanumantha Rao, who led the protests with the chant "Go back KTR."

CASTE SURVEY

BC Commission to conduct hearings



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BC Commission launched its operations on Monday with a meeting at its office in Khairatabad. The Commission discussed the further course of action in line with the orders issued by the Telangana

Government on October 9 outlining the terms of reference for the Commission's work.

Planning Department Principal Secretary Sandeep Kumar Sultania attended the meeting as a special invitee and briefed the Commission on preparations for the caste survey. Continued on Page 5

Cooperatives vital for farmers' welfare, asserts Ponnam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Transport Minister Ponnam Prabhakar emphasised the role of the cooperative movement in rural development and the part it played in his life.

He was speaking at a meeting on 'Cooperative Credit and Banking Development' held at the Hotel Park in Hyderabad on Monday.

"I started my political career as a student leader. Coming from a farming background, I chose to become a co-operator to serve farmers. From being the president of a Primary



Agricultural Cooperative Society in my hometown, I became the President of the District Cooperative Marketing Society. Eventually, I was

elected as the President of the State Cooperative Marketing Federation of United Andhra Pradesh," he said. Continued on Page 5



Eatala takes up SCB compassionate appointments with Rajnath

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP's Malkajgiri MP, Eatala Rajender, appealed to Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to examine the possibility of making compassionate appointments to the Cantonment Board as these appointments have not been made in the last 15 years.

Minister on Monday in New Delhi and explained to Rajnath Singh that many families are awaiting compassionate appointments and that they are requesting the Centre to take a positive decision regarding this.

Meanwhile, Eatala assumed office as the Chairman of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Offices of Profit on Monday in New Delhi.

ALLEGED VANDALISM

Tension grips Muthyalamma temple area

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Tension prevailed in Secunderabad after the alleged vandalism at Muthyalamma temple.

In the early hours of Monday, according to the CCTV footage going viral, an unknown individual has entered kicking the temple gate making a loud noise.

The Endowment officers have conducted an investigation and a report will be submitted to the Commissioner of Endowments. The Goddess's idol has been vandalised and thrown aside, said the endowment officers.

The North Zone Hyderabad City Police are investigating the case and have taken custody of a person handed over by the locals. Though



official information has not been released by the Police, an officer informed The Pioneer that one person was caught by the locals and detained by the police.

BJP member Madhavi Latha staged a protest and was later detained by the police. Speaking with the media, Madhavi Latha said, "I have no trust in the Police. People

have entered the temple premises and no action has been taken until afternoon. When we are here to question, they are not allowing us inside the temple. Is this fair enough?"

MLA Raja Singh has been kept under house arrest. He released a video on his social media platform saying that he is not being allowed to visit Muthyalamma temple.

Idols destroyed by fanatics: Kishan

Telangana BJP President Union Minister of Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy said that the idols in the Muthyalamma Temple were destroyed and that some people are trying to create com-

munal disturbances in Hyderabad. Demanding the State government to protect Hindu temples and punish the culprits, Kishan asked the State

Continued on Page 5

Seethakka launches job portal for the disabled

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Panchayat Raj, Rural Development and Women and Child Welfare Minister Seethakka inaugurated the Telangana Disabled Job Portal at the Secretariat on Monday. She also handed over appointment orders to 10 individuals at the Women's Welfare Department's helpline centre.

The event was attended by Women and Child Welfare Secretary Yakati Karuna, Disabled Welfare Corporation Chairman Veerayya and JD Shailaja from the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens.

A large number of representatives from associations of the disabled were also present.

In her speech, Seethakka stressed the challenges faced by disabled individuals in securing employment.

"Opportunities for disabled people are limited. Fighting for equality like other groups is difficult for them. Physical disabilities



are beyond one's control, and factors such as malnutrition or accidents can lead to disability. We are launching this online job portal to help these individuals," she said.

Seethakka emphasized that private companies must follow reservation policies for disabled individuals.

"There's no need for disabled people to go around seeking

jobs at companies. Registering on this online job portal is enough, and jobs will be offered based on their qualifications," she said.

She also outlined the government's commitment to empowering disabled individuals. "We are allocating 5% of welfare funds for disabled people, and we are pushing for 4% reservations in private

sector jobs. Previously, it was only 1%, but we are working to increase it to 4%. In schemes like Indiramma housing, reservations for disabled individuals will be strictly followed."

The minister assured the government's dedication to uplifting the disabled community. "This year, we are allocating Rs 50 crore in the budget for providing assistive devices to disabled individuals. There's no need for them to run around government offices; just share your problems with us directly, and we will ensure they are resolved."

She concluded by urging the disabled community to be united and report any issues they face, promising that the 'people's government' would resolve them.

"The backlog posts, which have been pending for a long time, will soon be filled," she announced, encouraging disabled individuals to pursue opportunities in fields that interest them.

CM, Mahesh going to Delhi on Oct 17 to attend CWC meeting

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is going to New Delhi on October 17 to attend the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting in which the party's important leaders from all states are participating.

Besides Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, TPCC President B. Mahesh Kumar Goud is also going to New Delhi to attend the CWC meeting.

The CWC's permanent invitee Health Minister Damodara Raja Narsimha may also go to New Delhi on October 17 to attend the same meeting.

The Chief Minister may meet the high command after this meeting to discuss Cabinet expansion.

It may be recalled that TPCC President B. Mahesh Kumar Goud informed on Monday that Cabinet expansion will take place soon.

Cong bankrupting TG like it did in HP: Kishan

BJP to launch protests on public issues from Nov 1

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana BJP President Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy said that in the name of guarantees, the Congress bankrupted Himachal Pradesh and in the same way it is bankrupting Telangana too.

He said the BJP will launch protests from November 1 on public issues and that party committees will be appointed from the village level.

He said that Revanth Reddy's rule is like former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Reddy's admin

and that the Congress government has not yet constructed a single house or demolished a single house but is demolishing the houses of the poor.

He said the Congress threw the poor on the road in the name of its five guarantees.

Kishan asked the government to show an alternative to the Musi River for drainage problems and asked whether it is going to beautify the Musi with gold.

He said that there is no clarity on Fourth City and Pharma City and that the Congress

government has been criticizing the Centre to divert public attention from its wrong policies.

He said the Centre has no intention to privatise SCCL and reminded that the BRS government had handed over coal mines to private companies.

He said that defections were also started by KCR and Revanth is also following KCR's footsteps.

He said that only the flag of the ruling party has changed in the state and not the agenda of the rulers.

Malla Reddy invites Sanjay to his granddaughter's wedding

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLA Ch. Malla Reddy met the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, on Monday along with his son-in-law BRS MLA Marri Rajasekhara Reddy and invited Sanjay to attend his granddaughter Marri Sreya Reddy's marriage. Malla Reddy and Rajasekhara Reddy handed over the wedding card to the Union Minister.

Meanwhile, Malla Reddy and Rajasekhara Reddy invited



the Munugode Congress MLA, Komatireddy Raj Gopal Reddy, also to his granddaughter's marriage.

Geetha Reddy to receive Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhavana Award on Oct 19



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former Minister Dr J. Geetha Reddy will receive the Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhavana Award on the occasion of the 34th Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhavana Yatra Commemoration Day at the Charminar on Saturday.

Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhavana Yatra Commemoration Committee members A. Shyam Mohan, G. Anand and others revealed this on Monday at the Gandhi Bhavan.

They said that Dr J. Geetha Reddy is a veteran Congress leader, former minister, three-time MLA and TPCC Working President.

They said that the late Rajiv Gandhi, former Prime Minister and former Congress President hoisted the Congress flag and started his Sadbhavana Yatra in the twin cities from the historic Charminar on October 19, 1990.

Indians have highest concentration of professionals in UK: Report

PNS ■ LONGDON

The ethnic group with the highest concentration of professional workers in the UK is Indian and considering ethnic minorities as a monolithic group for public policy purposes is now increasingly meaningless in the country, a new think-tank analysis concludes on Monday.

'A Portrait of Modern Britain: Ethnicity and Religion' published

They said that the Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhavana Yatra Commemoration Committee had been observing this day as the 'Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhavana Yatra Commemoration Day' for the last 34 years and organizing a programme at the Charminar every year and honouring an eminent personality with the Sadbhavana Award.

The panel consisting of Ex-MLC B. Kamalakar Rao and A. Shyam Mohan, the Chairman of the TPCC Intellectual Cell selected Dr J. Geetha Reddy for the Sadbhavana Award this year.

TPCC President B. Mahesh Kumar Goud MLC will hoist the Congress flag (where Rajiv hoisted the party flag in 1990).

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka and AICC in-charge Deepadas Munshi will be the chief guests at the function.

India, Algeria agree to strengthen ties

Prez Murmu holds talks with counterpart Tebboune

PNS ■ ALGIERS (ALGERIA)

President Droupadi Murmu met her Algerian counterpart Abdelmadjid Tebboune on Monday, during which they reviewed bilateral relations between India and Algeria and agreed to strengthen ties across sectors. Murmu reached here on Sunday evening on the first leg of her three-nation visit, making it the first-ever tour by an Indian Head of State to deepen India-Africa ties.

"Infusing momentum to India-Algeria ties! President Droupadi Murmu @rashtrapatiibhvn met President @TebbouneAmadjid of Algeria today," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) posted on X.

"Both leaders reviewed India-Algeria relations and agreed to work towards strengthening the ties across the sectors," it said, sharing some photographs of the meeting.

According to the website of the Indian Embassy in Algeria, exports from India to Algeria during 2022-23 were US\$ 613 million which further increased to US\$ 848.16 million in 2023-24. India's imports



during 2022-23 were US\$ 1.5 billion and during 2023-24 stood at US\$ 885.54 million.

India's exports to Algeria consisted of rice, pharmaceutical products, polyethylene terephthalate, granite and boneless meat etc.

India's imports from Algeria consisted largely of petroleum oils, LNG, natural calcium phosphates, saturated methanol and urea.

Earlier in the day, President Murmu laid a wreath at the Maqam Echahid Memorial in Algiers and paid tribute to the soldiers who laid down lives in the Algerian war of independence.

The President also visited the National Museum of the Moudjahid, which commemorates Algeria's struggle for liberation.

During an interaction with the Indian community in the Algerian capital on Sunday, Murmu said the head of National Liberation Front of Algeria was present in India in the late 50s and early 60s and "when Algeria became independent in 1962, India was present there to support Algeria and we immediately established diplomatic ties with the new state."

TG villagers ask Rahul to implement six guarantees

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

People from a village in Telangana's Adilabad district have written to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi demanding immediate implementation of the six guarantees.

The villagers of Mukhra in Echoda Mandal of Adilabad district sent postcards to the Leader of the Opposition, urging him to immediately start implementing the guarantees given during Assembly elections held in November last year.

The villagers have also sent postcards to Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy expressing their dissatisfaction over the delay in implementing the six guarantees.

They reminded Rahul that the Congress had promised to implement the guarantees within 100 days but it failed to do so even after completing 300 days in power.

The villagers said the

Congress failed to implement promises like enhancing social security pensions from Rs 2,000 to Rs 4,000 a month, a monthly pension of Rs 2,500 for all women, a tola gold for the beneficiaries of the Kalyana Lakshmi scheme, scooters for girl students, input investment



of Rs 15,000 per acre for farmers and waiver of crop loans up to Rs 2 lakh.

The villagers said if the Congress failed to honour its commitments they would protest in New Delhi.

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao posted on X 'the

postcard sent by the villagers along with photographs of villagers holding postcards in their hands.

"Six guarantees were assured to be implemented within 100 days of government formation. It's been over 300 days and no signs of progress. People can clearly see your betrayal, Mr Rahul," wrote KTR.

The BRS leaders have been trying to put pressure on the Congress government to implement its six guarantees and other promises made in the election manifesto.

Under the six guarantees, the Congress had made various promises to different sections of people like farmers, women and youth. While ruling party leaders have been claiming that they have already implemented some promises and are trying to implement the others, the opposition parties said that the Congress betrayed the people by not implementing the guarantees.

BRS admin gave final approval for VLF Station/Naval Base at Pudur: Govt

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress Government defended its decision to cooperate with the Centre in establishing a VLF station/naval base in the Pudur village of Ranga Reddy District.

The statement released on Monday said that the final approval for the naval project was given by the BRS government headed by K. Chandrasekhara Reddy.

The statement said the BRS admin issued GO Ms. No: 44 on December 12, 2017, through the Environment, Forests, Science & Tech Department. The GO approved the diversion of 1174 hectares (2,900 acres) of forest land in the Damagundam Reserve Forest of Hyderabad Division for establishing the VLF station/naval base.

It said the approval was given by the BRS admin to the Headquarters of the Eastern Naval Command, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh under Section 2 of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980.

However, BRS Working President KT Rama Rao on Monday condemned the project which they had approved.

The note said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy had merely respected the age-old concept of continuity of governance, and cooperative federalism and supported a project concerning national security.

The statement said that Revanth Reddy will inaugurate the project on Oct 15 (Tuesday) along with Union Ministers Rajnath Singh and G. Kishan Reddy, MoS Bandi Sanjay Kumar and others.

ED raids IAS officer, minister's aides in Jharkhand

PNS ■ RANCHI

The Enforcement Directorate Monday conducted searches against a senior IAS officer, persons linked to a cabinet minister and some others as part of a multi-crore money laundering probe into alleged irregularities in the water and sanitation department of poll-bound Jharkhand, official sources said.

The sources had earlier said that the raids were linked to the Jal Jeevan Mission, a scheme of the central government.

They said alleged illegal commission payments at the rate of 10 per cent was prevalent in the works awarded by the water and sanitation department and these kickbacks were shared among politicians in power, bureaucrats and department officials.

A total of 23 premises in state capital Ranchi and Chaibasa in West Singhbhum district were searched by the officials of the federal agency.

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Trayodashi: Oct 15 03:42 AM to Oct 16 12:19 AM
Chaturdashi: Oct 16 12:19 AM to Oct 16 08:40 PM
Nakshatram: Purva Bhadrapada: Oct 15 12:42 AM to Oct 15 10:08 PM
Uttara Bhadrapada: Oct 15 10:08 PM to Oct 16 07:17 PM
Rahukalam: 2:56 PM to 4:23 PM
Yamaganadam: 9:07 AM to 10:34 AM
Varjyam: 06:36 AM to 08:00 AM
Gulika: 12:01 PM to 1:29 PM
Amritakalam: 03:00 PM to 04:25 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:38 AM to 12:25 PM
HYDERABAD WEATHER
Forecast: Scattered Showers
Temp: 31°C
Humidity: 73%
Sunrise: 6:09 AM
Sunset: 5:54 PM
Updated: October 14, 2024 5:00 PM

CITY EVENTS

Heroines of Dharma

The uncompromising spirit of women from Indian epics. Nilesil Nilakanth Oak, Author, Indian antiquity researcher, TEDx speaker, Adjunct faculty, @ Institute of Advanced Sciences, Massachusetts.

Venue

The Quorum, 6th floor, Sattva Knowledge City, Gachibowli, October 15, 3.30 pm

Antar - Agni

Venue

Gaurang, Plot No. 106, Road No. 1, Jubilee Check Post. October 15, 1pm to 7 pm. October 16, 11 am to 7 pm.

South Star Rail

First special tourist train to the temples of Karnataka.

Vignesh, Product director, South Star Rail; Ramesh lyengar, business head, Tour Times, Telangana region, to speak.

Venue

Press Club, Basheerbagh, Besides LB Stadium, October 15, 11 am.

First Aid- CPR training

Venue

Taj Mahal Hotel, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad October 16, From 10 am to 1 pm

Gallery Dotwalk

The exhibition is curated by ace curator Premish Achari. The preview and walkthrough will display the works that are a mix of old and new thoughts by prominent artists.

Venue

Chitramayee State Art Gallery, Kavuri Hills, Jubilee Hills, Near Madhapur, Hyderabad Show on view till October 16, 11 am to 6 pm.

Rivaayat

A beautiful at home evening curated specially with our designer partners Shivan & Narresh.

Venue

Bobby Khandaris residence, 443, Jubilee Hills Rd. No 86, Filmnagar Phase 3 October 16, 6:30 pm onwards.

Toxic

By Abhishek Upmanyu

Venue

Shilpakala Vedika November 2

Prateek Kuhad

Silhouettes tour.

Venue

Hyderabad international convention centre November 8

Bottle Art workshop

Join us for a lively and creative event where we turn ordinary bottles into extraordinary works of art! Participants are encouraged to bring their old bottles-whether they're from beer, water, or any other source-and engage in a hands-on bottle paint workshop

Venue

Trailing Ivy Cafe till November 17

Lodge Keys invites people to donate old cycles for recycling

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

It is a common sight that a lot of discarded or unused cycles are left in the parking place as kids have outgrown them. They end up occupying so much valuable parking space. So, residents or owners can give the old cycle a fresh lease of life through the Cycle or Recycle initiative of Lodge Keys No 297.

Abandoned bicycles which would die rusting can be reborn, said Radheshyam Tiwari of Lodge Keys No 297. "We will give them a

fresh lease of life. Discarded bikes get a second chance at life and also help the young kids get a chance to adopt a healthy practice of bicycling," he said.

Public with such abandoned bicycles may please donate at Goshamahal Baradari Masonic Building, where they will be retrofitted and kept ready for donation.

The mission of Cycle Recycle, according to Lodge Keys, is to make affordable, good-quality used bicycles available to low-income people in developing areas.

Seethakka conducts surprise inspection of TG Foods

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Women and Child Welfare Seethakka, conducted a surprise inspection at the Telangana Foods office and factory located in Nacharam.

Telangana Foods is responsible for supplying various food products, including Balamrutham to Anganwadi centres. During her visit, the Minister checked the quality of the food products and inspected the cleanliness of the surroundings. The Minister also visited the food processing unit to understand the procedures involved and enquired

about the working methods. She personally examined the quality of the Balamrutham powder to ensure it met the required standards. As she toured the factory, the Minister gathered information from workers and staff members regarding the operations. Her unexpected inspection put the officials and staff on alert. The Telangana Foods officials briefed the Minister on the factory's different departments and the performance of the machinery. Seethakka was accompanied by Telangana Foods chairman Fayim and managing director



Srinivas Reddy. The Minister issued several directives during her inspection, including immediate arrangements to cover processed food items and the use of meshes for food storage containers. She emphasised the importance of cleanliness and instructed the staff to immediately implement the use of gloves for handling food products. Seethakka also visited the Telangana Foods warehouses and reviewed the procedures from raw material processing to packaging. She

stressed the importance of maintaining higher hygiene standards, considering the food is supplied to Anganwadis for children's consumption. Additionally, the Minister demanded a laboratory report on the quality of the food products to be submitted to her. She expressed displeasure over the snack food unit not functioning for a month due to technical issues and questioned the delay in repairs. She also toured the newly constructed units, expressing surprise over the fact that construction had not been completed even after a decade.

City Pioneer



HYDERABAD TUESDAY | OCTOBER 15, 2024

03

FESTIVAL RUSH

Passengers face shortage of buses, extra charges

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Passengers from across the State faced shortage of buses and extra charges on special buses for Dasara festival. Almost everyone who travelled a day before and a day after the festival faced this experience.

Former minister T Harish Rao took to X and said that it is very sad that the TGSRTC is collecting extra charges from people who went to celebrate Bathukamma festival at their home. "Without increasing the number of buses, increasing the ticket prices and taking away the festival joy from the people. Is this people's government?" he asked the Chief Minister.

The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) said that during festival time, usually passenger rush is one side only. They have charged extra only on special buses according to a Government Order (GO) released in 2003. With that GO, the corporation can increase the rates by 150 per cent on special buses. More than 9,000 buses are plying in the State.

"The corporation runs an average of 500 special buses every day to cope with the rush during the festival season. Amended charges



would be applicable only to those buses only," a TGSRTC official said.

Passenger Raghuvaran said that he had travelled from Jachcherala to MGBS. "They have collected Rs 170 instead of Rs 130 on Monday. I came to know that they are charging extra only in special buses. But the bus I boarded was not a special bus. It is a daily first bus on the route," he added.

Another passenger Uday Kiran said, "Due to the rush at bus depots we were forced to go for the private vehicles with extra money. I went

to Suryapet at 7 am on Monday but the bus depot was totally filled with the passengers. So, I chose to pick private travels, but they collected Rs 200 extra on usual bus fare."

Even in the special buses, there is no place to sit. A passenger who did not want to be named said that he travelled in an RTC bus from Thorrur to Uppal X roads and paid Rs 360.

"There was no place to sit in the bus from Thorrur bus depot till I got off at Uppal. I stood in the bus for around four hours," he added.

Southern leg of K2K electric bus expedition flagged off

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Southern leg of Kashmir to Kanyakumari (K2K) electric bus expedition launched in Hyderabad. The NueGo electric intercity brand under Green Cell Mobility was flagged off by Gopalakrishna VC, Director of Automotive and EV, Government of Telangana.

The K2K electric bus expedition which started from Hyderabad is part of the journey's southern phase. The all-electric bus, which began its journey in Kashmir, is equipped with the latest technology and emits zero tail-pipe emissions. Covering over 4,000 kilometers through 11 states and union

territories, the expedition aims to set new records for electric mobility. So far, the bus has travelled approximately 2,800 kms spreading the message of sustainability.

The Hyderabad leg follows the Nagpur flag-off, where Union Minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the western section of the journey.

Gopalakrishna commented, "The Kashmir to Kanyakumari expedition showcases not just the potential of electric vehicles but also India's commitment to building a sustainable future. Telangana is at the forefront of promoting green mobility and we are proud to support this remarkable journey."

VH's biography to be released on Oct 26

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former Lok Sabha speaker Meira Kumar will release Telangana Congress senior leader V Hanumantha Rao's biography 'The Extraordinary Life and Times of V Hanumantha Rao' on October 26 at Ambedkar Auditorium, Andhra Pradesh Bhavan, 1, Ashoka Road, New Delhi.

It was written by Kambalappalli Krishna in Telugu and translated by journalist CR Gowri Shankar into English. While revealing it, VH appealed to his fans and followers to attend the book launch.

He said that the future generations will get inspiration while reading his book. He made it clear that he will serve the Congress party while continuing in the party only.

VH said that Chief Minister



A Revanth Reddy is going to implement the caste census as he assured in the Assembly following the word of Rahul Gandhi. He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not care about the BCs, being a BC for the last 10 years.

VH said that the party will get majority public representatives in the local body elections

due to caste census. He appealed to the Congress leaders to enroll the backward classes as party members.

VH said that Telangana should stand as a role model to the nation while conducting caste census in the State. He assured that the caste census would be taken up in Karnataka also.

Deputy forest range officer Arun Kumar suspended

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Forest Department has suspended B Arun Kumar, Deputy Range Officer of the Jagtial Section, following allegations of gross negligence and misconduct.

The suspension order was issued under Rule 8(1) of the Telangana Civil Services (CC&A) Rules, 1991, by Chief Conservator of Forests C Saravanan.

The suspension follows an incident on October 11, when Arun Kumar, along with other officials, allegedly consumed alcohol at the Jagtial Forest Office during Mysamma puja celebration. The incident, which was covered in local media, brought disrepute to the department and was

deemed a violation of Rule 26(ii) of the Telangana Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964.

Disciplinary proceedings have been initiated against Arun Kumar for his action. Until the conclusion of these proceedings, he will remain under suspension.

His headquarters will continue to be the Jagtial forest office and he has been instructed not to leave without prior permission from the competent authority.

During the suspension period, Arun Kumar will be entitled to subsistence allowance equivalent to half-pay leave salary, along with DA and other compensatory allowances, said the orders.

Odisha cadre trainee IAS officers visit GHMC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As part of their study of the practices followed by the officials of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, a group of probationary IAS officers from Odisha visited the city on Monday.

Officials from the GHMC explained the functioning of the key departments of tax, finance, solid waste management, public grievance redressal system and modern services provided to the people.

GHMC additional commissioner Sneha Sabarish told them that with the help of GIS survey, the GHMC is completing the mapping of assets.

Body of human rights activist Saibaba donated to Gandhi Medical College

DEEPIKA PASHAM deepikapasham2015@gmail.com ■ HYDERABAD

The family and colleagues of human rights activist Professor GN Saibaba honoured his final wish by donating his body to the Anatomy Department of Gandhi Medical College in Hyderabad, allowing medical students to study his remains.

His eyes had previously been donated to the LV Prasad Eye Hospital.

Over 150 first-year MBBS students, on their first day of classes at Gandhi Hospital/Gandhi Medical College, gathered to witness the handing over of the body for educational purposes. Among the crowd was Saibaba's wife, Vasantha Kumari, who addressed the students, asking, "Do you all know who Saibaba is?"



Human rights activist give their message to medical students in Gandhi Medical College about GN Saibaba's last wish

She explained, "Saibaba was a man of determination and hard work. Despite contracting polio at the age of five, he pursued his education, earning a PhD and becoming a professor. Teaching was not just his profession but his passion. His dream was to interact with students every day. Sadly, he was wrongfully

imprisoned and endured immense suffering. His final wish was to donate his body for students to study, hoping it would help advance medical knowledge, especially concerning disabilities."

His daughter, Manjeera, said that her father wanted to contribute to the development of medical science. "It's not a loss for us. I'm happy

that his final act was for the benefit of students."

Earlier, Saibaba's body was kept at his residence in Moulali before being taken to Gandhi Medical College, accompanied by friends, colleagues and family members.

One of Saibaba's students, Sai Kiran, remarked, "Just as Sir was waiting, we were also hoping he would return to teaching one day."

K Sajaya, a social activist in Hyderabad, reflected, "A great childhood friend has gone too far, but we hope someone will continue to fight for the person he was and the cause he stood for." Professor Sudha Rani from the Anatomy Department commented, "There has been an increase in body donations for medical education, from people of all backgrounds, including NRIs and VIPs."

Panel to be set up to probe trolls on women scribes

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In response to letter written by the Forum for Good Governance (FGG) to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to form a committee to investigate online trolling of women journalists, the Telangana Cyber Security Bureau (TGCSB) has forwarded the information to Telangana Director General of Police (DGP) to form a committee.

"Journalists in Telugu states are increasingly being targeted through online

harassment, trolling and abusive language simply for reporting the news. In several extreme cases, criminal charges have been filed against them, clearly indicating attempts to silence independent voices and stifling free expression.

Social media wings of political parties are orchestrating organised troll farms and war rooms to target journalists, subjecting them to relentless online abuse," the FGG wrote to the CM.

Telangana junior docs to go on fast today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Junior Doctors Association (TJUDA) has announced a one-day fast to join the ongoing fast-unto-death over the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at West Bengal's RG Kar Medical Centre and Hospital.

In a release, they said that postgraduates, interns, under-graduates and super-speciality post-graduates will join a peaceful one-day fast on Tuesday, October 15, from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm.

This protest is in response to the call given by the Indian Medical Association (IMA), both JDN and MSN, expressing solidarity with junior doctors in Kolkata who are protesting against critical issues in the healthcare system through a fast-unto-death for the fast-track justice of Dr Abhaya, they added.

The protest will be conducted peacefully and will not affect essential medical services in collaboration with the IMA at respective stations, said the junior doctors of Telangana.



'A village that shunned Dasara forever after a tragedy'

PNS ■ YADADRI BHUVANAGIRI

Situated in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, the village Boddugudem under Addagur mandal does not celebrate Dasara. While the festival is widely celebrated across Telangana, people in Boddugudem have stopped celebrating the festival long ago.

An incident 50 years ago during the celebrations of the Dasara festival led to the villagers adopting a resolution to avoid celebrating the festival forever. The story traces back to a tragic incident during a Dasara celebration in the village. A violent clash resulted in the death of a villager. The incident deeply impacted the community and the village elders began to believe that celebrating Dasara brought bad luck and misfortune. From that point on, the elders decided to refrain from celebrating the festival, a decision that has been passed down from generation to generation.

The village elders, considered the custodians of tradition, strongly believe in this practice. They have upheld this belief for decades, arguing that celebrating Dasara brings disaster and unrest to the community. Despite the changing times and the

influence of new generations, the elders continue to resist the idea of observing the festival.

For decades, the elders of Boddugudem have been the driving force behind the decision to avoid Dasara celebrations. This belief has become so deeply ingrained in the community that it has shaped the village's identity. Despite the festival symbolising the victory of 'good over evil' in many other regions, the people of Boddugudem believe that participating in Dasara would only bring misfortune.

Although the younger generation has occasionally raised questions about the validity of this belief, advocating for the celebration of Dasara as a festival of unity and joy, these voices have been largely suppressed by the elders. The latter holds that breaking from tradition would lead to social unrest and even tragedy.

As the debate continues, Boddugudem remains a village where superstitions and modernity intersect. While the village elders continue to uphold the belief that Dasara brings bad luck, the newer generation is slowly starting to challenge these beliefs.

One killed, three injured in car mishap

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

One person was killed and three others injured when the car in which they were travelling met with an accident in the early hours of Sunday on the outskirts of Jeella Cheruvu village under Kusuman chimandal on the National High Way in Khammam district.

According to the police and national highway patrolling personnel, a family belonging to Aziz Nagar of Khammam were returning after attending a marriage on Saturday in Hyderabad. The accident happened when the driver lost control over the vehicle. The deceased was identified as Moimuddin Ali, 57, Imam of the Jama Masjid in Kaman Bazar in Khammam. The condition of driver Shafi was stated to be serious. Two others Kurjahan, Hamid Khan survived the accident with minor injuries.

Sex determination tests go unchecked

Officials are yet to crack on pre-natal gender tests

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

The sex determination tests are reportedly going unchecked in the district. In fact, the district has emerged as the breeding ground for conducting such tests. The tests are being carried out clandestinely and the female fetuses are being aborted if the test results indicate that the fetus is not that of a baby boy, it is alleged.

The tests are being done at the doorsteps of the pregnant women by some diagnostic laboratories visiting the patients along with their mobile kits, reports indicate.

It is apparent that the patients are visiting from neighbouring states of Maharashtra and Karnataka to undergo the pre-natal gender test.

Conducting such tests is prohibited by law. At many diagnostic centres, the scanning of the fetuses is being done to assess the health of the baby, but they refrain from conducting the sex-determi-



nation tests.

Recently, the officials conducted raids on several diagnostic laboratories and hospitals and seized them for conducting the tests. When one hospital is sealed, another hospital with a different name has been opened to resume

the conduct of such tests.

When the persons with no proper qualifications and experience are conducting the tests, jeopardizing the lives of the expectant mothers, it is said.

The scanning centres are required to have experienced

radiologist and technician on their rolls. Some centres have been conducting the tests. In 2021, complaints were lodged against a few hospitals on conducting the tests. The state's health team conducted the raids and the irregularities going on in the hospital were completely video recorded. The hospital was seized and the organisers of the hospital were taken into custody.

As and when a woman becomes pregnant, the family members are bringing the patient to this place to undergo the sex-determination test done. Most of the patients who visit this are pregnant woman having a girl as their first child.

These unscrupulous centres charge anything between Rs 10,000 and Rs 15,000 to conduct the sex-determination test and reveal the identity of the fetus.

The registered medical practitioners (RMP) too are conducting tests.

Liquor sales hit record high in RR, Vikarabad dists

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Dasara celebrations in Telangana have once again contributed to a massive surge in alcohol sales, bringing in record-breaking Rs 291.24 crore in revenue for the State government from Rangareddy and Vikarabad districts. As with many major festivals in the region, alcohol sales soared as revelers gathered with friends and family to celebrate.

Compared to last year's Dasara, which saw Rs 257.31 crore worth of liquor sold, this year marked a notable increase of Rs 33.93 crore. Residents of the joint district celebrated the festival with enthusiasm, particularly those returning to their hometowns for the holiday, significantly boosting liquor sales.

Rangareddy district led the



while Shamshabad, Serilingampally, and Chevella Excise divisions contributed Rs 71.44 crore. In Vikarabad district, alcohol sales also saw a notable increase, rising from Rs 16.71 crore last year to Rs 20.74 crore this year, a growth of Rs 4.03 crore.

Beer emerged as the drink of choice during this year's Dussehra festivities. While 2,78,133 cases of Indian made liquor (IML) were sold, beer sales surged, with 4,79,673 cases sold. The increased demand for beer, especially in the warm weather, contributed to the record-breaking revenue figures.

This surge in sales has proven to be a windfall for the Excise Department, as festival-goers continue to indulge during Dasara celebrations.

Man attacked on suspicion of practising black magic

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

Despite advancements in science and technology, superstitions seem to be on the rise. Though several rationalist associations are vigorously campaigning against black magic, people in some areas still believe in its existence and even attack and kill those suspected to have been practising witchcraft.

In a shocking incident at Adloor village in the district, a man, identified as Gaddameeda Silu, was attacked by villagers on the suspicion that he was practising black magic and it led to people in the village taking ill.

Sailu had been expelled from the village a month ago and had been living on rent near the old bus stand in Kamareddy since then. Following the attack, he suffered serious injuries. The vic-



Gaddameeda Sailu

tim's family has filed a complaint against the assailants at the Devanipalli police station. The police have registered a case and initiated an investigation.

The police said that an investigation is underway. The police confirmed that Sailu was assaulted by a group of villagers.

But, the motive behind the attack is yet to be ascertained, the police said.

Harish Rao participates in Medak's Alai Balai event

PNS ■ MEDAK

Former minister T Harish Rao attended the Alai Balai event held under the leadership of former MLA Chanti Kranti Kiran at Andole in Medak district.

In his remarks, Harish Rao expressed his grief over the loss of prominent leaders like Vijayarama Raju and Allam Nawaz Reddy, offering his deep condolences to their families. "They have made significant contributions to the party, and I pay my respects to them," he said. Harish Rao expressed happiness in participating in the Alai Balai event, describing it as a celebration that brought immense inspiration during the Telangana movement.

He emphasised the cultural importance of Alai Balai, where people from all castes come together to celebrate Batukamma



Former minister T Harish Rao speaking at a meeting in Andole on Monday

and honor nature. "Telangana is a land that cherishes the worship of flowers and nature," he added. Commenting on the current state of governance, Harish Rao criticised the failures under Revanth Reddy's administration. "Under KCR's rule, there were no such issues.

In Sangareddy, two people lost their lives due to drinking contaminated water. "While we pro-

vided safe water through Mission Bhagiratha, even that is being neglected now." He further criticised the lack of farmer support and other welfare schemes. "There is no Rythu Bandhu, no Batukamma sarees, and the loan waiver hasn't materialized. December 9 and August 15 have passed, and yet the promises remain unfulfilled. Minister Tummala recently said that the loan waiver will be completed by December 9, but they've already wasted a year." Meanwhile, Legislative Council Opposition Leader Madhusudhanachari also spoke, highlighting Telangana's unity in diversity. "Telangana is a testament to unity in diversity, where people of all castes, religions, and regions live in harmony. KCR's ten years of governance were without any hurdles and set an example for the entire country," he remarked.

YADAGIRIGUTTA SRI LAKSHMI NARASIMHA SWAMY TEMPLE

Gold plating of Vimana Gopuram to begin soon

PNS ■ YADAGIRIGUTTA

The Telangana government has granted permission for the gold plating (Bangu Thapadam) of the Vimana Gopuram at the Yadagirigutta Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple, using temple funds and donations from devotees. The government order, issued on September 27, authorised the use of contributions and temple reserves for the project.

The copper sheet work for the Vimana Gopuram has been completed, and the golden plating work will now begin. The project has been assigned to Smart Creations, Chennai, who previously handled the construction of the flagstaff and the main entrance at the temple.

A total of 60 kilograms of gold is required for the plating



work. So far, donations have contributed 10.5 kilograms of gold, along with Rs 20 crore in cash. This cash donation will

be used to purchase approximately 26 kilograms of gold. Additionally, 13 kilograms of gold from the temple's reserves

will be utilised for the project. The remaining gold will be supplemented by gold equivalent to 2 kilograms and 776 kilograms of silver, which are available at the temple.

The government has decided to complete the gold plating work by February 25 next year in time for the annual Brahmotsavams starting from March 1 next year.

The entire project covers 10,000 square feet, with the cost of the project estimated at Rs 3,90,000 at the rate of Rs 3,900 per square foot. The funding for the work will be provided by the Yadagirigutta Temple Trust, as confirmed by Bhaskar Rao, the temple's Executive Officer.

In related news, the Yadagirigutta temple reported a total income of Rs 13,40,391 on October 10.

Two youths die in road accident

PNS ■ RAJANNA SIRICILLA

Two youths died in a road accident near Mamidipalli village under Konaropet mandal in the district on Sunday night.

The incident happened when a bike on which they were travelling crashed into a tree. They rider lost control of the bike leading to the accident. The deceased were identified as Sura Anil (22) and Vikruthi Dileep (21).

They hailed from Hanumajpet under Vemulawada rural mandal. They were on their way back after participating in the Durga Mata immersion festivities on Sunday night. After the celebrations, the two young men were on their way to Mamidipalli. The rider lost control of the bike due to



Anil Dileep

overspeeding. The local people called 108 for ambulance, but there was no response. The police who were on patrol in the area ferried the injured to Vemulawada Area Hospital. As the doctor felt that the injured required expert treatment, the police took them to another hospital. But, tragically, the youth died en route to hospital, the police said.

Foundation for Navy radar station to be laid today

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Preparations are underway for the foundation laying ceremony of a Navy radar installation in the Damagundam forests under Pudur Mandal in Vikarabad District. Navy officials have already installed a plaque at the site ahead of the event, scheduled to take place on Tuesday.

Union Defense Minister Rajnath Singh and Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy will participate.

Vikarabad District Collector Pratik Jain and Superintendent of Police Narayana Reddy are closely monitoring the arrangements, ensuring the event proceeds

smoothly. Amid ongoing movements by voluntary organisations and public associations campaigning under the 'Save Ramagundam' banner, security for the programme has been tightened.

Authorities have made it clear that only those with proper authorisation will be allowed to attend, and individuals without the required permissions may be blocked from entering.

The District Collector and SP are also set to hold a meeting with officials from various departments at the Collector's office to finalize the program's arrangements and security plans.

Insider allegedly steals rice bags from temple

PNS ■ JAGTIAL

One of the prominent temples in Telangana, the Kondagattu Anjaneya Swamy Temple in Jagtial district has been frequently making headlines.

A theft that took place on the temple premises, specifically in the daily annadanam (free meal service) hall, stunned the authorities. On October 9, a good number of bags of rice and other items were stolen. Upon reviewing the CCTV footage, it was revealed that the thief was not a stranger, but the assistant in charge of the annadanam hall, Ramulu.

Authorities identified Ramulu as the alleged perpetrator after

examining the CCTV footage. Consequently, they issued a memo to Ramulu and ordered an inquiry into the matter, stating that departmental action would be taken after the report.

In the past, serial thefts in the temple were reported. In February 2023, a major theft occurred in the main temple when two idols and silver and gold items were stolen. The total value of the stolen items was estimated to be around Rs 9 lakh, including 15 kilograms of silver and various gold ornaments. Police arrested seven individuals in connection with this case, identifying the main suspect as notorious burglar from Karnataka.

Govt keen on developing Vemulawada temple: Minister

Minister for Endowments Konda Surekha said that Sri Raja Rajeshwara temple will be developed on the lines of Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple at Yadagirigutta

PNS ■ RAJANNA SIRICILLA

Minister for Endowments Konda Surekha on Monday announced that the State government is taking steps to develop the Vemulawada temple on the lines of Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple at Yadagirigutta.

During her visit to Vemulawada town on Monday, she was welcomed by Government Whip Aadi Srinivas, District Collector Sandeep Kumar Jha, and Superintendent of Police Akhil Mahajan.

The temple priests offered her traditional welcome with poornakumbham. She offered prayers to the deity.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister mentioned that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is paying special attention to the development of the Rajanna temple.

A high-level meeting on the temple's development is scheduled to take place soon under the leadership Chief Minister and the government is preparing plans based on scriptures for the temple's development.



Minister for Endowments Konda Surekha offering prayers at Sri Raja Rajeshwara temple in Vemulawada on Monday

She assured the devotees that all necessary facilities would be provided and that the government has already taken steps to facilitate the smooth flow of pilgrims visiting the temple since the formation of the people's government.

Local MLA and Government Whip Aadi Srinivas is also working diligently for the temple's development, she said.

The government is committed to developing the Vemulawada temple orders had been issued for the gold

covering of for the Yadadri temple, she said.

With 65 kilograms of gold and 5,000 kilograms of silver available at the Vemulawada temple, plans are being made to use it for golden covering, silver palanquins, and festival idols, the Minister said.

She was accompanied by Temple Executive Officer Vinod Reddy, Vemulawada Municipal Vice Chairman Mahesh, Revenue Divisional Officer Rajeshwar, public representatives, officials and others.

ACROSS THE STATES



Eight Bangladeshis held for illegal stay in Karnataka

Eight Bangladeshi nationals who were staying illegally in Udupi district here were apprehended, police said on Saturday. They were residing in Hooide village in the district for the past three years without valid passports or visas. According to Udupi Superintendent of Police Arun K, the arrest came after one of the accused, identified as Mohammed Maniq, attempted to flee to Dubai from Mangaluru airport using a fake passport. Suspicion from immigration officials led to his arrest at Bajpe airport in the neighbouring Dakshina Kannada district, he said. "Upon interrogation, Maniq revealed that seven other Bangladeshi nationals were staying with him illegally in Hooide village." The information was relayed to the Udupi police, who subsequently conducted a raid in the area. Police detained the seven individuals on Friday and initiated a detailed inquiry into their illegal stay. During the investigation, it was discovered that the accused possessed fake Aadhaar cards.



Court rejects bail plea of Kannada actor Darshan

A sessions court here on Monday denied the bail petitions of Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa and his friend Pavithra Gowda in connection with the murder of 33-year-old Renukaswamy, a fan of the actor. Renukaswamy was abducted from his hometown Chitradurga and tortured to death allegedly by Darshan and his gang members. The victim had allegedly sent obscene messages to the prime accused of the case and the actor's friend Pavithra Gowda, which enraged the actor. This alleged provocation is said to have led to Renukaswamy's murder. His body was discovered near a stormwater drain close to an apartment complex in Sumanahalli, Bengaluru, on June 9. In September, the Bengaluru police filed a comprehensive 3,991-page charge sheet implicating 17 people, including Darshan and Gowda, in the case.



Durga Puja: 50 lakh people travel on Kolkata Metro

Over 50 lakh people travelled on the Kolkata Metro during the six days of Durga Puja, a statement said on Monday. The passenger count was marginally higher, 1.77 per cent, than the previous year, it said. In the Blue Line between Dakshineswar and New Garia, 44.19 lakh people travelled from October 7 and October 12. The Green Line 2, Howrah Maidan-Esplanade, a total of 3.79 lakh passengers travelled, while in Green Line-1 between Sector 5 and Sealdah, 2.53 lakh people travelled. The Dum Dum metro station in the northern fringes of the city recorded the highest footfall of 4.43 lakh people, followed by Kalighat (3.61 lakh) and Sovabazar-Sutanuti (3.11 lakh). The Kolkata Metro extended its service hours and ran special services to handle the festive rush on the two corridors during the period.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT CASE AGAINST BRIJ

Delhi court records statement of witness

A Delhi court on Monday recorded the statement of a witness in a case of alleged sexual harassment of female wrestlers by former Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Priyanka Rajpoot recorded the statement of the witness and posted the matter on October 19 for further proceedings. The court on May 10 ordered framing the charge of sexual harassment and other charges

against Singh, a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader, in the case lodged on a complaint from six female wrestlers, observing that there was "sufficient evidence" against him. It had directed framing of charges against Singh, a six-time former Lok Sabha MP, under Indian Penal Code sections 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 354A (sexual harassment) and 506 (criminal intimidation). The magistrate framed the charges on May 21 after Singh pleaded not guilty.

'Turn towards Indian talent for sourcing workforce'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday said the need for a "well-trained workforce" in different geographies is only going to grow further, and urged friendly nations to turn towards the Indian talent for sourcing workforce requirements in their countries.

In his keynote address after launching the eMigrate V2.0 portal and a mobile app here, he also said the government shall remain steadfast in the efforts to create safer and legal channels of emigrating abroad.

Union Minister of Labour and Employment, Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister of State for External Affairs Pabitra Margherita also joined on dais, while ambassadors of several countries, among others, were present among the audience.

Mandaviya in his address said efforts are underway to integrate the eMigrate V2.0 portal with other digital platforms of his ministry to provide seamless access of relevant documents and profiles of skilled workers by potential employers sitting abroad.

The revamped version of eMigrate portal is more than just a digital platform, "it is a beacon of hope, a symbol of our commitment to protecting the rights and dignity of our workers in foreign lands", Jaishankar said.

EAM Jaishankar to friendly nations



The revamped version of eMigrate portal is more than just a digital platform, "it is a beacon of hope, a symbol of our commitment to protecting the rights and dignity of our workers in foreign lands", Jaishankar said.

The enhancements in the portal reflect new realities and transformation that is being witnessed in so far as global migration dynamics are concerned, the external affairs minister underlined.

"There is a global need for workers who have domain specific knowledge in their particular fields. For several reasons, this need for a well-

trained workforce in different geographies is only going to grow further," he said.

This is clearly reflected in the pace at which "we have undertaken negotiations with different countries" on migration and mobility since 2015, and also in how the mobility ecosystem in India itself is taking shape, the EAM said.

In his address, Jaishankar

said the government shall remain steadfast in the efforts to create safer and legal channels of emigrating abroad.

"I am sure that all the Protectors of Emigrants, empowered with technology and through their collective experiences, will gear to work relentlessly towards fulfilling our commitments to the public and to the nation," he said.

"I urge all the participants and particularly the ambassadors who have joined us today, in this inauguration programme, to turn towards the Indian talent and the demographic dividend that India has to offer, for sourcing workforce requirements in your particular countries" the EAM said.

The eMigrate Version 2 portal has also been integrated with DigiLocker, and that is also a big step in digital transformation. This will enable the emigrants to submit various documents for obtaining clearances through DigiLocker in a paperless mode, as well as to store them securely, all their important documents like passports, employment contracts, are actually secured, he added. The Ministry of External Affairs has leveraged the use of technology and digital systems to enhance the efficiency and efficacy of this portal.

Opposition MPs boycott Waqf committee meeting over allegations against Kharge



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Several opposition MPs on Monday boycotted a meeting of the parliamentary committee examining the Waqf (Amendment) Bill alleging that the panel is not functioning in accordance with rules, after Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge was accused by a depositor of being involved in Waqf land scams.

The lengthy meetings of the Joint Committee of Parliament have been marked by the exchange of heated words between its BJP and opposition members, and things turned especially stormy on Monday as the latter questioned the rationale behind calling members of Hindu groups for deposition on a law concerning Muslims.

Opposition MPs walked out in protest against the submission of Anwar Maniappady, a former chairman of the Karnataka State Minorities Commission and the Karnataka Minorities Development Corporation. He

is also a former Karnataka BJP vice-president.

Maniappady named several Congress leaders from Karnataka, including Kharge and Rehman Khan, and others for their alleged involvement in embezzling Waqf properties.

The opposition MPs cited rules regulating the parliamentary committees' proceedings to claim that "unproven allegations" against "high dignitaries" cannot be made at the meetings of these panels. Maniappady, they said, also made an appeal to Muslims not to oppose the Bill, which too was out of line.

An opposition MP said allegations cannot be levelled against someone who is not there to defend himself.

The chairperson of the committee, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Jagdambika Pal, however, overruled their objections and allowed the deposition to continue.

A BJP member said the deposition was relevant to the Bill as Maniappady's claims pertained to Waqf properties.

Congress's top leadership involved in 'land grab': BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday alleged that the entire top leadership of the Congress is involved in corruption relating to land transactions and said they should resign on moral grounds after being "exposed".

BJP spokesperson and Rajya Sabha MP Sudhanshu Trivedi's sharp attack on the Congress came after a trust linked to its president Mallikarjun Kharge's



family withdrew its request for the allotment of five acres of civic amenity site in Bengaluru to set up a 'Multi-Skill

Development Centre, Training Institutes and Research Centre".

The move by Congress president Kharge's son Rahul Kharge, who heads the trust, comes close on the heels of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi returning the 14 sites to the Mysuru Urban Development Authority after the Lokayukta police registered a case against Siddaramaiah, his wife and brother-in-law.

Can finish off Lawrence Bishnoi's network in 24 hours: Pappu Yadav

PNS ■ PATNA

Bihar MP Pappu Yadav said he could "finish off within 24 hours" the network of Lawrence Bishnoi who is suspected to be behind the assassination of former Maharashtra minister Baba Siddiqui.

The Purnea MP made the boastful statement in a post on X, on Sunday, when he called Gopalganj-born Siddiqui "a son of Bihar" and trained his guns at the NDA government in the

western state. "Has the nation become an army of eunuchs? A criminal sitting in jail gets people bumped off at will and all remain mute spectators," wrote Yadav, himself known for strong-arm tactics in politics.

He added, "Maha jungle raj prevails in Maharashtra. The proof is the murder of Baba Siddiqui, who

enjoyed Y security cover and was known to be supportive of the government."

The MP, who redeemed himself politically in the recent Lok Sabha polls after remaining in the wilderness for a long, also said "if law permits, I can finish off within 24 hours the entire network run by this two-bit criminal called Lawrence Bishnoi".

Cooperatives vital for farmers' welfare..

Continued from page 1

"Cooperatives have been a crucial part of my life after student politics, particularly those dealing with farmers. I have attended several international conferences, including ICIC meetings worldwide. I'm glad to be part of this international conference hosted by my brother, Ravinder Rao, here in Hyderabad," Ponnamm added.

Highlighting the past efforts of leaders, he said, "In 2005,

Ravinder Rao and I joined hands to strengthen cooperatives. During the tenure of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Rajasekhar Reddy, a united committee was formed, which played a vital role in reviving the cooperative movement across the nation." He pointed out that the cooperative movement, sustained by government decisions, helped all farmers across India. "In 2004, the Congress

government waived the loans of millions of farmers, and under the leadership of Revanth Reddy in Telangana, we provided a two-lakh loan waiver to farmers," Ponnamm stated. He added that the Congress commitment to initiatives like farm loan waivers stemmed from its determination to protect farmers.

"Cooperatives in Telangana are involved in the procurement of crops. This system provides financial support to coop-

eratives in our villages. Inputs like fertilizers and seeds are also provided through cooperatives, and we hope that every farmer becomes a cooperative member to access financial assistance from either the government or cooperative banks," he concluded.

Karnataka's Cooperative Minister Rajanna, NAFUCB Chairman Konduri Ravinder, and NAFUCB Managing Director Bhima Subramanyam were also present at the meeting.

Cabinet expansion..

Continued from page 1

He said that KCR destroyed the once economically strong Telangana and that there is a need to introduce a Smart City scheme in Nizamabad city and that the Skill India College is coming to Nizamabad district. Mahesh said the Congress government is also implementing schemes not promised during elections.

Responding to the clash between the followers of Minister Konda Surekha and MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy, he said that the problem arose due to the over-enthusiasm of the followers but there is no dispute between the leaders.

HC issues notices..

Continued from page 1

The respondents are the Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency (HYDRAD) Commissioner, AV Ranganath, Sangareddy Collector Valluri Kranthil, Ameenpur Tahasildhar Radha, Patancheru DSP Ravinder Reddy, HYDRAD DSP Srinivas, Town Planning official Ram Reddy and other officials. The court will hear the case on October 28.

India recalls top envoy from..

Continued from page 1

The other diplomats expelled are Marie Catherine Joly, Ian Ross David Trites, Adam James Chuijka and Paula Orjuela (all first secretaries).

In its reaction to Canada's charges against Verma, New Delhi described them as "concocted" and "preposterous imputations" and ascribed the allegations to the "political agenda of the Trudeau government that is centred around vote bank politics".

In its statement, the MEA said India received a "diplomatic communication from Canada yesterday suggesting

that the Indian High Commissioner and other diplomats are persons of interest in a matter related to an investigation in that country".

Canadian Charge d'Affaires (CDA) Wheelers was summoned by MEA's Secretary (East) Jaideep Mazumdar and it was underlined to him that in an atmosphere of extremism and violence, the Trudeau government's actions "endangered" the safety of Indian diplomats and other officials.

"We have no faith in the current Canadian government's commitment to ensure their security. Therefore, the government of India has decided to

withdraw the high commissioner and other targeted diplomats and officials," the MEA said.

"It was also conveyed that India reserves the right to take further steps in response to the Trudeau government's support for extremism, violence and separatism against India," it said. It is learnt that Verma and other officials will return from Canada in the next few days. The relations between India and Canada came under severe strain following Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations in September last year of a "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Nijjar.

Idols destroyed by fanatics..

Continued from page 1

Government and police to take strong action against the guilty. Speaking to the media after visiting the Muthyalamma Temple in Secunderabad where two persons destroyed its idols, Kishan asked the government, which had prohibited DJs, to explain why it is not concentrating on protecting temples.

He said that he would bring the issue to the attention of Governor Jishnu Dev Varma and that many similar incidents have taken place during Durgamata Navratri celebrations. He said that another incident had taken place before the Nampally incident could be forgotten. He said that the culprits had come to destroy the idol and not for theft.

Kishan said that the culprits, who removed Muthyalamma idol, had come from another area at night. He demanded the government to act strongly against this kind of incident.

Pointing out that there is a need to protect Hindu temples, he sought police protection for temples at night.

Two persons destroyed the idols in the temple at Kamma riguda in Secunderabad. Hearing the sound of the idols being destroyed, local people intervened and caught one culprit. However, the other one escaped.

India to launch updated biodiversity plan at UN conference

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has updated its national plan to protect biodiversity in alignment with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, officials said on Monday.

They said the updated plan will be released at the biannual UN Biodiversity Conference (COP16), scheduled to take place in Cali, Colombia from October 21 to November 1.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), adopted in 1992 to protect the world's biodiversity, requires

countries to create a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), which is a key tool for safeguarding and utilising biodiversity at the national level.

An official said India updated its NBSAP to align it with the new goals and targets set by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF), adopted at the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) in Montreal, Canada.

One of the main goals of the KM-GBF is to protect at least 30 per cent of the world's land and oceans by 2030.

Odisha forms task force to check distress migration

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government has set up a high-level task force under Deputy Chief Minister K V Singh Deo to recommend comprehensive measures to address the issue of distress migration in the state.

Other members of the task force include another Deputy Chief Minister Pravat Parida, Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Minister Rabi Narayan Naik, Chief Secretary, Development Commissioner,

and secretaries from relevant departments, the state government said on Monday.

The task force may also co-opt experts of national or international repute, as well as academics, development practitioners, and representatives from UN agencies, who will be invited to attend meetings as needed. This task force will thoroughly examine the challenges faced by migrant workers, aiming to prevent distress migration and determine actionable solutions.

BC Commission to..

Continued from page 1

The Commission has decided to conduct the survey under its supervision in coordination with the Planning Department as per the government's directives.

One of the Commission's key responsibilities is to determine the percentage of reservations for Backward Classes in local bodies. The Commission will tour the

entire state and hold public hearings at the old 10 district headquarters to decide this.

It was agreed in principle to start this tour on October 24. A notification regarding the public hearings will be issued soon. The Commission has also resolved to seek opinions from various sections of society and will convene a consultation meeting with intellectuals from the Backward Classes as part of this initiative.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Speeding up 'GatiShakti'

GatiShakti gets a fresh boost as PM Modi hails it as a game-changer for India's infrastructure

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has lauded 'GatiShakti,' describing it as a transformative initiative poised to revolutionise India's infrastructure. Speaking on the third anniversary of 'GatiShakti' PM Modi hailed its potential to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the country's logistical network, thereby driving economic growth and development. The 'GatiShakti initiative,' introduced by the Central Government in 2021, aims to streamline and integrate various infrastructure projects across sectors, including roads, railways, ports and airports. The programme seeks to bridge gaps in existing networks, eliminate bottlenecks and promote the use of advanced technology and data analytics in planning and execution. GatiShakti goes beyond traditional infrastructure planning, as it involves the coordination of multiple departments and incorporates feedback from state governments, private sector stakeholders and local communities. The initiative is expected to transform



how infrastructure projects are conceived and executed, bringing about a paradigm shift in the country's growth trajectory. By fostering seamless integration of various sectors and improving the synergy between different modes of transport, GatiShakti is set to play a pivotal role in accelerating India's economic development.

By improving logistical efficiency, reducing costs and promoting seamless connectivity, the initiative can significantly bring down the cost of production. China's rapid economic growth provides a valuable lesson for India. Over the past few decades, China has focused heavily on large-scale infrastructure development, including extensive networks of high-speed railways, highways and ports. This not only improved connectivity but also drastically lowered logistics costs, making it easier for businesses to thrive. Following a similar path, 'GatiShakti' can serve as a catalyst for India's economic transformation, driving sustainable growth and helping the country achieve its ambition of becoming a \$5 trillion economy. While 'GatiShakti' promises to transform India's infrastructure, several challenges may hinder its implementation. Key impediments include land acquisition issues, where delays and disputes over land ownership can stall projects. Regulatory bottlenecks also pose challenges, with complex approval processes across different ministries slowing down progress. Additionally, financing constraints may arise, as large-scale infrastructure projects require substantial investment and public-private partnerships. To overcome these hurdles, the government can implement policy reforms to streamline land acquisition and simplify approval procedures, reducing bureaucratic delays. Incentivising private investment through tax benefits and offering risk-sharing models can attract more participation from the private sector. GatiShakti is the need of the hour and must be prioritised to realise India's growth potential.

PICTALK



Devotees carry the palanquin of the deities to participate in the Dussehra festival, in Kullu

Ratan Naval Tata: A gem of a person



BHOPINDER SINGH

The passing of Ratan Tata has left the nation mourning not just an industrialist, but a rare leader who transcended divides, representing the 'Idea of India'

The year was 2000 and the list of Padma Awardees sent to the Rashtrapati Bhawan had included a list of super achievers. The scholarly constitutionalist in President K R Narayanan went through each name carefully, as he always did. The list had included luminaries like Pandit Hariprasad Churasia, Prof J B Bhagwati, Rajnikanth, Tarlok Singh etc., but one particular name brought a smile to the face of the otherwise reserved and ultra-correct Rashtrapati K R Narayanan, and it was the name of the then relatively young, 63-year-old Chairman of the Tata Group, Ratan Tata.

Arguably the most accomplished President ever, with a curriculum vitae of achievements that included recognition as the 'best diplomat of Indian Foreign Service', Ambassadorship to countries like USA, China etc., Vice Chancellorship of JNU, 3 consecutive wins as Member of Parliament, posts of Union Minister, Vice President of India, all on merit was no small achievement. Unbeknownst to many, his brilliant journey had the benefit of winds in his sails instilled by the Tata Group, long back! K R Narayanan had never forgotten what the Tatas had done to make its version of the 'Indian Dream' - the story from Uzhavoor in Kottayam to the Rashtrapati Bhawan had an unmistakably selfless, generous, and humble hand of the Tatas.

The topper from his school days who overcame unimaginable tribulations of financial and social nature fought against all odds and with the timely aid of the Travancore Royal family. In 1944, K R Narayanan was helped immeasurably by the Tata Scholarship to pursue his obvious genius in economics, politics and journalism at the London School of Economics - it was just the academic break that the precocious talent needed, and the rest as they say, is history. JRD Tata had heeded a recommendation letter stating that Narayanan had secured an MA at Travancore University, ranking first. He further noted that he achieved the distinction after surmounting many personal obstacles. Ironically, there



was yet another name in the 2000 Padma awardees who had a Tata hand in his own life story, the illustrious scientist, RA Mashelkar. Given his financial hardship, he too would attribute a large part of his success to the "Tata scholarship of 60 rupees per month for six years that helped me study".

He conflated his own story to that of K R Narayanan's, "Both of us were Tata scholars. We both left India, only to return when we were fairly young with a zeal to do more for our homeland". The surreal moment was described by Mashelkar, "Padma Bhushan, was bestowed on both me, a Tata scholar, and Ratan Tata, head of the house of Tatas. By whom? President Narayanan, another Tata scholar. This was the best endorsement of President Narayanan's remarks about moving from the 'sidelines of the society to the hub of social standing'."

As President Narayanan's Military Secretary, I was responsible for protocols et al, and I distinctly remember the President telling me that presumably Ratan Tata knew of the Tata connection in Narayanan's life, yet he had never sought any favour, consideration, or familiarity, out of any sense of entitlement.



HIS DEATH SHOWED WHAT A COLOSSUS HE WAS, WHOSE LOSS IS FELT BY ALL, WITHOUT ANY EXCEPTIONS. HE WAS UNBELIEVABLY ABOVE ALL POSSIBLE 'DIVIDES' THAT BESET A 5000-YEAR-OLD CIVILISATION AND DEMOCRACY CALLED INDIA

Always one for puns with languages, he suggested fondly that perhaps the Tata leaders were not 'Captains of the Industry', but more befittingly 'Generals of the Industry'.

As one from the 'Uniform' and knowing Narayanan personally, I knew immediately that the remark was not about seniority (ranks) but about leadership, inviolable values, and personal integrity, which is asked of an individual, as she/he is in a position to walk-talk. Much before expressions like affirmative action, corporate social responsibility or corporate trusteeship were defined - Tatas were already doing the same, with no vested interest, whatsoever. It was always about a larger purpose. It is with this sense of immutable responsibility that Ratan Tata stepped into the shoes of the legendary JRD Tata, who had been passed the baton by Nowroji Saklatwala and Jamsetji Tata. The silent dignity, grace, and magnanimity of the typical Tata way of doing things were upheld and reinforced by Ratan Tata - in his passing, the nation lost its most loved son and the 'Idea of India' its finest exponent. The passing away of Ratan Tata has also exposed just how poor (in leadership) we have suddenly become. In

wounded and polarised times of bitter conflicts between the realms of majority-minority denominations, capitalist-socialist societies, agrarian-industry priorities, and white collar-blue collar dimension - it is ironic that Ratan Tata was never ascribed to be working for a restricted denomination. His death showed what a colossus he was, whose loss is felt by all. He was unbelievably above all possible 'divides' that beset a 5000-year-old civilisation and democracy called India.

Today there are many leaders of political parties, communities, regions, corporations and even perhaps of causes - but none who can be said to be a leader of the inclusive and caring 'Idea of India'. In such desperate times, his passing away has also inadvertently posited the relevance of 'humility' and basic 'decency' that is so sadly missing in the national discourse. So, there may be leaders or even 'Captains of Industry', but 'General' of Leadership (and beyond) - absolutely none. Ratan Tata was the last of the knights, a first-rate hero.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RSS CALLS FOR HINDU UNITY

Madam - Apropos of the news 'Hindu be united, empowered, weakness not an option: RSS' (October 13). The message of RSS Sar Sangh Chalok for unity of Hindus amidst political subversion on caste lines has made a wide impact and sensitised Hindus to diminish caste lines. The media made it headlines like never before. This is highly worrisome, as religious conversions by Islamic and missionary institutions and consequent demography change are the most potent threats emanating from caste divisions. Kashmiri Hindus have faced the worst violence and mass exodus since independence and even before, which is yet another consequence of weakened and divided Hindus but which was taboo for a selected media and the intellectuals to even discuss.

Narratives have been set on caste divisions weakening and dividing Hindus for more than a century on misrepresentation of oppression bereft of any evidence, whereas the former rulers of various princely states, entrepreneurs of traditional businesses, and defeated warriors faced persecutions by the Mughal and British rulers and were reduced to penury and ruins and classified later as lower castes. Such narratives should be busted. The movies and OTT platforms are equally responsible for inculcating inferiority complexes among Hindus selectively. Lately, there is a noticeably undercurrent among Hindus against those who are insulting Hindus and their Gods and undercutting their religious faiths. The constitutional term secular has been misused to the extreme for dividing Hindus. The demand for caste census selectively for Hindus only while excluding other religions, though not provided in the Constitution is yet another shot to divide Hindus and create vote banks. Sangh Pramukh's message is loud and clear.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

TRAIN CRASH SPARKS PANIC

Madam - Gruesome rail accidents in the recent past caused concern and created a

Md Siraj appointed as DSP



Star Indian pacer Mohammed Siraj has been appointed as Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) by the Telangana state. The post has been extended to him by the state government in appreciation of his exceptional and splendid achievement in international cricket. Siraj no doubt fought all odds to get into the national team and has carved a niche of his own with his superb

performance since his entry. The state in its declaration cited that the young cricketer has made Telangana proud and brought honours to the nation, hence this great honour for him. Among his noteworthy accomplishments are his participation in the Cricket World Cup series and the ongoing series with various teams before World Test Championship finals.

It has to be noted that the state made amendments in its regulations of appointments to felicitate and honour sports persons as heads of government departments. He now joins the likes of Joginder Sharma (Cricketer), Akhil Kumar, Jitender and Vijender (Boxers) and Hima Das (Athlete) to name a few who became police officers for their contributions to sports. This no doubt will attract more youngsters to sports and encourage them to showcase their best to bring laurels to the state and the nation.

M Pradyu | Kannur

BABA SIDDIQUE ASSASSINATED

Madam - Former Maharashtra minister and Nationalist Congress Party leader Baba Siddique was killed in Mumbai. He was shot outside his office by three unidentified men. Siddique, 66, was a key Muslim political leader in Maharashtra and also served as Minister of State for Food and Civil Supplies, Labour and FDA. More than politics, Siddique was known for his social image and hosting grand iftar parties every year. During his time as an MLA, Siddique worked extensively on improving the infrastructure of his constituency, focusing on slum rehabilitation, upgrading healthcare facilities, and enhancing educational institutions. It is too premature to say anything as an investigation is going on. The law and order situation is deteriorating. This is not good for the city and state of Maharashtra. If the third shooter is also arrested, then we can make a breakthrough in this murder case.

M R Jayanthi | Trichy

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Navigating the complex path of integrity



SANJAY CHANDRA

In a world where honesty is often presented as situational, staying true to one's principles can be a daunting task

I caught snatches of an interesting conversation on the radio recently. The host and the guest were having a free-flowing discussion on the role of honesty and truthfulness in life. The conclusion was that honesty always pays, but a half-truth may be acceptable to avoid hurting the other person. I did not agree to subjective honesty as the situation demands. I remembered a few incidents while working in the government. These were lessons learned about integrity and honesty in public life. I was working on an arbitration case a few decades back. The advocate representing the contractor approached me to tilt the report in his favour for consideration. I told him that the case would be dealt with on merits. He was expecting elevation as a High Court judge, and I was warned of being hauled up in his court. I do not know if he was promoted. I was certainly not summoned. I moved to a government company in Delhi. I started commuting to work with my senior colleague in his official vehicle. New to the organisation, I claimed the



entitled conveyance allowance for the commute. He gently pulled me up and told me that I could not claim the money till the time he chauffeured me. I continued to travel with him till I was elevated and had been provided with an official vehicle. Another acquaintance from the private sector informed me about his promotion. Having received my congratulatory wishes, he hesitantly told me he was now in a position of authority to do something for me. I pointed out that I was better placed to do his company a favour, and not broach the subject again if he wished to remain a friend and a business associate. We continue to be friends. The word got around. I was not subject to any more proposals of illegal gratification.

A gentleman joined the dispute resolution board that I am part of only when he was assured by a former senior colleague about my proven integrity in public life. I am not vain, or at least try not to be demonstrative of my vanity, but I could not resist a proud smile. There were also incidents when I was on the receiving end. I did not live up to the standards that I had set. My father-in-law met an untimely death three decades back. A few days after the rituals were over, I accompanied my brother-in-law to the local post office to withdraw the savings. The dealing assistant's table was piled high with earlier case files. The work was done within the time frame promised, without his touching the money that we

were asked to put in the office drawer. I could have refused and waited out. I chose the easy way. I once read an article that corruption is a global phenomenon. It exists even in developed countries like America and Japan. The difference is that it is at the highest levels and does not affect the common man. I recently flew with a senior corporate leader who echoed exactly similar sentiments. This is the conundrum that I am unable to resolve. We should not be teaching our children conflicting lessons. To me, being truthful or honest are the two sides of the same coin. There cannot be two standards, be it in business, politics, personal life, or at the common man's level. American author, H Jackson Brown Jr said "Live so that when your children think of fairness, caring and integrity, they think of you." That will be the day when we will be truly proud of ourselves.

(The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

THE CHANGING FACE OF RAM LEELA

As traditional values blur, concerns grow about the erosion of cultural heritage of Ram Leela



VINOD TAKIAWALA

The connection between Delhi's residents and Ram Leelas is a deeply rooted tradition, with the historic Ramlila Maidan serving as a living testament to this cultural bond. Stories linked to the venue continue to be shared even today. During the Ram Leela performances, the atmosphere in Delhi and the NCR resonates with the chants of "Jai Shri Ram" and "Har Har Mahadev." As evening falls, families eagerly set out to partake in the festivities. I, too, had the opportunity to witness some of these performances. However, to my disappointment, the portrayal of Ram's story often appeared distorted, with dialogues sounding jarring and performances lacking in choreography. It seemed as though the actors, much like the director and scriptwriter, had little familiarity with the original Ramayana.

The Ram Leela I watched during my younger days has transformed into a commercial event, with little regard for the religious and cultural essence of this annual festival. It has become more of an entertainment spectacle than an exploration of the Ramayana's teachings. For some, it's a means to profit, while others use it as a platform to pursue their personal agendas. In the capital, the celebrations—including the enactment of the Ram Leela and the ritual of burning Ravana's effigy—frequently feature prominent figures such as politicians and businessmen as guests of honour. It often feels as though the Ram Leela is being staged to honour them, as the announcements from the stage are filled with praises for their greatness and importance.

Yet, I couldn't help but wonder whether any of them truly embodied the



virtues of Maryada Purushottam Ram. Whether ministers, political leaders, social workers, or other distinguished personalities holding official positions, none struck me as being worthy of comparison to Ram. I kept asking myself, "Is there anyone among them who genuinely understands Ram or upholds his ideals?"

Moreover, the management of the Ram Leelas raises several concerns. From the chaotic parking outside the venues to the giant advertisements plastered on temporary boundaries, the arrangements leave much to be desired. The presence of high-ranking officials, Delhi police, and businessmen with their families often overshadows the experience of the common people. Organisers are granted access to public spaces with government support, including subsidised electricity, water, security, and other amenities. Despite this, substantial funds are collected through donations for staging the Ram Leelas, though there is no clear accounting or auditing of these finances. Only God knows where the money goes.

At one Ram Leela in Delhi, the organisers spared no expense in creating luxurious settings for themselves, while visitors had minimal or no facilities. A statue of Lord Ram was placed in an open field, and the idols of other Hindu deities were carelessly laid out on the ground. Meanwhile, the organisers and their close circle enjoyed lavish facilities in opulent tents with exclusive arrangements for food, photoshoots, and private promotions. Ordinary visitors, who came with their families to enjoy the performance, often struggled to gain entry. Once inside, they were met with private security guards employed to serve the organisers' guests, who sometimes treated the common people poorly. Ram Leelas have now become major attractions and money-making opportunities, with little consideration for the people who come to witness them. The entire event is chaotic, and all one can hope for is that it concludes without any unfortunate incidents. The ideals of Ram seem to be the last thing on the minds of those who organise these events. The essence of Ram Leela has been overshadowed by the spectacle of wealth and status. Even the story of Ram is distorted, and the dialogues are awkward—but that is the reality of modern-day Ram Leela. (The writer is a freelance journalist; views are personal)

Why RBI should not look at food inflation



UTTAM GUPTA

Concerns over persistent food price volatility and the need for economic growth support have prompted the Reserve Bank of India to keep its options open



On October 9, 2024, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das announced the decisions taken by the six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) in its fourth bi-monthly meeting of the current financial year (FY). It has kept the policy rate (the interest rate at which the RBI lends to banks) unchanged at 6.5 per cent. However, it has altered its policy stance from "withdrawal of accommodation" to a neutral stance. In 2016, the Union Government put in place an institutionalised framework to enable the MPC to formulate monetary policy and determine the key interest rates including the policy rate for inflation targeting. It mandated the RBI to fix the policy rate in such a manner as to maintain the Consumer Price Index or CPI (it corresponds to a basket that includes food, fuel, manufactured goods and select services) within the target range of 4 per cent (+/- 2 per cent). The RBI decides the policy rates once in two months during each FY. The mandate initially given for five years ending March 31, 2021, has since been extended till March 31, 2026. The other crucial policy instrument the banking regulator uses for targeting inflation is Liquidity - a jargon for the quantum of credit available in the banking system. Pumping more liquidity along with a reduction in the policy rate represents a scenario which in jargon is described as an 'accommodative' policy stance. The terminology was coined by Das in June 2019 when he started going for aggressive cuts in the policy rate and an increase in credit availability. Since June 2022 the RBI changed its stance to "withdrawal of accommodation" and has since stuck to it till date. From October 9, 2024, it has decided to go for what it terms a "neutral" stance. A "neutral" stance connotes that the RBI has vowed to keep its options flexible meaning it will neither squeeze liquidity by restricting credit availability and keeping policy rates high nor go



AS LONG AS FOOD (WHOSE PRICES ARE FUNDAMENTALLY AFFECTED BY SUPPLY-SIDE FACTORS) REMAINS A PART OF THE CPI BASKET, INFLATION TARGETING WILL ALWAYS REMAIN A PROBLEM

for unrestrained lending at low interest rates.

At the time of taking charge in December 2018, Das was confronted with a legacy of policy rate at a peak of 6.5 per cent, courtesy of a tight stance taken by his predecessor Urjit Patel. In February 2019, he initiated a process of aggressive cut that led to its plummeting to a low of 4 per cent by May 2020. It stayed at that level for over two years. Beginning May 2022, the RBI delivered a hike of 1.4 per cent during the first half of FY 2022-23 and another dose of 1.1 per cent during the second half.

A total hike of 2.5 per cent thus restored the policy rate to its earlier peak of 6.5 per cent by February 2023. Since then, the rate has remained unchanged to date.

Why hasn't RBI reduced the rate? Look at the trajectory of the CPI inflation. It had scaled to a high of 7.8 per cent in April 2022. During FY 2022-23, it hovered around 8 per cent. In the following FY, it started decreasing from 7.4 per cent in July 2023 to 5 per cent in September 2023, 4.8 per cent in October 2023 and 5.1 per cent during January/February 2024. For the whole of FY 2023-24, it was 5.4 per cent. During the current FY also, the CPI inflation has kept low; 5.08 per cent in June 2024 and 3.54 per cent in July 2024. During FY 2024-25, the RBI expects the CPI inflation to be 4.5 per cent. Given the above, from the third quarter of FY 2023-24, the CPI inflation has remained well within the target range of 4 per cent (+/- 2 per cent). Moreover, as per RBI's assessment, this position will be sustained till the end of the current FY.

There was thus a strong case for reducing the repo rate. This would have given a boost to economic

growth besides helping millions of borrowers reduce their EMIs and helping industries, especially MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises) reduce the cost of servicing their loans. Yet, the RBI remains unfazed and has stuck to its stance of 'not reducing the policy rate'. This has to do with a mindset that was reflected in Das's observation while announcing the first bi-monthly policy of the current FY. He had said "The elephant has now gone out for a walk and appears to be returning to the forest. We would like the elephant to return to the forest and remain there on a durable basis." Put simply, he meant there was no need to start reducing interest rates until inflation reached the target of 4 per cent and stayed at that level. If, that figure of 4 per cent was so sacrosanct, then why keep (+/- 2 per cent)?

The short point is the RBI is clamoring for a scenario that is unlikely and even if it is reached, it won't be possible to stay there for long. A potent reason for this is food inflation which has a weight of around 40 per cent in the overall CPI and is impacted predominantly by supply side/seasonal factors whereas monetary policy instruments work on the demand side.

Invariably, food inflation maintains an upward trend even as a small disruption in supply caused by seasonal factors can lead to spiralling prices. This, in turn, lifts the CPI inflation more so because of its high weight of 40 per cent. In July 2023, food inflation was 11.8 per cent which led to CPI inflation of 7.4 per cent. In October 2023, the former decreased to 6.6 per cent, and so did the latter to 4.8 per cent. At the start of the current year, food inflation spurted to around 8 per cent and by June 2024, it had fur-

ther moved up to 9.4 per cent. As long as food (whose prices are fundamentally affected by supply-side factors) remains a part of the CPI basket, inflation targeting will always remain a problem. There is an urgent need to exclude it while setting benchmark interest rates, an idea that was mooted by the Chief Economic Advisor in the Economic Survey (ES) for 2023-24. The CEA argued that monetary policy has no bearing on the prices of food items, which are dictated by supply-side pressures. For instance, during 2021-22, wheat output was affected by unusually high temperatures. During 2022-23, rains accompanied by hailstorms acted as a spoiler. During the first half of FY 2023-24, food inflation went up due to a spike in the prices of vegetables caused by seasonal factors. The current inflationary trend in food prices also has to do with supply-side pressures only. The RBI can achieve little to control them by keeping the policy rate high.

The RBI should take the idea mooted in the ES - 2023-24 on board. Meanwhile, it should consider reducing the weight of food inflation in CPI to reflect the contemporary reality. The current 40 per cent weight is based on the Consumption Expenditure Survey (CES) of 2011-12 whereas Summary Statistics from the 2022-23 CES point towards a significant reduction. While formulating its monetary policy, the RBI's prime responsibility is to ensure macro-economic stability its pivotal focus being on keeping inflation within reasonable bounds. However, it can't be oblivious of the dire need to support economic growth which could be adversely impacted if it keeps the interest rates high.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Laapataa Ladies: India's Oscar entry poised to captivate the world

This year's selection for Oscar marks a bold statement about the future of Indian cinema and its universal appeal

India is ready to stun the world once again, not only with its glamorous presence but also with its captivating storytelling at the 2025 Oscars. With Kiran Rao's *Laapataa Ladies* chosen as India's official entry for Best International Feature Film, the global stage is about to witness a film that exemplifies the power of Indian cinema where tradition meets modernity, and women's stories are told with gradation, strength and authenticity. From the grand stages of Cannes and TIFF to the prestigious halls of the Oscars, India's cinematic journey continues to break boundaries, capturing hearts across the globe. The selection of *Laapataa Ladies*



CHAITANYA K PRASAD

stands out as a justified move that speaks volumes about the direction the Indian cinema will take in the future. It signifies not just a bold statement but also a deeper narrative that India aims to convey to the world. The decision has stirred passionate discussions about the nature of Indian cinema, the evolving landscape of

global filmmaking, and the art of storytelling that resonates universally. It signifies not just a bold statement but also a deeper narrative that India aims to convey to the world. One characterised by powerful storytelling and emotional depth, laced with cultural authenticity that delves into the unique yet universally relatable experiences of women. Kiran Rao's return to the director's chair after more than a decade has proven to be nothing short of a cinematic triumph of her evolution as a filmmaker. *'Laapataa Ladies'* offers more than a film, it's an experience that beautifully blends humour and poignant social commentary and a fresh perspective on the complex-

ities of Indian womanhood. Set against the backdrop of rural India, the story revolves around two brides mistakenly swapped due to their veils, igniting a whirlwind of confusion and identity crisis. But beneath the surface, the film tackles deeper societal themes, portraying the often unspoken struggles women face while navigating tradition and personal identity. Rao's masterful storytelling elevates this from a simple narrative to a cultural dialogue, one that resonates with both Indian and global audiences. It's this jugalbandi of emotion, drama, and humour that makes *'Laapataa Ladies'* stand out as a universal story about women's empowerment.



The film doesn't just reflect the plight of Indian women, it taps into the global consciousness of gender roles, the subtle acts of defiance, and the resilience required to reclaim one's identity in a patriarchal society. By sending *'Laapataa Ladies'* to the Oscars, India is presenting the world with a film that balances entertainment with a serious undercurrent. This

is the kind of storytelling that Hollywood needs to see an authentic narrative that reflects the socio-cultural realities of a nation while remaining universally relatable. With well-written characters, immersive performances, and a storyline that oscillates between light-heartedness and gravitas, *'Laapataa Ladies'* will serve as a testament to Indian filmmaking talent. The performances of Nitanshi Goel and Pratibha Ranta shine, their portrayals brimming with vulnerability and strength, making their characters relatable on a universal scale. This film is not just a story about two women but about the entire spectrum of Indian womanhood—its beauty, complex-

ity, and contradictions. The landscape of global filmmaking is undergoing a revolution. The world is slowly waking up to the storytelling brilliance that many nations like South Korea, China, Turkey and India have always possessed but are now showcasing with greater confidence and finesse. India's selection of *'Laapataa Ladies'* is part of this global wave of cinema that is redefining the narrative structure, giving voice to local stories with universal appeal. Much like South Korea's *Parasite*, which used the backdrop of class disparity to tell a universally compelling story, *'Laapataa Ladies'* uses rural India's traditions to explore gender,

identity and empowerment in a way that transcends cultural boundaries. As *'Laapataa Ladies'* makes its way to the Oscars, it carries with it the hopes of millions who believe in the power of authentic storytelling. The film's emotional depth, paired with Rao's visionary direction, is set to make waves on the international stage, showing Hollywood and the world what Indian cinema is truly capable of. With *'Laapataa Ladies'*, India has not just sent a film—it has sent a message. (The writer is a former additional DG, DFF, and festival director at IFFI. Inputs provided by Zoya Ahmad and Vaishnavie Srinivasan; Views are personal)

IN BRIEF



HCLTechnet profit rises to Rs 4,235 crore

Services company HCL Technologies on Monday reported a 10.51 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to Rs 4,235 crore in the July-September quarter of the current fiscal. It had reported a net profit of Rs 3,832 crore in the year-ago period. Revenue came in at Rs 28,862 crore during the reporting quarter, 8.21 per cent higher than Rs 26,672 crore in the year-ago period. HCLTech CEO & Managing Director C Vijayakumar said that the company's pipeline is very strong, including data & AI, digital engineering, SAP migration and efficiency-led programmes. "Revenue growth has come with an improved profitability. Our EBIT margins in Q2 rose to 18.6 per cent, up 149 bps sequentially. LTM Return on Invested Capital (ROIC) stands at solid 35.7 per cent at company level and 43.5 per cent at services, an expansion of 353 bps YoY and 403 bps YoY respectively," said HCLTech CFO Shiv Walia.



Gold revisits all-time high of Rs 78,700 per 10 grams

Gold prices rose Rs 200 to revisit the all-time high of Rs 78,700 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday on persistent buying by stockists and traders even as the precious metal lost steam globally, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The silver metal had closed at Rs 78,500 per 10 grams on Friday. Silver jumped Rs 500 to Rs 93,500 per kg on the back of fresh industrial demand. It had ended at Rs 93,000 per kg in the previous close. Additionally, gold of 99.5 per cent purity climbed by Rs 600 to reclaim its all-time high level of Rs 78,300 per 10 grams. The metal had finished at Rs 78,100 per 10 grams. Earlier, gold prices hit a record Rs 78,700 per 10 grams on October 7. Despite a weak trend overseas, the precious metal gained in the domestic market, mainly due to an increase in demand from jewellers, traders said.



BSE launches World Investor Week

Leading stock exchange BSE Ltd on Monday announced the launch of globally popular event World Investor Week 2024 with special focuses on educating investors about technology, digital finance and cyber security. World Investor Week (WIIW), a global initiative by the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO), is being observed in India from October 14 to 20 under the leadership of Sebi and other Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIIs). This year's theme "Technology and Digital Finance" focuses on educating investors about online safety, with a sub-theme highlighting the prevention of cybercrimes and frauds. BSE said in a statement. The exchange inaugurated the World Investor Week 2024 with a ceremonial bell-ringing event at its International Convention Hall. As part of the celebrations, BSE is organising various digital, print and on-ground activities to engage a broad spectrum of investors. Key initiatives include a nationwide quiz for the public as well as competitions inviting participants to create jingles and storytelling content centred around the WIIW theme.

Banks must ride on advantages of AI and Bigtech: RBI Governor Das

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Concerned over the high reliance on AI and machine learning in the banking space, Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das on Monday said lenders ought to ride on the advantages of big tech and not the other way round.

Stressing that the latest technological advancements such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) have opened new avenues of business and profit expansion for financial institutions, he said, these technologies also pose financial stability risks.

"The heavy reliance on AI can lead to concentration risks, especially when a small number of tech providers dominate the market. This could amplify systemic risks, as failures or disruptions in these systems may cascade across the entire financial sector," he said in his keynote address at a conference organised by the RBI here.

Moreover, he said, the growing use of AI introduces new vulnerabilities, such as increased susceptibility to cyberattacks and data breach-



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es. Additionally, AI's opacity makes it difficult to audit or interpret the algorithms that drive decisions, he said, adding that this could potentially lead to unpredictable consequences in the markets.

"Banks and other financial institutions must put in place adequate risk mitigation measures against all these risks. In the ultimate analysis, banks have to ride on the advantages of AI and Bigtech and not allow the latter to ride on them," he said.

Growing digitalisation of financial services has enhanced the efficiency of the financial sector across the globe but has also brought in several challenges that central banks have to deal with.

For instance, in the modern world with deep social media presence and vast access to online banking with money transfer happening in seconds, rumours and misinformation can spread very quickly and can cause liquidity stress. Banks have to remain alert in the social media space

and also strengthen their liquidity buffers.

Talking about the risk of digitisation, the RBI Governor said in the modern world with deep social media presence and vast access to online banking with money transfer happening in seconds, rumours and misinformation can spread very quickly and can cause liquidity stress.

Banks have to remain alert in the social media space and also strengthen their liquidity buffers, he said.

Cement industries growth to slow down to 7-8 pc: Crisil

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The cement industry is expected to record slower growth of 7 to 8 per cent to 475 million tonnes this fiscal, impacted by lower growth in the first half after registering a double-digit growth from the last two financial years, according to a Crisil report.

The cement demand grew only 3 per cent in the June first quarter of FY2024-25, owing to an extended heatwave and shortage of labour during general elections and is estimated to have grown at a similar pace in the second quarter due to seasonal weakness.

However, the second half is likely to bode well for the sector, the agency in its report said, adding that the margins would be better this fiscal.

"Cement demand is set to grow slower at 7-8 per cent year-on-year to 475 MT this fiscal, after clocking a compound annual growth rate of 11 per cent between fiscals

2022 and 2024," the report said. However, the operating profitability of cement players is likely to sustain at Rs 975-1,000 per tonne, above the decadal average of Rs 963 per tonne, said the report, which is based on an analysis of 18 cement makers, accounting for over 85 per cent of domestic sales volume.

It expects the growth in the housing segment, which accounts for 55-60 per cent of cement demand, will see a likely revival in rural housing demand supported by the healthy monsoon this year.

"Similarly, the government spending on infrastructure development, which accounts for 30 per cent of cement demand, will support demand too," it said, adding that "though actual spending was sluggish until July, the government's capex is likely to accelerate from the third quarter of this fiscal, which will boost cement demand from the infrastructure segment".

Domestic passenger vehicle sales to grow: SIAM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Domestic passenger vehicle wholesales are expected to grow by 3-5 per cent this fiscal with the industry pinning hopes on strong performance in the festive period after witnessing a flatish first half, automobile industry body SIAM said on Monday.

At the start of the current fiscal, the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) had pegged the passenger vehicle (PV) sales to grow between 5-8 per cent this fiscal. For the April-September period this fiscal, PV sales stood at 20,81,143 units, registering a marginal growth from 20,70,960 units in the same period of 2023-24. SIAM President Shailesh Chandra said the industry was expecting to post growth in the April-September period.

Retail inflation hits 9-month high of 5.49 pc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Soaring vegetable prices pushed the retail inflation rate to a nine-month high of 5.49 per cent in September, according to government data released on Monday.

The consumer price index (CPI)-based retail inflation rate was 3.65 per cent in August and 5.02 per cent in September 2023. The previous high inflation rate was witnessed in December 2023 at 5.69 per cent.

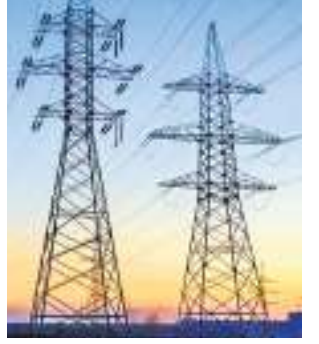
As per data released by the National Statistics Office (NSO), the inflation rate in the food basket rose to 9.24 per cent in September compared to 5.66 per cent in August and 6.62 per cent in the year-ago month.

"It is likely that the increase in inflation rate for the month of September 2024 is due to high base effect and weather

unchanged earlier this month, has been asked by the government to ensure the CPI inflation rate remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side.

The annual inflation rate in the vegetable basket in September was nearly 36 per cent and in 'pulses and products' it was 9.81 per cent. Fruits, too, were dearer.

However, inflation in spices was in the negative in September, compared to the year-ago month.



India needs to increase its power generation capacity four-fold to 2,100 GW by 2047 against an anticipated demand of 708 GW, Union Power Minister Manohar Lal said on Monday.

As per official data, India's total power generation capacity stood at around 453 GW as of September 30, while the government's projection for peak power demand this year was 260 GW.

However, it could not be reached due to lower temperatures due to rains, and peak power demand remained around 250 GW.

"By 2047, we anticipate our power demand to reach 708 gigawatts. To meet this, we need to increase our capacity by four times, i.e. 2,100 gigawatts," Lal said, addressing 'Brainstorming Conclave on Indian Power Sector Scenario by 2047', organised by Central Electricity Authority (CEA) in partnership with industry body Ficci.

Ficci former president Subhrakant Panda said India's power sector presents vast opportunities in the transition

Jio Platforms net profit jumps 23.4% to Rs 6,539 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Jio Platforms on Monday reported a 23.4 per cent year-on-year rise in its consolidated net profit for Q2 FY25 to Rs 6,539 crore, as average revenue per user surged to Rs 195.1 per month.

The revenue from operations of Jio Platforms - which houses Reliance Industries' telecom and digital businesses - rose 18 per cent to Rs 31,709 crore in the just-ended September quarter.

The gross revenue stood at Rs 37,119 crore in Q2FY25, 17.7 per cent higher than the corresponding period of the previous year.

ARPU - a key metric for telcos - increased to Rs 195.1 with the partial follow-through of the tariff hike and a better subscriber mix.

'Research on ethanol blending in diesel in advanced stages'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Monday said that the research around blending 15 per cent ethanol in diesel is in advanced stages, and the government is exploring ways to prioritise it based on sound evidence.

Addressing the Confederation of Indian Industry's (CII) Bio Energy Summit 2024, Gadkari further said according to government data, ethanol blending in India has surged from 1.53 per cent in 2014 to 15 per cent in 2024.

Spurred by this progress, the government has set an ambitious target of reaching 20 per cent blending in petrol by 2025, the road transport and highways minister said.



Gadkari said the progress on building an ethanol ecosystem -- where ethanol pumps can complement ethanol production and launch of vehicles that can run on ethanol are on fast-track in four states -- Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and Maharashtra.

He pointed out that Indian Oil has decided to put 400 ethanol pump stations.

"We are meeting automakers as well including Suzuki, Tata, and Toyota.

"These automakers have decided to launch flex-engine cars," he said.

According to the minister, other vehicle makers like TVS, Bajaj, and Honda are ready with ethanol bikes and are waiting for the ethanol pumps to come to launch their bikes.

He said the country has moved from the era of 'knowledge to wealth', to a 'waste to wealth'.

On CNG, the minister said, "Over 475 projects are in pipeline in CNG, and over 40 projects have already started across Punjab, Haryana, western UP, Karnataka among others." Gadkari emphasised on the need to explore further technologies of conversion of municipal solid waste into bio-CNG, where the cost of raw material becomes zero.

Sensex rises 592 pts, Nifty settles above 25K on gains in IT, banking

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark BSE Sensex jumped nearly 592 points while Nifty reclaimed the 25,000 level on Monday following gains in IT and banking shares amid a firm trend in global markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 591.69 points or 0.73 per cent to close at 81,973.05. During the day, it surged 690.81 points or 0.84 per cent to hit a high of 82,072.17.

The NSE Nifty rose 163.70 points or 0.66 per cent to settle at 25,127.95. In the intraday trade, the benchmark indices climbed 195.5 points or 0.78 per cent to 25,159.75.

From the Sensex pack, Tech Mahindra, HDFC Bank, Larsen & Toubro, ITC, Infosys,

IndusInd Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Titan and HCL Technologies were among the gainers. Maruti Suzuki India, Tata Steel, Bajaj Finance, UltraTech Cement, Nestle India, Axis Bank and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) were among the laggards.

Market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies jumped by nearly Rs 1.35 lakh crore to Rs 4,63,62,781.71 (USD 5.51 trillion). "The Indian market is demonstrating resilience, with subdued Q2 earnings expectations seemingly priced in and oil prices declining. The IT and financial sectors are attracting buying interest after recent corrections," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said.

Exports to be major job creator for India: USISPF

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

US-India Strategic Partnership Forum President and CEO Mukesh Aghi on Monday emphasised that exports are going to be a major job creator for India as the country moves towards becoming a USD 5 trillion economy.

Aghi, who was speaking at an event organised by the USISPF, also stressed that India and the US should continue to strengthen their economic engagements and increase the bilateral trade to USD 500 billion going forward.

He said creating nearly 1.2 million jobs per month is going to be a challenge, highlighting the importance of job

creation to ensure there is no social unrest among the youth.

"As India's economy goes from 4 to 5 trillion dollars, one of the biggest job creators is going to be exports because we have a challenge and the challenge is how do we create 1.2 million jobs (in India) a month and unless we are able to meet that objective we will start seeing some kind of social unrest among the youth itself..." Aghi said.

"So I think it is important to keep on driving the (bilateral) trade objective of USD 500 billion moving forward," he added.

The USISPF President and CEO shared that 5 million Indian Americans currently reside in the US, comprising



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roughly 1.5 per cent of its population. However, they contribute nearly 6 per cent to the nation's GDP.

"So in every aspect, from people to people, economic, technologically and also geopolitically, these two countries (India and the US) are aligned. Yes, we have our

road bumps, we have our challenges, but we keep on working with that and what we see with this government, last 10 years they have stepped up. They have basically working with us to make sure that there is much more ease of doing business," Aghi asserted.

The bilateral trade between India and the US stood at USD 118.3 billion in 2023-24. Washington was the top trading partner of New Delhi during 2021-22 and 2022-23. However, China emerged as the largest trading partner of India with USD 118.4 billion two-way commerce in 2023-24, slightly edging past the US, according to the data of economic think tank GTRI.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA IRRIGATION AND CAD DEPARTMENT E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

No.05/2024-25 Dt: 11.10.2024

Minor Irrigation - Bids are invited for the work FDR-2023 Permanent repairs to Maredigudem/Maredukonda Cheruvu at Laxmidivipeta(V), Venkatapur(M), Mulugu District for an Amount of Rs: 286.14 Lakhs is published in the e-procurement web site from Dt: 15.10.2024 at 11:00 AM to 22.10.2024 at 05:00 PM, Ph.No.8555896941. For further details log on to <http://tender.telangana.gov.in> website

Sd/- Superintending Engineer, I&CAD Irrigation Circle, Narsampet.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION TENDER NOTICE

NIT No.34/SE/MSBZ/GHMC/2024-25. Date: 14.10.2024

Scope of Work: Request For Proposal for "Appointment of consultant for preparing RFP documents for selection of agency to Upgrade, Operate and Maintain Sports Complex at Ameerpet and Shaikpet in GHMC under PFP mode. (Recal), RFP downloadable from website (Date & Time): 15.10.2024 @ 3.00 PM. Pre-Bid Meeting at O/o. Superintending Engineer, Secunderabad Zone, GHMC: 21.10.2024 upto 5.00 pm. Last date of Bid Submission: 28.10.2024 @ 1.00 PM. Name & Address Office Ph No.: Superintending Engineer, Secunderabad Zone, GHMC, Cell No.: 9989930374. Further details can be seen at <http://www.ghmc.gov.in> in tender notifications Notice board of this office.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer Secunderabad Zone, GHMC

TASTING LIGHT, SHOOTING FLAVOURS: RANVEER BRAR'S JOURNEY BEYOND KITCHEN

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Ranveer Brar's passion for food has driven him to almost every nook and cranny of the world. A journey into culinary that started off as the youngest executive chef at a five-star hotel, today he is not only one of the most celebrated chefs we have but also has his own cooking shows. Well, well, well! It's just not the cooking shows. He's been the judge of *MasterChef India*; he owns several restaurants and is also an avid traveller.

But there's another avocation that he enjoys a lot: it's photography! "If there's one thing I am as passionate about as much as cooking, it's photography," begins chef Brar with great excitement. In fact, if he hadn't with great excitement. In fact, if he hadn't become a chef, packing his camera gear and travelling the world was definitely what he is keen to take upon. For any artist, their art is their medium of expression and it's no different for a chef; he says, "I express myself through the food I cook. And my love for photography is an extension of that expression. It's the creative lens to view my creation."

Simply put, "It perfectly matches my culinary values. In cooking, precision and presentation are strong pillars of any food item or recipe." Precision, he says, in terms of ingredients, cooking time and the process. Equally important is the presentation, which serves to tell a story of how the chef wants their patrons to view their food and inspire conversations. Taking a photo is more than just pressing a button. It's about telling a story, capturing the essence of a moment.

Be it cooking or photography, both of them complement each other, says Brar. "In the kitchen, each dish I create tells a story through its flavours, textures and presentation. Photography allows me to capture and share that story in a way that words often can't. Just as I'm meticulous about the balance of ingredients and technique in cooking, I approach photography with the same attention to detail—focusing on the light, angles and timing to bring out the essence of a dish. There's something magical about freezing a moment that reflects the soul of a dish, and it's incredibly rewarding to see how both mediums—culinary and visual—can inspire and connect with people. For each recipe

or dish I create, I make it a point to capture its essence in a photograph, and when I visit various locations and try their local cuisines, I make it a point to take a picture; it takes me back to the experience of trying out something new."

Wondered what really goes on while filming a particular recipe or an episode of his food? Let's take you through it: "I always wanted my food videos to be more than just behind-the-counter instruction videos. My idea was to help people connect to what drives us the most and passionately so, food."

Well, at a time when recipe videos were hardly longer than a few minutes, he thought of going beyond and telling my story—the story of the dish, the place and the ingredients. Always an explorer that he's been, something that really defines this is his show *Dum Lagu Ke India*, an amalgamation of food, travel and entertainment. "I love travelling, especially when it involves discovering known and unknown stories about food," enthuses chef Brar with great exhilaration. "Since *Dum Lagu Ke India* has been an interesting journey, for him connecting with people and the food they love, cook, or eat. Needless to say, there were a lot of behind-the-scenes moments and memories to capture."

Well, something that comes naturally to him and acting in front of the camera is a whole new world. "Acting in front of a camera made me feel like I'm back to school; it was a delightful learning experience," he shares. "I've learned so much about how to convey emotions on camera. It's fascinating. I definitely love being behind the camera, but I also enjoy being in front of it, talking about my recipes, cooking and now acting as well!" Talking of his acting front, how could we just miss out on his latest performance in *The Buckingham Murders*, helmed by Hansal Mehta and starring Kareena Kapoor.

The Modern Love Mumbai fame had no less than an incredible experience on the sets. Oh, and of course the positive feedback! "Kareena Kapoor has been a delight to work with," expresses *The Great Indian Rasoi* host, who initially was slightly nervous. However, he recalls, "She made me feel comfortable on the first day itself and all my anxiety vanished instantly. Each and every scene we worked together has been memorable, the interrogation scenes were particularly difficult yet fun to work on because they taught me a lot."

In fact, he further reveals, "We ended up

doing 15 takes for the slap scene because we wanted it to feel just right. It wasn't about getting it perfect technically, but making sure the moment had the right emotion and impact. Sometimes, you have to keep going until it truly feels authentic."

On the sets of *The Buckingham Murders*, his bond with Hansal Mehta began over their shared passion for cooking. Interestingly, it was a Nihari recipe that initially caught his attention.

"He discovered that I was searching for the recipe online and jokingly said that's what sealed the deal for him to cast me. Our inside joke is that my love for food was the real reason he chose me for the role. In reality, our shared enthusiasm for cuisine helped him understand me better as an actor and it fostered a deeper connection between us on set."

Food with a pinch of photography and acting—all three make him a better Ranveer Brar. For someone who propounds the theory of cuisine being an extension of culture, the *MasterChef India* judge says, "Photography allows me to capture the cultural essence embedded in every dish. Through my lens, I aim to convey the story behind each recipe, highlighting the traditions, ingredients and people that make it special. By freezing these moments, I can share the rich cultural context of cuisine with others, making it more relatable and personal. Photography bridges the gap between flavours and emotions, enabling me to showcase the soul of a dish and its cultural significance."

Food and photography, for him, are two sides of the same coin, with both requiring attention to detail and a passion for storytelling, which I've developed due to my love for art. "I strive to create dishes that are visually captivating and photographs that capture the essence of my culinary creations. Every element, from the colour of the plate to the angle of the shot, contributes to the overall narrative, making it look like a piece of art itself. I think every recipe is drawn from a conversation I had, somebody I met, food that I ate at some place, or an ingredient I encountered. That moment is usually captured on camera somewhere, and so for me, it is the visual memory of the dish that eventually translates into a recipe. That is why visual memory brings out feelings and emotions," signs off our special interviewee, as this brings us to the end of this flavourful chat.



From the spice-scented streets of India to the silver screen, Ranveer Brar's remarkable journey is a true reflection of his multifaceted personality. With a career spanning television shows, restaurants and films, Brar shares his inspiring story of pursuing multiple passions in an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*

FROM TAEKWONDO TO TIARA

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Shemonyl Wankhadia, a youthful, vivacious and multidimensional individual from the big city of dreams, is an avid fan of beauty pageants and was just named Miss India International in Bangkok. Wankhadia opens up to us in an exclusive chat about her sincere dream and other things! "Winning the prestigious title of Miss Global International seems like a dream come true. I've been working hard on it since last year and I'm really appreciative that it worked out better than I had anticipated. My dreams and confidence have grown even more as a result of this international victory, which has profoundly changed my outlook and given me a sense of empowerment. I benefited much from the emotional support I got from my friends and family, as well as from interacting with other pageant contestants. I feel proud of myself for serving my nation and all the training I've had has helped me realise a lot about myself," she informs me.

Shemonyl is putting in a lot of work in preparation for her sincere goal of representing India on the international Miss Universe stage. To name a few of her pageantry accomplishments, she placed first runner-up in the competition for Miss Global World India 2024: "Patience, resilience and discipline are qualities that are highly valued in pageantry. As an experienced Taekwondo player and teacher, my participation in athletics has greatly aided in my acquisition of these qualities. I developed a

strong mindset and learned mental discipline from my experience as a Taekwondo coach. It not only increased my physical strength but also taught me how to focus my energy in the appropriate places to push over discomfort barriers."

Regarding her educational background, she holds a degree in International Economics and has two years of experience as a qualified national referee and pet groomer. She is also a national Taekwondo athlete! Oh, Shemonyl has four years of experience as a Taekwondo coach. "My parents have instilled in me the value of academics from an early age and as a pageant winner, I hope to share this knowledge with other young people who may be considering a career in fashion. I think it's critical for individuals to pursue interests outside of their careers."

It has aided me in becoming more extroverted and confident in myself in addition to helping me acquire new abilities and cultivate a varied personality." It does require tremendous mental fortitude and the skill of flexibility to win several titles across different pageants. Speaking from personal experience, "My pageant journey has been filled with a myriad of both minor and large disappointments. For example, I completed my pageant attire, but it didn't appear like what I had envisioned it would shortly before the upcoming final round. But I solved the

wardrobe conundrum by remaining cool, collected and prompt in my team coordination. I'm really passionate about raising awareness of beauty inclusivity and diversity as well as beauty that transcends the shallow standards that the media sets, promoting a variety of ways that beauty is portrayed globally."

In her spare time, Shemonyl enjoys baking, swimming, riding bikes and practicing martial arts. Her strongest suit is her adaptability and fortitude! "In order to empower future pageant hopefuls and models to claim their space and redefine beauty according to their own standards, I intend to start my own pageant academy. I can stay grounded and focused, learn to slow down and make connections with like-minded people because it helps me develop a sense of resilience and humility and lets me express myself in different ways. I therefore take my exercise seriously, stay to a routine and follow it. Before deciding to enter the beauty pageant business, you must undergo extensive and rigorous training in both the physical and mental domains."

For both pageants, the same amount of preparation is needed, but when competing on a worldwide scale, there are higher standards. Participating in an international pageant draws more spectators and increases the amount of unspoken pressure. Additionally, participants must master the dress code and adhere to particular etiquette when representing their country abroad. "One misconception I would like to debunk is that pageant contestants are entitled or superficial; it is actually untrue, as they are very rooted and grounded," she says in her concluding remarks. "Since they are aware of how critical it is to preserve interpersonal ties and place a high value on inner beauty and fitness. Simply believing in your wildest aspirations may seem impossible, but it is possible if you have a well-thought-out plan and pursue your true vision. I want to be remembered as a gregarious person who dared to venture beyond her comfort zone and as a beauty queen."

Coming arms race in content authenticity

Rise of AI writers

You look at any scenario, a content creator is under immense pressure for generating new, genuine and unique ideas for their content. And in the present market with cut-throat competition, it becomes difficult to do so. The reason being, there are an infinite number of content creators probably working on similar projects, using similar resources. This limits the number of end results. To overcome such situations and reduce the occurrence of similar content the AI writers have been designed.

How many times has it happened that you thought about writing an article on a topic, but there is a similar article already existing on the web. Although you might have some different take on it, there might be a chance of generating plagiarised content (unintentional plagiarism).

This situation would be demotivating for any content creator! But with the help of such AI writing tools, you don't have to worry about that. These tools are designed in such a way that they can generate unique ideas and genuine content without causing any plagiarism. This helps the content creators to generate content in a short span of time, brings fresh ideas, and enables the writers to become more efficient.

Rise of AI detectors

There are always two sides to a coin and so are with these advanced technologies. On the one hand we have the AI writers and on the second we have AI detectors. Both the platforms commit to work in favor of content creators and ensuring authentic, genuine and unique content creation.

AI detectors were designed to detect any piece of content generated using an AI tool. These are to ensure that the content that is being published online and is available for the readers online is 100% human generated, authentic and unique in its nature. The biggest application of these tools is in the academics where these AI detector tools help detect any form of AI writers in assignments submitted by students and detect any plagiarism. This encourages the students to generate better and unique content without the help of an AI tool.

Also, with AI detector tools you can also detect any intentional or unintentional plagiarism and save yourself from getting into any trouble for copying content. Additionally, there is also a group of people who believe that with the use of AI writers, the internet will again end up having the same content. Since they believe that the tool will generate the same response for the same query. Hence, to avoid this from happening the implementation of an AI detector tool is required.

Ethical dilemma

If you are a content creator or are associated with any content creators, you can clearly understand the ethical and moral dilemma with the application of both the tools. Since both platforms are working to ensure authenticity and uniqueness of the content. There are certain points in both the platforms that work in the favor of content creators and both the debates sound just about right. As a content creator it becomes a moral obligation at times to stick to the traditional method of content creation and ensure the authenticity of the content.

However, in today's time, the fast-paced world doesn't give you enough time to produce quality content with the traditional method. Hence, content creators slightly bend towards the use of AI writers for quick results. Additionally, the content generated using these platforms doesn't always end up being the same for two different users with the same requirements as well. The reason being, one writer might require the content to sound a bit formal and have a firm tone, so with these tools, you can generate the exact content with this specification. And the other writer might require the content to sound casual but informative, so again the response is changed. This enables you to use the AI writer platform as per your preference and generate content as per your preference.

Yet again, the guarantee of authenticity is not there with these tools. Hence, we do need AI detectors at some point to detect any plagiarized content and ensure that the generated content is unique in its nature.

For any content creator it is essential to be true to their work. But in this fast-paced world, we often need quick results, and for that we are required to strike the perfect balance of both the tools. Leveraging AI writers to generate a unique piece of content with required specifications for audience and using AI detectors to ensure the authenticity of the content and reduce any chances of publishing plagiarised content.

(The author, Ravi Kumar is the Founder & CEO of MadHawks.)



what's brewing?

Neeta Goel

Nidhi

Radhika

Sonali

Sushila

Neha

Chandna Jayaram

Miss Universe Andhra Pradesh 2024, Chandna Jayaram, inaugurated the first showroom of Vastram by Singhania at The Platina, Gachibowli, alongside Sailesh Singhania on Monday.

On this Bijoy Dashami, the ladies of the Bengalee Cultural Association of Hyderabad came together for the beautiful and emotional ritual of Sindur Khela

A dynamic collaboration with renowned dancer Shakti Mohan for an exclusive flash mob event for Victoria's Secret India. The event showcased Shakti Mohan and her powerhouse squad of 20 fierce, all-female dancers, bringing the crowd to life, all decked up in Victoria's Secret Iconic PJ Sets

Aparna Cyberscape recently hosted its first-ever grand celebration of Durga Puja, Bathukamma and Navratri, marking a significant milestone in the community's cultural calendar. This event brought together diverse traditions, showcasing the rich tapestry of Indian festivals while promoting unity and inclusivity among residents. Devi Durga was worshipped with deep reverence

Hero Nikhil Siddharth celebrated the inauguration of KGF (Krishna Godavari Flavors) at Alvin X road Miyapur, expressing his love for the unique flavors of the Godavari districts. He emphasised the significance of local creativity in the restaurant's name while highlighting its potential to expand across the city. MLA Arikupudi Gandhi praised the restaurant for providing employment opportunities, advocating for a focus on quality food. The event also saw participation from local leaders and community members, marking a promising start for this new culinary venture.

PARTY
Photos by- SV Chary

FUN

ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBS

GARFIELD

REALITY CHECK

SPEED BUMP

CROSSWORD

NANCY

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Yesterday's solution

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

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

- Nearly
- Wide smile
- Tame animals
- This colour plus red makes orange
- One hundred years
- Parts of a minute
- Tired and drowsy
- Meat and vegetables boiled slowly
- Drink made from grapes
- Happening every twelve months
- The one bought most recently
- Sleep in this room
- Try
- A puzzle with many pieces
- A newspaper boss
- A plant with fronds that grows in shady places
- Absent

DOWN

- Mountains
- A parent
- A law

SOLUTION

E	V	E	R	B	O	D		
E	O							
M	E	N	D	S	G	O	I	N
E	D	O						
A	L	S	O					
S	I	D						
L	E	S	S	O	N			
E	P	L						
S	M	A	L	L	O	P	E	N
I	N	D						
A	N	S						
A	N	S						



RIYA SUMAN

NAVIGATING CHAOS, CINEMA AND CONFIDENT NEW ROLES

AARTI SREENATH
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In a world where the silver screen often reflects the chaos and charm of life, Riya Suman is a breath of fresh air, dancing effortlessly between the vibrant realms of Telugu and Tamil cinema. Bursting onto the scene with her debut in *Majnu*, she quickly turned heads and won hearts, proving that she's more than just another pretty face. With an infectious energy that lights up every frame and a fearless approach to her craft, Riya is not just acting, igniting a sensation. Whether she's tackling serious social issues in *Men Too* or unleashing her inner action heroine in the upcoming thriller *Hitler*, this Bombay-born dynamo embraces every challenge with a wink and a smile.

Navigating the dual worlds of Tamil and Telugu cinema is no easy feat, but for actress Riya Suman, it's been a "hell of a roller coaster." Born and raised in Bombay, she found herself learning new languages, shuttling between cities and adjusting to the complexities of two distinct industries. But while the journey has been chaotic, it's also been rewarding. "It's super chaotic and challenging but at the same time quite a humbling and rewarding experience," she reflects. She candidly shares that her growth has been immense, not just as an actor but as an individual. "I've evolved so much as a person, learned so much about myself, people, and life in general. It's almost like an innocent girl to an assured confident woman transformation. I'm already in love with the woman I'm becoming."

Riya made her debut with the Telugu film *Majnu*, which was a commercial success, and continued her journey through Tamil cinema, embracing roles both large and small. When it comes to screen time, she holds a pragmatic view. "Screen time is definitely not something I stress about because in the end, the pace and essence of the film is what matters," she says. Her role in *Men Too*, a film dealing with sensitive themes, allowed her to explore complex dynamics, but she approaches each project without personal judgment. "As an actor, you are never supposed to judge your characters," she states, reinforcing her belief in cinema as a director's medium.

Her latest venture, the political thriller *Hitler*, offered Riya the chance to explore a challenging character in Sara, a confident yet emotionally complex woman who suffers from fits due to past trauma. "The part to act getting fits suddenly was the most challenging physical aspect of this character," she reveals. Working alongside seasoned actors like Gautham Menon, she found herself in awe of his professionalism, noting that "no matter who, an actor must always go with a clean slate and submit to the narrative of the director."

The *Hitler* star is not content to be pigeonholed into any one type of role. Whether light-hearted romantic characters or intense dramatic ones, she finds herself at home in front of the camera, eager to embrace all genres. "To be honest, you put me in front of the camera, and I already feel I'm home," she shares, with a particular eagerness to explore horror comedies or period dramas like *Pomniyin Selvan*.

With the rise of OTT platforms and the

global reach of cinema, she believes that experimental roles are finally gaining the recognition they deserve. "Interesting roles were always being offered, like Mani Ratnam has been doing it forever," she says, acknowledging the evolving landscape for female actors in regional cinema. However, she remains grounded, understanding that her role in a film is to serve the director's vision: "Once I'm on board for the film, I completely submit to the vision of the director."

As someone who has portrayed everything from innocent to morally complex characters, she emphasises that it's a team effort to ensure her roles remain fresh and distinct. "When a director signs me up, they themselves make sure that my look and nuances shouldn't be similar to my previous work," she explains.

Despite her rising profile, she hasn't burdened herself with the expectations of being a role model just yet. However, she is committed to helping others navigate the industry. "The responsibility I do take is to guide well with my own experiences, help with any contacts if needed, and share my thoughts and knowledge transparently," she says.

Looking ahead, she remains open to exploring new creative realms, whether it's experimental cinema or venturing into international projects. But beyond acting, she keeps herself busy by managing her family's real estate business, travelling and enjoying her leisure time. "Experimental roles, international cinema, or cinema in any language basically anything to do with acting," she says of her future aspirations, offering a glimpse of her passion and zeal for the craft.



Chiranjeevi launches Abhishek Nama's new film *Nagabandham*

Producer Abhishek Nama, who turned director with the film *Devil*, starring Nandamuri Kalyan Ram and Samyuktha, is now directing his second film titled *Nagabandham*. The previous film, a period drama, was released last December. The new film was launched on Monday at a private studio in Hyderabad, with Megastar Chiranjeevi attending as the special guest. The tagline for *Nagabandham* is "The Secret Treasure".

Interestingly, Abhishek Nama is also providing the story and screenplay for this upcoming

film, which is produced by Kishore Annapureddy. Virat Karma, who made his acting debut in *Peddha Kapu*, will play the lead role in *Nagabandham*, alongside Nabha Natesh and Iswarya Menon as the female leads. Notable actors Jagapathi Babu, Jayaprakash and Murali Sharma will also feature in key roles.

The story revolves around the ancient concept of *Nagabandham*, linked to the protection of 108 Vishnu temples across India. With a backdrop of hidden treasures, such as those at the Padmanabhaswamy Temple in

Thiruvananthapuram and the Ratna Bhandar at the Puri Jagannath Temple, *Nagabandham* delves into a powerful narrative filled with spiritual and adventurous elements, according to the makers. The film is set to release in Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam in 2025, with regular shooting scheduled to begin on October 23.

Several industry figures, including BRS MLA Talasani Srinivas Yadav, director Ajay Bhupathi and producer and distributor Asian Suniel, attended the launch to wish Abhishek Nama and the team success.

Kiran Abbavaram's *KA* joins Diwali race

Actor Kiran Abbavaram is entering the Diwali race with his film *KA*, set to release on October 31. The release date was officially announced by the makers on Monday during a media conference. This film holds special significance for Kiran Abbavaram, as it marks his first release in multiple languages. Directed by the duo Sujith and Sandeep, the film is produced by Chinta Gopalakrishna Reddy.

The story is a period drama with hints of supernatural elements, as teased in the promotional videos. Kiran Abbavaram plays the role of Vasu, a postman. The plot revolves around mysterious incidents in a village and Vasu's connection to them. Kiran Abbavaram has high hopes for the film and has spoken positively about its potential. Tanvi Ram stars as the female lead.

"The film's theatrical rights were bought by Vamsi Nandipati for a high price. Another factor is that the festival holidays will definitely benefit our film. The story's 1970s backdrop is sure to captivate family audiences, so we decided to release the film for Diwali, despite the competition," said Kiran Abbavaram.



Is *Viswam* really a hit or just hype?

The Gopichand and film maker Srinu Vaitla collaboration, *Viswam*, was released on October 11, coinciding with the Dasara festival. However, critics were unimpressed, with many noting that Srinu Vaitla stuck to his usual formulaic approach. This film is particularly crucial for Srinu Vaitla, actor Gopichand, and lead actress Kavya Thapar, all of whom have faced a string of flops in recent years.

Recently, the makers released a poster claiming that the film had recovered its budget within two days and entered the profit zone by day three. Yet, many viewers and industry insiders find this hard to believe. According to reports, *Viswam* was made on a budget of approximately Rs 44 crore, including the remuneration for Gopichand and Srinu Vaitla. Initially, production began under Chitralaya, but due to financial constraints, Peoples Media Factory took over the project.

Sources suggest that the theatrical rights for the Telugu States were sold for just Rs 10 crore, a notably low amount for a Srinu Vaitla film in recent years. After its release, many dismissed the film, with social media criticism focusing on the outdated storytelling. Despite this, the filmmakers seem determined to position *Viswam* as a success, likely due to the challenging phase faced by key members of the team.

So, is *Viswam* truly a hit, or just marketing spin?

Ghatikachalam: A true incident-based horror tale set to thrill

The small film *Ghatikachalam* has sparked interest following the release of its teaser on Monday. Directed by Amar Kamepalli and produced by Amar Kamepalli and producer SKN, the film is now being released worldwide by producer SKN and director Maruthi. After watching the film, both decided to back the project, aiming to support smaller films.

The teaser reveals a horror storyline with a split personality backdrop. Intriguingly, the film is based on a true incident. Director Amar Kamepalli shared that his friend Raju, who resides in the US, sent him a video depicting eerie incidents that occurred in a house belonging to someone Raju knew. This intrigued Amar, who then wrote a story inspired by the event. Raju decided to produce the film. The plot centers around a 19-year-old medical student, with Nikhil Devadula, a former child actor with credits in nearly 70 films, making his debut as a lead actor.

Director Amar revealed that he showed the trailer to Maruthi, who offered valu-



able suggestions for improvements. "I incorporated the changes Maruthi recommended and after seeing the final cut, he decided to release the film," said Amar. He expressed gratitude to Maruthi and SKN for their support in giving the film a wide release. Producer SKN emphasised the importance of supporting small films in the industry. "Many successful actors began with small films, which are essential for keeping theaters running. However, these films often lack the promotion they deserve. After watching *Ghatikachalam*, I was impressed and decided to release it," said SKN. He praised Nikhil's performance and advised him not to limit himself to lead roles but to explore various character roles.

Nikhil Devadula, who has been acting as a child artist for 15 years, expressed his excitement for the project. "With the experience I gained and the support from the technicians, I gave my best in *Ghatikachalam*. I hope it will be a great success," he said.



IT MAY HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT IF WE TOOK CHANCES: MUZUMDAR

PTI ■ SHARJAH

Disheartened India head coach Amol Muzumdar rued the missed opportunities that could have altered the game's outcome after his team's hopes of reaching the women's T20 World Cup semifinals were dashed by a loss to Australia. In a bid to control their own destiny, the Indian team delivered a lackluster performance on the field, ultimately resulting in a nine-run loss to defending champions Australia in their must-win game on Sunday. "I think we were right in the game, right till the last over. Just that experience of Australia, saw them through," Muzumdar said at the post match press conference. "Just a little disappointing with the loss. And I feel we've fielded pretty well. But yeah, a couple of chances could have been, we could have taken those chances and then the things could have been different. "Maybe 10-15 runs less, even the last over. But at the same time, I would like to say that we put in our best effort



forward in this game," he added. India dropped as many as three catches, while also missing a stumping opportunity. To add to their woes, a close lbw call also went against them. In the 17th over of the Australian innings, Phoebe Litchfield, batting on 5, had attempted a reverse sweep with the on-field umpire giving her leg-before-wicket after she missed the shot. However, a decision to review handed her a reprieve because the ball pitched outside leg stump. India players, including vice-captain Smriti Mandhana, protested, claiming the ball pitching outside the leg-stump line should be deemed inconsequential given the batter had switched stances. Litchfield went on to add 10 more crucial runs, helping Australia post the highest team total at Sharjah in the ongoing tournament. "What I gathered from that non-dismissal is that she didn't move before the ball was released. So, the leg mark, what was there, it stood as it is. That was my only understanding about it.

Whether it was out or not, it was up to the umpires to decide or the third umpire. So yeah, it was a crucial one." Australia posted a total of 151/8. In response, India fell short, finishing at 142/9 despite skipper Harmanpreet Kaur's unbeaten 54. With senior players Harmanpreet and Deepti Sharma in the middle, India needed 85 off 10 overs. Asked what message was being sent to the duo in the middle at the time, Muzumdar said: "First and foremost, it was about the run chase. Second was keeping the net run rate also in account. But the only message was if we take it a little deeper, then we do have a good chance to chase these runs down. "I think Harman's presence was very important till the end. That is what I felt in her run chase. We almost got it through." India's chances of making the semifinal now hinge on Pakistan beating New Zealand on Monday. "Well, I just want to wish Pakistan all the best. That's all I can say. But we will be watching the game very closely, that's for sure."

Ben Stokes returns for second Test against Pakistan

PTI ■ MULTAN

Captain Ben Stokes made a return to the England Test team as he was on Monday named in the playing eleven for the second match against Pakistan beginning here Tuesday, after he was declared to have been recovered from an injury he sustained in August. Stokes, who has been out of action due to a hamstring problem, is one of the two changes in the England side that beat Pakistan in the first Test by an innings and 47 runs. Fast bowler Matthew Potts was included in place of Gus Atkinson. Stokes has replaced pacer Chris Woakes while England have retained both spinners Shoaib Bashir and Jack Leach in their eleven. According to the visiting team management, Stokes has bowled and batted

without any discomfort in the nets in the last few days and was cleared by medical experts to make his comeback. The 33-year-old all-rounder last played in the Hundred where he sustained his injury in August forcing him to miss the entire three-match series against Sri Lanka at home. He also missed the first Test against Pakistan here. Pakistan is yet to announce its playing eleven although the selectors on Sunday dropped Babar Azam, Shaheen Shah Afridi and Naseem Shah for the remaining two Tests and also released Sarfaraz Ahmed from the squad. **England Playing XI:** Ben Stokes (capt), Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Ollie Pope, Joe Root, Harry Brook, Jamie Smith (wk), Brydon Carse, Matthew Potts, Jack Leach, Shoaib Bashir.



Cummins to lead Australia in Pakistan ODIs, McGuirk retained

AP ■ SYDNEY

Pat Cummins will captain Australia's one-day squad for the first time since lifting the Cricket World Cup in November in its three-match series against Pakistan at home next month. Cummins was named Monday in the 14-man Australia squad for the matches at Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth along with Josh Hazlewood and Mitchell Starc, the other regular members of Australia's test pace lineup. Jake Fraser-McGuirk has been given another chance after struggling in Australia's Twenty20 series against Scotland in September, in which he made 16 runs in three innings with two ducks. While he made a 30-ball 50 against England, he wasn't selected for the subsequent five-match ODI series. Fraser-McGuirk will likely open the batting with Matt Short in the absence of Travis Head and Mitch Marsh who are on paternity leave. The squad also includes batters Steve Smith and Marnus Labuschagne and white ball regulars Glenn Maxwell, Josh Inglis and Adam Zampa. In Cooper Connolly also has

been retained after making his one-day and T20 debuts on Australia's September tour to Britain. Allrounder Aaron Hardie who scored 67 runs in two innings while batting No. 8 and took four wickets in the England series has kept his place while Marcus Stoinis returns after being left out of the England one-dayers. Seamer Sean Abbott also has held his spot with several bowlers recovering from injuries suffered in England. Nathan Ellis, Xavier Bartlett, Meredith all left that series with injuries while Spencer Johnson was ruled out with a side strain before it began. Meanwhile, test allrounder Cameron Green confirmed Monday he will undergo surgery on a stress fracture in his back and will be out of action for six months. A squad for the Twenty20 series against Pakistan will be named later this month. The Pakistan series which comprises matches at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Nov. 4, the Adelaide Oval on Nov. 8 and Perth Stadium on Nov. 10 is Australia's last one-day series before the ICC Champions Trophy in Pakistan in February.

Kohli hungry for runs, no need to judge after every match: Gambhir



PTI ■ BENGALURU

India head coach Gautam Gambhir is not too concerned about the recent lukewarm form of Virat Kohli, insisting that the star batter remains as hungry as when he made his debut. To now, his hunger is always there," Gambhir told reporters here on Monday. "That hunger is what makes him a world-class cricketer. I am sure that he will be hungry to get runs in this series and probably moving forward to Australia as well," he added. Gambhir said the prolific batter, once he gets into "those runs scoring phases", is remarkably consistent. "So, I am sure that he will be looking for these three Test matches in the series and then to Australia." Gambhir reiterated his opinion that a player should not be judged on the basis of a one bad match or a series. "You don't keep judging people after every game. If you keep judging people after every game, that's not fair on

them. It's a sport and people are bound to fail. "But more importantly, I think if we can get the results, if people are doing what is needed of them to get the results in our favour, that is fine," he noted. The former opener said his job is to back the players and keep them hungry for success, particularly during a long season where India is scheduled to play eight more Test matches. "Everyone doesn't have the best days everyday. I think the kind of vibe we have is we keep backing our players. My job is to keep backing the players. My job is to keep selecting the best playing 11, not dropping anyone. "I'm sure everyone is hungry and they know there are eight Test matches in a row. So, this is probably the start of them looking at eight Test matches in a row and performing well," said Gambhir.



Green ruled out of India Test series, to undergo back surgery

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australia all-rounder Cameron Green was on Monday ruled out of the marquee Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test series against India owing to a stress fracture in his spine that will need six months to heal after a surgery. The 25-year-old seam-bowling all-rounder was diagnosed with the problem in his lower back after experiencing pain during last month's tour of the UK. Green has previously suffered four stress fractures in his back but has not encountered any issues in that area since 2019. "Whilst spine stress fractures are not unusual in pace bowlers, Cam has a unique defect in an adjacent area to the fracture that is believed to be contributing to the injury," a CA statement said on Monday. A six-month recovery time will mean Green misses not just the Border Gavaskar Trophy, but also February's Test tour of Sri Lanka and the Champions Trophy. His

participation in the IPL is also in doubt. Green has decided to opt for a similar type of surgery undergone by several pacers including Jasprit Bumrah, James Pattinson, Jason Behrendorff, and Ben Dwarshuis. "After thorough consultation it was determined Cameron would benefit from the surgery to stabilise the defect and reduce the risk of future recurrence," CA said. The alternative to surgery would have involved rehabilitation and restricting his bowling during the five-match series against India, starting November 22 in Perth. "The surgery has been performed successfully with elite pace bowlers in the past. Recovery time is anticipated to be around six-months. "The decision to proceed to surgery is with Cameron's long-term future as an all-rounder in mind," the statement added. The operation will be performed by New Zealand surgeons Grahame Inglis and Rowan Schouten, which

involves screws and titanium wire to bind vertebrae together, according to 'cricket.Com.Au.' His absence would mean Australia will have to rejig their batting order. Green had returned to the Test side following veteran opener David Warner's retirement earlier this year with Steve Smith being pushed to open the innings. However, the veteran struggled at the top of the order and will drop back to his preferred number four position, which has been left vacant by Green. The selectors will now keep an eye on Australia's A series against India where the likes of Cameron Bancroft, and teen prodigy Sam Konstas will vie for the now vacant opening spot. Additionally, Australia will also have to find someone to bowl Green's overs. Mitchell Marsh did not bowl in Western Australia's Sheffield Shield match against Queensland and hardly rolled his arm while captaining the white-ball teams over the winter.

Battling accomplished Ashwin, Jadeja crucial for New Zealand: Rachin Ravindra

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Top-order batter Rachin Ravindra said on Monday that nullifying the twin threat posed by senior spinners Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja will be crucial to New Zealand's success in the three-match series against India. Ashwin and Jadeja together have grabbed over 800 Test wickets, and are among the most experienced bowling pairs in world cricket at present. "They've got consistent bowlers who bowl in an area for a long period of time. I mean, you see the two spinners who play consistently, Ashwin and Jadeja, they're two very accomplished bowlers. You know, they can bat too, which makes it a little bit hard," Ravindra told reporters here on Monday. "They're consistent, they're good to battle, especially in this part of the world. Obviously, we know how good India are in their own

conditions, the quality of their bowlers and batters. It shows how hard it is for a team to come and win here. So, it's difficult," he added. Ravindra banked on his previous experience of playing cricket in India to come good in the upcoming Test rubber. The Kiwi played in this part of the world during last year's ODI World Cup before appearing for Chennai Super Kings in the IPL 2024. "Although it is different formats, it gives you confidence that you can perform in this part of the world. I think it's (Test cricket) a different challenge entirely and it's something I'm really looking forward to. "As you've seen, those two tournaments (ODI WC and IPL) were amazing, the crowds and the passion and the hype and the buzz around them. So, I'm excited to have a full-fledged series here," he noted. From a team perspective, the 24-year-old said the tourists



will have to keep focus on their game plans rather than worrying about India's approach. "The brand of cricket they play is very positive, especially in their own conditions. The way they've evolved over the last few years has been amazing, especially away (from home). "As New Zealanders, we don't necessarily try and look at the opposition too much. We know what a quality side they are and what they bring to the table, but I think if we're able to play our game and be consistent and put our best foot forward, hopefully, that will result in a win," he added. New Zealand's preparation for the series against India has been far from ideal as they lost 0-2 against Sri Lanka recently, while their one-off Test match against Afghanistan was a washout at Noida. However, Ravindra was confident that the team can lean upon the learnings from

those experiences against India. "We did some really good stuff during the Sri Lankan series, obviously, came on the wrong side of the win and loss column. But I think as a group there were times where we really pushed and that first Test was close," he said. In the first Test against the Islanders at Galle, the left-hander made a fine 92 but the Kiwis lost the match by 63 runs while chasing 275. Ravindra wanted his side not to repeat the mistake of faltering at the crunch moments. "I think we've got to understand that we've got to do it (fighting) for long periods of time because that's what Test match cricket is about. Obviously, Sri Lanka and India are different places, but similar in terms of the amount of spin you might play. "So, we have learnt a lot. So, it's about, you know, seeing how we can play our game and how we can bring that here to India," he added.