

Roads and Buildings Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy did not answer my calls when I called him to speak about the roads and bridges in my constituency. We took up the construction of bridges at seven places in Nizamabad Lok Sabha constituency limits. But the state government is not giving us funds and bills in time although the Centre has deposited its funds



- Arvind Dharmapuri, Lok Sabha MP

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India seals big-ticket deal to procure 31 Predator drones From US



VERSATILE VIXEN READY TO RULE THE SCREEN



Tick tock! Rewind is ready to turn BACK TIME



DON'T MISS...

Family members of VRAs seek ...

Eligible family members of Village Revenue Assistants (VRAs) sought 3,797 pending inheritance job appointments as per GO 81 and 85. In all, 406 people have submitted their grievances at the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Praja Bhavan on Tuesday. More than 100 members from across the State have submitted applications in Prajavani, urging that out of 20,555 members, only 16,758 received ...

-PAGE: 3

Gambler students arrested ...

In a shocking turn of events, two engineering students were arrested by the police after they allegedly committed a theft to repay debts incurred due to their addiction to online betting and a life of luxury. The accused, Puthukuri Prabhass, a third-year engineering student, and Gundlapalli Siva, whom he met on Instagram, targeted elderly woman living alone, stealing gold ornaments to fund their extravagant lifestyle. The incident came to light ...

-PAGE: 4

The untold story of Captain ...

When you think of rotary wing aircraft in Nepal, some names will crop up: Tula Bahadur Thapa, Narain Singh Pun, Madan KC, all Army Colonels, but among civilians a pioneer is Capt Pameshwar Thapa, the first Russian Mi17 helicopter pilot who trained the then Royal Nepal Army on Mi17 and was later requisitioned by Security Forces during the Maoist People's War. Let's call the Captain, RT who has written the English version of his book in Nepali, Barud Mathi ...

-PAGE: 6

'Don't see impact on trade ties'

The escalation in the diplomatic row between India and Canada will not have an impact on the bilateral trade and investment ties between the two countries, government sources said on Tuesday. They also said that the bilateral trade value is not significant and Canadian funds get route their investments through Singapore, the UAE and the US. "India is a preferred investment destination," they said. Canada is India's one of the primary sources of lentils and now that can come ...

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India-Canada ties hit rock bottom

New Delhi strongly rejects Ottawa's fresh charges

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The India-Canada diplomatic row over the killing of Sikh separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar escalated further on Tuesday with Ottawa hinting at possible sanctions against India in view of certain findings in the case and New Delhi vehemently trashing the charges.

The Canadian authorities also attempted to link the Bishnoi gang with Indian government agents in carrying out covert operations including violent criminal activities in Canada and claimed to have clear evidence to back the charges.

As the ties between the two countries hit rock bottom, Canadian ... Continued on Page 5



7 flights get bomb threats via X



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Seven flights, including one bound for the United States, received bomb-threat messages through a social media handle on Tuesday, prompting security agencies to undertake specific counter-terrorist drills at various airports, official sources said.

The threats via microblogging platform X came a day after three international flights originating from Mumbai received bomb threats, causing trouble to hundreds of passengers and airline crew. The messages posted on Monday were declared a hoax.

The sources said an X handle issued threats on Tuesday to seven flights -- an Air India Express flight from Jaipur to Bengaluru via Ayodhya (IX765), a SpiceJet flight from Darbhanga to Mumbai (SG116), an Akasa Air flight from Bagdogra to Bengaluru (QP 1373), an Air India flight from Delhi to Chicago (AI 127), an Indigo flight from Dammam (Saudi Arabia) to Lucknow (6E 98), an Alliance Air Amritsar-Dehradun-Delhi flight (9I 650) and an Air India Express flight (IX 684) from Madurai to Singapore. Continued on Page 5

EC sounds poll bugle

Maha polls on Nov 20; Jharkhand polls on Nov 13, 20

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Assembly polls in Maharashtra will be held in a single phase on November 20, while Jharkhand polls will be held in two phases on November 13 and 20, the Election Commission of India announced on Tuesday. The votes for the two states will be counted on November 23.

"There are 9.63 crore eligible voters in Maharashtra, while the number of eligible voters in Jharkhand is 2.6 crore," Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said at a press conference here. Bypolls will also be held in 48 assembly seats and two Lok Sabha seats, the CEC said

Bye-elections to 47 assembly seats and the Wayanad Lok Sabha seat, vacated by Congress leader

Rahul Gandhi, will be Continued on Page 5

Will BRS contest in Maharashtra polls?

With the Maharashtra Assembly elections scheduled for November 20, all eyes are on BRS chief K. Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR) to see if his party will contest in the neighbouring state.

Although the BRS is currently in the opposition in Telangana, the party is financially sound, with official records indicating hundreds of crores in its bank accounts. This financial strength Continued on Page 5

No relief to IAS at CAT

TG bureaucrats told to go to Andhra Pradesh

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

IAS officers Vakati Karuna, K. Amrapali, A. Vaniprasad, D. Ronald Ross and G. Srijana had approached the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) seeking cancellation of the transfer orders issued by the Centre asking them to go to Andhra Pradesh on October 9.

The officers sought relief from the orders mandating their transfer between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, claiming that the decisions were made without considering their preferences or the recommendations of the one-man committee.

During the hearing, the CAT made some observations regarding the transfer process and the officers' roles. The CAT said that officers

should serve in areas that require their expertise and pointed out the floods in Andhra Pradesh.

"The people in AP are suffering due to floods. Don't you want to go to such a place and serve them?" the tribunal said, suggesting that the officers should be willing to serve

one-man committee when issuing the transfer orders. The counsel pointed out that the Centre had not considered the officers' preferences and that their petitions were based on the principles of natural justice.

As per DoPT order they stand relieved (four days ago itself). So, technically they are not with Telangana cadre any more. DoPT issued orders to immediately relieve from Telangana. Govt relieved IAS as per DoPT order. Along with IAS, IPS has also been relieved by the government.

The case involved officers like Srijana, currently working in Andhra Pradesh, who are now

required to move to Telangana, while officers Vakati Karuna, K. Amrapali, A. Vaniprasad and D. Ronald Ross, currently in Telangana, are required to go to Andhra Pradesh. The CAT refused to grant interim relief and did not issue stay orders against the Centre's decision. The tribunal ordered the petitioners to file their counter by November 5, indicating that the officers would have to comply with the transfer orders until further hearings.

The decision marks a significant step in the administrative reshuffling of IAS officers between the two states, with the court stressing that public service should be the paramount priority for officers, particularly during critical times like floods and other emergencies.

No politics over nation's security: CM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy attended the foundation stone laying ceremony of the naval establishment at the naval site in the Pudur mandal of Vikarabad district on Tuesday.

Speaking at the event, Revanth emphasized Telangana's crucial role in the defence sector, noting that Hyderabad has already become a key player in defence and nuclear fuel complexes (NFC).

He addressed concerns surrounding the Very Low Frequency (VLF) facility, which has sparked controversy in some political circles. Revanth said that certain groups are spreading misconceptions that the VLF project will be harmful to the people of Telangana.

Refuting these claims, he pointed to Tamil Nadu, which launched a similar initiative in 1990, noting that no adverse effects were



recorded there. "It is a matter of honour that the second VLF is being established in our region," he said and urged the people of Telangana to recognize the importance of the project for national security.

Revanth called on those opposing the project to consider its implications for national defence. "We survive only if the country exists. Our region will develop when we exist," he remarked, highlighting the

importance of supporting such initiatives for the country's safety and prosperity.

The Chief Minister also addressed the political controversy surrounding the project, describing it as an "eye-opener" for those who have raised concerns. He pointed out that the decisions to transfer land and allocate funds for the project were made by the BRS government in 2017.

Continued on Page 5

CM aiming to hand over Group-1 appointment letters on Dec 9

Irrigation Dept to go for long-term loans, reduce burden on treasury

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government is planning to shift from short-term loans to long-term loans for the irrigation sector to reduce the financial burden on the exchequer. Currently, the short-term loans taken by the Irrigation Department have resulted in a significant financial strain on the treasury.

The government has decided that by switching to long-term loans, the burden of monthly EMI payments, along with interest rates can be significantly reduced.

This strategic shift will also facilitate the swift completion of pending irrigation projects. The Minister for Irrigation and Civil Supplies, N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, met representatives of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) at the Jal

Soudha office in Erramanzil Colony, Hyderabad.

During the meeting, the Minister discussed the state's plans to secure long-term loans to accelerate project execution and reduce the interest burden.

The meeting was attended by Irrigation Department Advisor Adityanath Das, Secretary Rahul Bojja, Special Secretary Prashanth Jeevan Patil, Chief Engineers Anil Kumar, Nagender Rao and Deputy Chief Engineer K. Srinivas. From the AIIB, representatives Sangma Kim and Rajesh Yadav participated in the discussions.

Uttam highlighted the benefits of converting the current short-term loans into long-term ones, stating that this would not only reduce the burden on the government but also ensure Continued on Page 5



BASING ON REVENUE, OPERATIONAL NEEDS

Govt to reclassify temples in TG

NAVEENA GHANATE naveena.ghanate@gmail.com ■ HYDERABAD

After the formation of Telangana, a comprehensive classification of temples has not been undertaken. This has led to major operational challenges in many of the state's religious institutions.

Highly placed sources said that not just small temples but even big temples that generate lots of revenue like Yedupayala, Vemulawada and Bhadrachalam continue to operate

with insufficient staff due to their outdated classifications.

This issue has been highlighted by temple authorities for years, with many pointing out that the lack of proper staffing affects not only the temple management but also devotees.

The Congress government is now addressing this gap by taking steps to reclassify tem-

ples according to their revenue and operational needs.

Sources said that a file outlining the classification of temples is now awaiting government approval marking the first significant attempt to update temple reclassifications after the state's inception. Sources said this reclassification

according to rules should be done every 10 years, but that wasn't done. Sources indicated that the last reclassification was held in United Andhra Pradesh.

Meanwhile, the Andhra Pradesh Endowments Department reorganised temples and updated them in November 2023 and in February 2024.

The proposed reclassification will not only improve the temples' ability to function efficiently but will also create promotion opportunities for staffers and Continued on Page 5

Hyderabad tops in private equity investment deals

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a remarkable show of investor confidence, Hyderabad secured the highest share of private equity (PE) investments in India during the first half of FY25 by attracting \$284 million.

The industrial and logistics sector, driven by a significant deal involving Reliance Logistics and Warehouse Holdings, captured 67% of the total private equity inflows. This shift highlights the increasing preference for logistics and warehousing investments over traditional office spaces.

Shobhit Agarwal, MD & CEO of ANAROCK Capital, attributed the decline in office sector investments to Continued on Page 5

Naidu staring at an empty treasury amid 'super six' schemes

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu is facing acute embarrassment with regard to the implementation of his 'super six' programmes and staring at an empty treasury due to the fiscal indiscipline of the erstwhile YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) regime. Chandrababu Naidu, who had to go the 'extra mile' to impress people on continuing various schemes of the erstwhile regime, is now facing an uphill task.



Let us consider the Amma Vodi scheme targeted at mothers of school-going children. Under the scheme, an amount of Rs.15,000-00 would be credited to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries. The scheme, designed by YSRCP president and former chief minister YS Jaganmohan, had evoked tremendous response from lakhs of mothers of school-going children so much so that dropouts came down in almost every school. Due to financial constraints, the then government subse-

Given the huge debt burden inherited by his government, Chandrababu Naidu is unable to move freely in implementing the Amma Vodi scheme

quently decided to make this scheme applicable to only one child from each family. Without committing on paper, YSRCP later publicized that this scheme is meant even for families with more than one child. Now, this part of the promise is hanging fire under the NDA government, despite TDP's

pre-poll hype about implementing it for all school-going children. Given the huge debt burden inherited by his government, Chandrababu Naidu is unable to move freely in implementing the Amma Vodi scheme. Likewise, the proposed scheme for providing women



M D RATNA KUMAR
Senior Journalist

free travel facility in APSRTC buses is also causing much concern to the ruling front. Given the strain on fiscal resources caused by similar schemes providing free travel for women in Karnataka and Telangana, Andhra Pradesh has to look at the prospects of APSRTC upon implementing the scheme. Yet, with every passing day, the pressure on the ruling front in AP is mounting for implementing the schemes. Lack of resources has negatively impacted the Polavaram multi-purpose project, though it had been accorded national project status. Although the

Polavaram project required funds totaling Rs.53,000 crore, successive governments headed by TDP&YSRCP chose to put it on the backburner. The erstwhile Jagan regime spent funds totaling Rs. 2.7 lakh crore, obtained largely as loans, on welfare schemes instead. Obviously due to the financial crunch, the government headed by Chandrababu is confining itself to a few programmes like pensions for various sections of society. The Chief Minister has been frequenting Delhi to

secure funds from the Union government for running the state. Even salaries for lakhs of employees in the state government could not be disbursed on first day of every month. To avoid adverse reaction, the state government prefers to disburse pensions promptly on the first day of every month. It is perhaps time for Chandrababu Naidu to place all relevant facts before the people and let them know about the state's fiscal position. He must then spell out how he proposes to implement the super six programmes.

CM aiming to hand over Group-1 appointment letters on Dec 9

NAVEENA GHANATE
naveena.ghanate@gmail.com
HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is aiming to issue Group-1 appointment orders on December 9, in a move that could be a milestone in Telangana's governance. This date is symbolic as it is Sonia Gandhi's birthday, the day on which the formation of Telangana state was announced by Chidambaram and the day on which the TG Congress government completes a year in office. The government is pulling out all stops to clear legal hurdles and meet this important deadline. The Telangana government has been under immense pressure to finalize the recruitment process, as Group-1 posts are

coveted and any delay would not only impact the candidates but also reflect on the administration's efficiency. With the High Court's verdict going in favour of the TSPSC, the road is now clear for the government to fulfil its promise of appointing Group-1 officers, a crucial step in strengthening the state's administration. The significance of December 9 is not lost on the political landscape of Telangana, as the day encapsulates many historic milestones. By handing out appointment orders on this day, Revanth Reddy's government could solidify its place in the state's history, cementing its association with the formation of Telangana and its development strides over the past year.

On Monday, the High Court dismissed petitions challenging the Group-1 notification, giving the green light for the Mains examinations to commence as scheduled on October 21. These petitions, filed by candidates claimed discrepancies in the final answer key of seven questions of the preliminary examination. The petitioners sought a recalculation of marks and the issue of a revised list of eligible candidates. However, after reviewing the cases, the High Court ruled in favour of the TSPSC, allowing the examination process to proceed. The court had earlier reserved its judgment on Monday and delivered its verdict on Tuesday, dismissing all related petitions. Around 15 cases had been filed challeng-

ing various aspects of the Group-1 recruitment process, ranging from the validity of the final answer key to reservations and the allocation of posts. Despite these legal challenges, the court's decision now clears the path for the Mains exams, which are set to be conducted from October 21 to 27. The examinations will be held daily from 2 pm to 5 pm. Candidates are allowed entry from 12:30 pm. The TSPSC has already made all arrangements, releasing the hall tickets on Monday, which will remain available until the day before the exams. A total of 31,382 candidates are expected to appear for the Mains exams. The government is determined to ensure that the recruitment process goes smoothly without any legal obstacles.

KTR must ask KCR why he cleared radar station: Sanjay

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BRS's Working President, KTR, strongly criticized the Congress government in Telangana, accusing it of completely derailing the education sector. Addressing the media, KTR expressed his concern over the current state of affairs in education, stating that the Congress government is neglecting public education and making private education inaccessible to poor and middle-class students. "Schools like Gurukuls, which once provided corporate-level education to thousands of poor and middle-class students, are now being rendered ineffective by the government. Basic needs, including food and safety in Gurukuls, are not being met, and rent for Gurukul buildings hasn't been paid, causing landlords to shut them down," KTR remarked, showing his anger over the deteriorating situation. He added that such a crisis had never been seen before. KTR lashed out at the government for not paying the fee reimbursement and scholarships for students, causing mental distress and disruption in their education. "The Congress government has failed both public and private education. By not paying the reimbursement, it is pushing poor and middle-class students away from education," KTR said. He also said that private degree and PG colleges

'Cong ruined TG's education set-up'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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across the state have been forced to close indefinitely due to unpaid dues, a situation that he called "shameful." KTR pointed out that despite warnings from college managements about going on indefinite strikes, the government remains indifferent. "The government's apathy has resulted in students taking to the streets, protesting for their rights while the administration turns a blind eye," he stated. In a scathing attack, KTR questioned the government's priorities, citing its plans to spend Rs. 1.5 lakh crore for beautifying the Musi river, yet it cannot pay fees reimbursement or provide scholarships to poor and middle-class students.

carry out major and minor repairs to ensure the safety of students staying in these facilities. Earlier, the rent for March 2024 and April 2024 had been released shortly after the Revanth government took office. The pending rents had been a burden under the BRS admin, with building owners pressing for their release. The Telangana government, as part of its short-term relief measures, is committed to settling all outstanding dues to private building owners who provided facilities for educational purposes. Mohammed Faheemuddin Qureshi, in his statement, also acknowledged the patience of the building owners and their support for the welfare of TGMREIS students. He reiterated that the government's timely actions in clearing the arrears will ensure that the facilities can be maintained properly. The TGMREIS is dedicated to providing quality education and residential facilities to students from minority communities and this timely financial aid will contribute to the efforts to maintain a safe and conducive environment for learning.

Govt clears rental arrears of buildings housing TGMREIS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has cleared the long-pending rental dues of private buildings being used to house Telangana Minorities Residential Educational Institutions (TGMREIS). Mohammed Faheemuddin Qureshi, Vice Chairman and President of TGMREIS, thanked the government for releasing four months' rent arrears (August 2023 to November 2023). This release, amounting to approximately Rs 28 crore, will help building owners to

carry out major and minor repairs to ensure the safety of students staying in these facilities. Earlier, the rent for March 2024 and April 2024 had been released shortly after the Revanth government took office. The pending rents had been a burden under the BRS admin, with building owners pressing for their release. The Telangana government, as part of its short-term relief measures, is committed to settling all outstanding dues to private building owners who provided facilities for educational purposes. Mohammed Faheemuddin Qureshi, in his statement, also acknowledged the patience of the building owners and their support for the welfare of TGMREIS students. He reiterated that the government's timely actions in clearing the arrears will ensure that the facilities can be maintained properly. The TGMREIS is dedicated to providing quality education and residential facilities to students from minority communities and this timely financial aid will contribute to the efforts to maintain a safe and conducive environment for learning.

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AICC appoints Uttam, Seethakka as senior observers for Maharashtra polls

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Congress president Mallikarjuna Kharge has appointed AICC senior observers (Division-wise) and state election senior coordinators for Maharashtra for the forthcoming Assembly elections. Kharge appointed Telangana Irrigation Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy as the senior observer for the Marathwada division along with Sachin

Pilot. He also appointed Panchayatiraj Minister Seethakka as the senior observer in North Maharashtra along with Dr Syed Naseer Hussain. Kharge appointed senior leaders Ashok Gehlot and Dr G. Parameashwaran as senior observers for Mumbai and Konkan Division. Bhupesh Baghel, Charanjit Singh Channi and Umang Singh were appointed as senior observers in Vidarbha

(Amravati and Nagpur) division. TS Singh Deo and MB Patil were appointed as senior observers for Western Maharashtra division. Kharge appointed Mukul Wasnik and Avinash Pande as State Election Senior Coordinators. He appointed Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka as the senior observer along with Tariq Anwar, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhary in Jharkhand.

BJP appoints Laxman as its National Returning Officer

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP president JP Nadda appointed Raja Sabha Member Dr K. Laxman as the party's National Returning Officer on Tuesday as per the decision of the BJP's national executive committee. Besides Laxman, the party appointed MP Naresh Bansal, BJP Vice-President Rekha Verma and MP, Dr Sambit Patra, as national Co-Returning Officers with immediate effect.

Warangal MLAs complain to Deepa Das Munshi against Surekha

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Congress MLAs from the erstwhile Warangal district filed a complaint with AICC in-charge General Secretary Deepa Das Munshi on Tuesday alleging that her followers are troubling their followers in all constituencies. They are also going to file a complaint with TPCC chief B. Mahesh Kumar Goud on Wednesday. It may be recalled that Konda Surekha has been facing trouble in recent times one after the other. She also tendered apologies to Samantha and Nagarjuna family after taking back her comments. However, Nagarjuna approached the court seeking criminal and defamation action against Konda Surekha.



Mahesh warns Congress leaders against indiscipline

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC President B. Mahesh Kumar Goud warned Congress leaders that no excuse would be accepted if they go against the party line. Addressing a review meeting of the Medak district Congress on Tuesday at the Gandhi Bhavan, Mahesh lashed out at the internal bickering in the Medak Congress unit. He said that discipline is very important for all party leaders. Mahesh directed Congress leaders to take local body elections as well as MLC elections as a matter of honour. He suggested they should take the government's social welfare programmes to the people to strengthen the party and ensure the victory of party candidates. He asked the leaders to work hard to make the

public support the government. Mahesh asked leaders to work extensively at the field level during the coming MLC elections as well as local body elections. He said that leaders who work for the party will definitely get recognition and directed constituency in-charges to work without egos. He said the party should be a bridge between the people and the government and counter the criticism of the opposition. AICC in-charge General Secretary Deepa Das Munshi said the Medak district has BRS top leaders like KCR and Harish Rao. So there is a need to work hard. Moreover, the BRS and the BJP are now working together. So Congress leaders must proceed strategically in Medak district during local body elections, she said.

Nothing wrong in me expecting minister post: Preamsagar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress's Mancherla MLA, K. Preamsagar Rao, said that he is a senior and there is nothing wrong in expecting a minister post. Participating in a review meeting of Adilabad district Congress activists held under the leadership of TPCC chief B. Mahesh Kumar Goud on Tuesday at the Gandhi Bhavan, Preamsagar said that he is expecting a minister post as a senior Congress leader. However, the high command will decide to whom to give minister posts. He reminded that the AICC gave the TPCC chief post to B. Mahesh Kumar Goud in the same manner. Mahesh asked Adilabad Congress leaders that they should not take money from the people to implement welfare schemes. The party will take action if it is proved that any leader engaged in irregularities, he warned, and asked party activists to ensure that welfare schemes reached people who are 100 per cent eligible for them.

R&B Minister Venkat not answering my calls: Arvind

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP's Nizamabad MP, Dharmapuri Arvind, alleged that Roads and Buildings (R&B) Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy is not answering his phone calls when he called Venkat to speak about roads and bridges in his constituency. Arvind said that Venkat is misleading officials and people regarding development works. He said that he took up the construction of bridges at seven places in Nizamabad Lok Sabha constituency and that he made the 2-lane Madhava Nagar ROB 4-lane by spending Rs 93 crore. However, the state government is not giving funds and bills in time although the Centre deposited funds. Arvind asked the state government to explain why it has not allocated Young India Integrated Residential School to Nizamabad district. He said the Congress got weakened in Nizamabad district due to him and warned that the Congress will face the fate of the KCR government if it does not change its attitude. He said that there is no protection for temples under Congress rule. Telangana will develop only if the BJP comes to power, he said.

Cops nab 2 for offensively trolling Surekha, Raghunandan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The police arrested two persons in connection with the uploading of a photo and posting indecent comments about Endowment Minister Konda Surekha and the BJP's Medak MP, M. Raghunandan Rao. The Cyber Crime Police said on Tuesday that they had arrested Devanna, a former sarpanch of

Govt failed to pay rent for school buildings: Harish

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Education Minister in this Congress government, how long will you continue to ignore the crumbling education system?" Harish asked. "This issue is not just unpaid rent - it's about the future of students whose education is being disrupted. If the government continues to ignore basic responsibilities, it will have long-term consequences on the quality of education in Telangana," he added. Harish called for immediate intervention to resolve the issue and ensure that no more schools face closure due to administrative negligence. "The Congress government must act now to safeguard the future of Telangana's students, or else face the consequences of failing an entire generation," he demanded.

Stage set for Priyanka's electoral debut from Wayanad

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

vacate the Wayanad seat in Kerala, from where his sister Priyanka Gandhi will make her electoral debut. If elected, this will be the first time that Priyanka Gandhi will enter Parliament as an MP. This will also be the first time that the three Gandhi family members -- Sonia, Rahul and Priyanka -- will be in Parliament together. The EC on Tuesday announced bypolls to the Wayanad and Nanded Lok Sabha seats as well as in 48 Assembly constituencies. The bypoll to the Wayanad parliamentary seat and 47 Assembly seats will be held on November 13, along with the first phase of polling for the Jharkhand Assembly.

VH asks HYDRAA chief to revive Bathukamma Kunta Lake

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Senior Congress leader V. Hanumantha Rao appealed to HYDRAA Commissioner AV Ranganath to revive the Amberpet Bathukamma Kunta Lake. VH met Ranganath on Tuesday and extended Dasara greetings to him. They also discussed the Bathukamma Kunta Lake land encroachment issue. VH handed over documents regarding the lake to Ranganath and asked him to revive it. It is learnt that Ranganath assured VH that he will do everything possible to revive the lake.

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
Tithi:
Chaturdashi: Oct 16 12:19 AM to Oct 16 08:40 PM
Purnima: Oct 16 08:40 PM to Oct 17 04:56 PM
Nakshatram:
Uttara Bhadrpadra: Oct 15 10:08 PM to Oct 16 07:17 PM
Revati: Oct 16 07:17 PM to Oct 17 04:20 PM
Rahukalam: 12:01 PM to 1:28 PM
Yamagandam: 7:40 AM to 9:07 AM
Varjyam: 05:49 AM to 07:13 AM
Gulika: 10:34 AM to 12:01 PM
Amritakalam: 03:04 PM to 04:28 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: Nil
HYDERABAD WEATHER
Forecast: Scattered Showers
Temp: 32°C
Humidity: 74%
Sunrise: 6:09 AM
Sunset: 5:54 PM
Updated: October 15, 2024 5:00 PM

CITY EVENTS

The Association of Otolaryngologists of India South Zone

Dr DS Deendayal, Dr D Dwarakanath Reddy and Dr Venkatram Reddy of the AOI to speak on key breakthrough techniques including brain surgery through the eye and more.

Venue

Shenoy Nursing Home, East Maredpally, Hyderabad. October 16, 11.45 am.

50K corneal transplants

Reviving vision, Reclaiming life - One cornea at a time. Minister for Health C Damodar Raja Narasimha to be guest of honour. Cornea transplant recipient, former Vice President of India Venkaiah Naidu to speak.

Venue

LV Prasad Eye Institute, Patodia Auditorium, 6th level, KAR Campus, Banjara Hills. October 16, 5.45 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.

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

Chitrarayee 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.

Tribal Exotica

Nagaland bites x Japanese spirits

Venue

The House of Suntory, The Park, Hyderabad. October 17, 7.30 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

City Pioneer



HYDERABAD WEDNESDAY | OCTOBER 16, 2024

03

OVER 100 MEMBERS SUBMIT APPLICATIONS IN PRAJAVANI

Family members of VRAs seek inheritance job appointments

SAMUEL JOSHUA samueljoshuamjmc@gmail.com ■ HYDERABAD

Eligible family members of Village Revenue Assistants (VRAs) sought 3,797 pending inheritance job appointments as per GO 81 and 85. In all, 406 people have submitted their grievances at the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Praja Bhavan on Tuesday.

More than 100 members from across the State have submitted applications in Prajavani, urging that out of 20,555 members, only 16,758 received appointments. The remaining members, facing financial difficulties, demanded justice. Many raised slogans asking for inheritance job appointments from current VRAs aged above 61 years.

When asked, Gangaram from Chityal village, Medak district, shared that his father, a VRA, passed away, and earlier administration passed GO 81 and 85 for inheritance job eligibility. He said

that the new administration has been postponing the appointments. Gangaram also mentioned that the present VRAs are without salaries and work in the office.

Gangaram expressed frustration over their worsening financial struggle, as Prajavani officials keep delaying, claiming the government will handle it soon. He noted that he has been attending Prajavani for more than five months and urged the government to look into the issue as the family members have to be daily-wagers due to financial struggle.

Meanwhile, Ranga Rao from Nagar Kurnool stated that while leadership has changed, their situation remains the same. He cried out that despite promises, no progress has been made on the VRA job eligibility issue under the new administration. He explained that they are relying on loans and daily wages and are struggling financially. Rao added that they have written letters, visited the MRO office and even met Chief



Over 100 eligible family members of VRAs from across the State demanding justice at the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Praja Bhavan on Tuesday

Minister A Revanth Reddy during the Dussehra holiday, but no orders have been issued regarding the appointments.

He noted that 3,797 qualified members, many with post-graduate degrees, are being ignored. He also mentioned that over 250 peo-

ple have died struggling with debt and called for a state-wide protest if the issue is not addressed by the end of October.

HM Raja Narasimha lays stone for hostels at GMC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Health Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha has laid foundation stone for hostels for the MBBS and senior residents at Gandhi Medical College (GMC) on Tuesday.

Speaking to the media, Raja Narasimha said that the State has allocated Rs 200 crore to solve the problems of junior doctors. "Medical profession is the noblest one, deeply rooted in humanity. With the cooperation of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, Rs 200 crore was allocated within two days to resolve the issues of the junior doctors association (JUDA)."

"Despite claims of setting up an IVF centre at Gandhi Hospital for the past six years, no action was taken. However, we have now established the first IVF centre under government supervision at Gandhi



Hospital. This initiative aims to fulfill the aspirations of poor women who dream of becoming mothers."

An IVF centre will also be set up at the Petla Burj Maternity Hospital within 15 days, he added.

"We are planning to establish IVF centres in Warangal and Nizamabad as well. Before the elections, promises were made in October about establishing eight new medical colleges, but the necessary facilities were not provided. Orders were issued without providing

basic infrastructure. However, over the past seven months, we worked hard to establish eight new medical colleges," he added.

The number of cases of cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure and heart diseases is increasing. The government has decided to set up at least six cancer centres and approximately 73 trauma centres across the State. The government is focusing on providing healthcare within 15 minutes to those living in rural and tribal areas. The Health Secretary has been directed to establish an IVF centre at Sultan Bazar as well, said the Minister.

Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha has instructed officials to expand the existing 32 super-specialty departments at Gandhi Hospital and prepare plans for further expansion.

30-year-old woman raped by auto driver

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 30-year-old woman was allegedly threatened and raped by an auto driver in the Gachibowli police station limits on Tuesday morning.

The Police said that she travelled from Chennai and got off at RC Puram on Monday night.

To reach her home at Nanakramguda, she picked an auto-rickshaw at RC Puram. But when they reached the Masjid Banda, the auto-rickshaw driver stopped the vehicle and allegedly raped her and left her at the same location.

The victim was sent to a hospital for medical examination. Following her complaint, the Gachibowli Police registered a case against the accused.

MIN SRIDHAR BABU HOLDS PARLEYS WITH SEI LEADERS

SEI explores setting up Global Capability Centre in Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

SEI, a leading technology and investment solutions provider, is exploring the possibility of establishing a Global Capability Centre (GCC) in Hyderabad, further strengthening Telangana's banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) ecosystem. IT Minister D Sridhar Babu held discussions with SEI on Tuesday and announced that if approved, the GCC could create high-skill engineering and financial jobs over the next three years.

The Minister met with SEI's senior leaders, including Zachary Womack (Global CTO), David Langdale (Global Head of Operations) and others. The meeting focused on the impact of the



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proposed GCC on the region's economic and technological growth.

Minister Sridhar Babu emphasised Telangana's strong talent pool which has already attracted GCCs of top global BFSI firms like JP Morgan and Bank of America. SEI's interest in Hyderabad is seen as a boost to the State's efforts to become a global BFSI hub. He added that SEI, with 5,000

employees world-wide, views Hyderabad as a strategic location for supporting its digital engineering strategy.

Meanwhile, Global Chief Technology Officer David Langdale highlighted Hyderabad's appeal as a Global Capability Centre due to its talent, infrastructure and business-friendly environment, aligning with SEI's global digital engineering strategy.

Min Seethakka receives 160 applications at 'Face-to-Face'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Panchayat Raj Minister Seethakka received 160 applications, including land issues in the 'Face-to-Face with Minister' programme on Tuesday. Some of the applicants alleged that their lands were grabbed and appealed to the Minister to see that their lands would be given back to them.

Some appealed to the Minister to remove corrupt officials. Some others appealed to the Minister to initiate action against the BRS leaders who resorted to attacks on them during the BRS regime.

Other applicants appealed to the Minister to set up a new Anganwadi centre in their village and give Indiramma houses to Congress activists only and provide government jobs to them. Interestingly, 1998 DSC candidates, who submitted their applications in the very first face-to-face programme, also submitted their application to Seethakka requesting her lands to be provided jobs to them. Some others asked the Minister to recognise them as Telangana protagonists.

Minister Seethakka issued orders to the collectors and officials concerned over phone on the spot. She directed the staff to see that the problems should be solved as per the rules and regulations.

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Guv presides over White Cane Day celebrations at Raj Bhavan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Governor Jishnu Dev Varma presided over the White Cane Day 2024 celebration at Samskruti Hall in Raj Bhavan on Tuesday. The event, organised with the NGO Friendly Environment for Disabled (FED), emphasised the importance of white cane as a symbol of independence for the visually-impaired.

The Governor appreciated the strength of the disabled community, saying, "The Divyang Jan have an extraordinary energy, overcoming challenges with divine strength." He also applauded an inspiring dance performance by Swapna, a physically challenged artiste, and announced a Rs.50,000 reward for her outstanding performance.

The event featured cultural performances by disabled individuals



and highlighted new assistive technologies.

Governor Jishnu Dev Varma launched India's first Assistive Compact Device, developed by young innovator Kiran. Asha

demonstrated QR code technology for the visually impaired and AI's potential in the disability space was discussed. Books for visually impaired students and awards for 51 educators were also presented.

Officials asked to submit report on govt lands

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad additional collector (Revenue) E Venkatchary ordered the surveyors to take up field survey and produce data on the government lands in the district before October 31.

In a review meeting with the surveyors of all mandals in the district, he reviewed survey works and land reports at the Survey and Land Records Office on Tuesday.

He ordered them that survey works of petitioners' should not be pending in the district. Detailed maps should be prepared of all the government lands in all the mandals of the district after inspecting at the field level and taking measurements.

Assistant Director of Survey and Land Records V Sriram, Deputy Inspectors Rajesham, Butchiah Mahender Reddy and Surveyors participated in the meeting.

Cops restore Rs 39 lakh to cyber crime victim

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad City Cyber Crime Police has refunded an amount of Rs 39 lakh to victims cheated by the cyber fraudsters under the pretext of stock trading and promising substantial profits.

A complaint was lodged by a 34-year-old unemployed man from Hyderabad, stating that he was scammed by cyber fraudsters who posed as stock traders from an entity called MSTACKMAX.

The victim was

deceived into transferring Rs 78,70,500 to bank accounts provided by the fraudsters.

Upon receiving the complaint, the Hyderabad Cyber Crime Police Inspector K Madhusudhan Rao, along with constables Venkatesh and Sampath, sent notices to the respective banks, coordinated the freezing of fraudulent funds and assisted the victim in filing a petition in court to secure a refund of the defrauded amount.

ANGERED AT BEING ASKED TO SHOW AADHAAR CARDS

Residents break police barricades

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The residents living around Muthyalamma temple in Secundrabad have broken the police barricades claiming that they were asked to show Aadhaar cards to enter their colonies.

They refused to give any information on the illegal construction of temples and asked officials to question the members who are building mosques

in the same locality. A suspect who was arrested on Monday in the case was admitted to NIMS, but the hospital authorities have not shared information on the condition of the accused.

On Tuesday, hundreds of residents began protests with slogans of 'Jai Shri Ram', walked up to the entrance of the temple and broke open the barricades.

Speaking to The Pioneer, a

resident K Raghu explained, "Hindu temples have been damaged and there is nobody taking action on the culprits. We have seen three men and there is CCTV footage but Police could not trace them. One accused has been caught by us and handed over but the Police are not releasing information to the media. We need justice. Our decades-old Goddess idols have been vandalised completely."

Another resident Radhama said, "The temple has history and I am 55 years old. I have been here for 30 years now and we pray at the temple. There are claims that the temple is illegally constructed but the mosque just meters away is illegally constructed. The officials who gave permission must be questioned. We submitted all the details to the Police and we await justice."

TG to establish SDRF with 2,000 personnel

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari held discussions on Tuesday with top officials, including Director General of Police Jitender and Special Chief Secretary for Disaster Management Arvind Kumar on the proposal to establish the Telangana State Disaster Response Force (SDRF).

The meeting, held at the Secretariat, focused on improving preparedness and response to floods, fires and other natural calamities.



Following recent floods that inundated low-lying areas, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy directed the creation of a robust disaster response force. The SDRF will consist of 2,000 personnel drawn from the Fire Department and the Telangana Special Police Battalions. Ten teams from

the Fire Department and 10 companies from the Telangana Special Police Battalion will be integrated to form the SDRF, according to the Chief Secretary. The government has also approved the necessary budget to set up this force, with plans to begin training the first batch of personnel in the first week of November.

During the meeting, Santhi Kumari stressed the importance of providing the teams with proper training and the equipment needed for rescue operations.

NON-PAYMENT OF RENTS

Landlords lock up few Gurukul schools

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Landlords in some places have locked up Gurukul Schools and hostels operating from rented buildings, citing nine months of unpaid rent. This protest has affected minority residential schools also, leaving students and teachers stranded outside as they returned after the Dasara holidays.

According to reports reaching here, an ongoing tussle between the landlords and the government over non-payment of rent led to many Gurukul schools and hostels operating from rented buildings being locked up. The landlords on Tuesday morning locked up the schools without any notice, leaving the students and staff waiting outside the gates.

Most of the Gurukul schools in the district are functioning from rented buildings.

Several Gurukul schools are operating from private buildings. The landlords claimed that many notices had been issued to the principals, Zonal Officers and Commissioners, but there was no response. As a result, building owners across the state began locking the Gurukul school buildings, the landlords said.

In this context, the building of the Backward Classes Welfare Gurukul School at Motkur was locked by the owner. He said that the gates of the school would be unlocked only after the dues were cleared.

On Tuesday, the schools reopened after the Dasara holidays, and teachers arriving at the schools found themselves locked out. Furthermore, with students not yet arriving at the schools, the situation remains uncertain.



Teachers waiting outside a Gurukul School in Warangal district after it was locked up on Tuesday

In Warangal district, landlords did not allow students and teachers to enter the Mahatma Jyotirao Phule Gurukul schools running under the Backward Classes Welfare Department. Teachers staged a protest outside the Jyotirao Phule Girls School near Ursu Gutta under Warangal mandal. The landlords claimed that the government had not paid rent since the beginning of the current academic year.

In the Jayashankar Bhupalapally district, the landlord locked the Minority Residential School. There are 340 students in the school. However, the staff and teachers have been unable to enter the school since the building is locked, leaving them in a state of confusion.

The Gurukul schools in Motkur, Huzurnagar and Thungathurthi were also affected.

Gambler students arrested for theft of gold

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

In a shocking turn of events, two engineering students were arrested by the police after they allegedly committed a theft to repay debts incurred due to their addiction to online betting and a life of luxury. The accused, Puthukuri Prabhas, a third-year engineering student, and Gundlapalli Siva, whom he met on Instagram, targeted elderly woman living alone, stealing gold ornaments to fund their extravagant lifestyle.

The incident came to light following the theft of six tolas of gold from Devarashetti Sumatamma, an elderly woman residing in Akula Mylaram village. The duo rented a car, conducted reconnaissance of her home, and broke in during the night after knocking on her door. They forcefully silenced the victim and made off with the gold.

With the assistance of advanced technology, Maheshwaram Deputy Commissioner of Police Sunitha Reddy, Circle Inspector Krishnamraju, sub-inspector Tejam Reddy, and teams from Yacharam and Manchal police



stations tracked the suspects by locating the car in Koheda village.

The authorities seized four gold bangles, two tolas of gold chain, scissors used for cutting jewelry, the rented Baleno car, and an iPhone 13 mobile. Both accused have been remanded into custody.

The Pharmacy Circle Inspector Krishnamraju, sub-inspector Tejam Reddy, and constables Sundarayya, Imtiaz, Shekhar, Srinu, and Prabhu were commended for apprehending the culprits within four days of the incident and were rewarded for their efforts.

MLA calls for probe into land acquisition

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Shadnagar MLA Veerlapalli Shankar has raised concerns over irregularities in the land acquisition process for the development of an industrial park at Siddapur village under Kothur mandal. In a formal complaint submitted to Telangana Vigilance Commissioner Y Gopal, the MLA highlighted discrepan-

cies in the acquisition of approximately 230 acres of land across Survey Nos. 252, 278, and 361.

The land acquisition, initially sanctioned under the previous government, included both assigned and government land. A notification was issued in January 2021, indicating that around 240 acres of land were acquired from nearly 250 farmers

Need to develop Khammam into model city stressed

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Minister for Agriculture Tummala Nageswara Rao on Tuesday stressed the need to develop Khammam into a model city. The Minister was visiting Sardarhi Nagar in the 46th division of the city. He laid the foundation for stormwater drain construction. It is estimated to cost Rs 1 crore. It has been funded by the Telangana Urban Finance and Infrastructure Development Corporation.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Nageswara Rao expressed his appreciation for the people's representatives and government officials making all efforts to serve the people.

He mentioned that following the floods in Munneru and nearby lakes, he requested the Chief Minister to appoint an expert committee to design



Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao laying the foundation stone for a stormwater drain in Khammam on Tuesday

the retaining wall and to plan how floodwaters would flow. He assured people that the government would take measures for effective flood control.

The minister emphasised that the design of the drainage systems currently under construction should be robust, ensuring that they do not lead

to problems in the future.

He stated that the poor people when evicted from encroachments should be rehabilitated. Construction work should only commence after these encroachments are cleared. He advised local corporators to persuade the poor to ensure better rehabilitation

and complete drainage construction before the onset of monsoon. He called for special attention to sanitation in the city, advising residents to segregate wet and dry waste before handing it over to municipal staff and not to throw waste into drains.

The minister promised to secure the necessary funds from the Chief Minister for Khammam and expressed his vision for the city to become a clean and healthy place with access to quality education and healthcare.

Chairman of the State Warehousing Corporation R Nageswara Rao, City Mayor Punukollu Neeraja, Municipal Commissioner Abhishek Augustya, 46th Division Corporator Kanna Vaishnavi, Corporator Kamaratapu Murali, public representatives, relevant officials, and others.

Shopkeepers call for staying road widening work

PNS ■ VEMULAWADA

Shopkeepers in front of the Rajanna temple in Vemulawada took out a bike rally to highlight the fact that the road widening would "rob them of their livelihood."

They expressed concerns that the road widening work would lead to demolition of part of their shops.

They appealed to the Municipal officials to stay the road widening works for time being.

The shop owners stated that the road widening could endanger the livelihoods of over 2,000 families and dependent on their businesses.

Revenue Divisional Officer Rajeswar addressed the concerns, stating that if objections were submitted in writing, the work would only commence after resolving those issues.

BOOST TO NALGONDA INFRASTRUCTURE

Centre to expand Nakrekal-Nagarjunasagar highway at Rs 516 cr

Nalgonda set to benefit from NH 565 expansion

PNS ■ NALGONDA

In a major boost to Nalgonda's infrastructure, the Central government has approved the expansion of National Highway 565, a key route that connects Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, with an investment of Rs 516 crore. The announcement, made by Union Minister for Surface Transport Nitin Gadkari, marks a significant step towards improving road connectivity and reducing traffic congestion in the district.

The project, which involves the construction of a four-lane bypass around Nalgonda Town, will cover a stretch of 14 kilometers. It aims to ease the traffic flow between Nakrekal and Nagarjuna Sagar, enhancing connectivity between rural and urban areas. The upgraded highway is expected to boost economic activity in the



region by improving access for both passengers and goods.

The NH 565 is a critical arterial road that starts at the Nakrekal junction in Telangana and runs through several towns, including Nalgonda, Macherla, Erragondapalem, and Kanyigiri. It plays a pivotal role in linking Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, providing essential transportation access for travelers and businesses. With the expansion, the highway will not only facilitate smoother traffic but will also enhance road safety, addressing long-standing concerns of

congestion and accidents in Nalgonda.

In his recent address, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari highlighted that the project would bring long-term benefits to the region, improving connectivity and road safety. He also expressed optimism about the positive impact on Nalgonda's economic growth.

BJP leaders from the region, including State Secretary Madhagani Srinivas Goud and Nimala Rajasekhara Reddy, thanked both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Nitin Gadkari for prioritizing this vital infrastructure project, which is expected to have far-reaching effects on the district's development.

The expansion of NH 565 is poised to transform Nalgonda's transportation landscape, offering a smoother and safer commute for residents and travelers alike.

Police personnel urged not to fall prey to 'depression'

PNS ■ BHADRADRI KOTHAGUDEM

At a conference here on Tuesday, District Superintendent of Police B Rohit Raju urged police personnel and staff to bring any problem they face to his notice. There is no point in experiencing mental pain due to one or another difficult situation when they can bring their problems to the notice of higher-ups and ensure that they are solved.

He expressed deep concern over the recent incidents in the district. "It is very distressing to see individuals take their own lives without considering the fate of their families. Everyone in the police department should



B Rohit Raju

remain physically and mentally strong at all times. Perform your assigned duties with integrity and protect the good name of the police

department," he told the personnel.

He said the district police earned a reputation for effectively managing tasks such as maintaining peace and combating Maoist activities. He told the personnel not to get carried away by negative influence.

Following the conference, some men brought some issues to the notice of the Superintendent of police, who assured them that efforts would be made to resolve these matters promptly.

The Superintendent of police organised the conference in the backdrop of a constable committing suicide after blaming two sub-inspectors of police for allegedly implicating him in a case.

104th birth anniversary of founder of BVRIT institutions celebrated



Vishnu Educational Institutions Secretary Aditya Vissam distributing clothes at BVRIT institute in Sangareddy on Tuesday

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

The 104th birth anniversary of founder chairman of BVRIT educational institutions Dr BV Raju was celebrated on a grand scale at the BVRIT engineering college at Narsapur on Tuesday. Rich tributes were paid to him. Sri Vishnu Educational Institutions Secretary Aditya Vissam distributed clothes to

the sweepers, drivers and gardeners. He also distributed fruits and bread among the inmates of the home for the aged in Narsapur town.

He called upon one and all to strive to fulfil late BR Raju's ideals. BVRIT educational institutions' director Lakshmi Prasad, Principal Sanjay Dube, professors, employees and others took part in the event.

Collector distributes safety kits to toddy tappers

PNS ■ KUMRAM BHEEM ASIFABAD

District Collector Venkatesh Dhotre has called upon the toddy tappers to make good use of the Katamaiah safety kits being given to them.

He was taking part in the safety kits distribution programme held at the Collectorate here on Tuesday.

District Superintendent of Police DV Srinivasa Rao, Asifabad MLA Kova Lakshmi, District Excise Superintendent Jyoti Kiran and others took part in the event.

Addressing the gathering, the Collector said the State government has been implementing many programmes for the welfare and development of the toddy tappers. As part of the exercise, the safety kits were distributed to toddy tappers.

In Sirpur constituency, the kits were given to 38 toddy tappers, while the kits are being given to 31 tappers in Asifabad constituency, he said asking the toddy tappers to make use of the safety kits before climbing up the trees. Kova Lakshmi, the MLA of Asifabad, addressing the gathering said that the community members have been engaged in the business of toddy tapping.

For the benefit of the toddy tappers and the families dependent on them, the toddy tappers use the safety kits before climbing up the trees, thereby preventing accidents. Primary Agricultural Cooperative Society president Alibil Ahmed, district incharge BC welfare official Sajeevan, Asifabad Excise Circle Inspector Ramesh, Goud association BaleshGoud and others took part in the event.

Procure fine rice, coarse rice separately: Collector

PNS ■ NALGONDA

District Collector C Narayana Reddy has directed the officials at the paddy procurement centres to purchase fine rice and coarse rice separately. He also appealed to farmers to cooperate by bringing fine and coarse rice separately to the centres.

On Tuesday, the Collector inaugurated a paddy procurement centre set up under the Primary Agricultural Cooperative Society at the Agricultural Market Yard in Tipparti mandal in the district.

The state government has already announced that fine rice will be distributed to white card holders through fair price shops starting from January 1. Therefore, purchasing fine rice

separately will facilitate the distribution of fine rice, which will benefit both farmers and cardholders, the Collector explained. He also mentioned that the state government has announced bonus of RS 500 for fine rice, specifically aimed at benefiting farmers.

For the current monsoon season, the government has fixed a support price of Rs 2,320 per quintal for Grade-A paddy and Rs 2,300 per quintal for ordinary paddy. Additionally, Rs 500 per quintal bonus will be provided for fine rice, the Collector said, urging that fine and coarse rice should not be mixed under any circumstances.

He further emphasised that if the rice mills receive separate varieties of fine paddy, it would



Nalgonda Collector C Narayana Reddy inaugurating a paddy procurement centre in Tipparti mandal on Tuesday

benefit everyone consuming fine rice.

The Collector also advised

farmers to avoid selling their paddy to private mills and instead bring it to the procure-

ment centres. Since there is still a possibility of rain for the next month, he instructed the centers to ensure that all arrangements are made to prevent the paddy from getting wet. Specifically, he asked for trucks, labourers, gunny bags, tarpaulins, weighing machines, and moisture-testing equipment to be ready to dispatch the purchased paddy to the mills immediately.

The program was attended by Agricultural Market Committee Chairman Jookuri Ramesh, PACS Chairman Sampath Reddy, former ZP Chairperson Rami Reddy, D.C.M.S Director Venkata Reddy, District Civil Supplies Officer Venkateshwari, D.C.O, and other officials, public representatives, and dignitaries.

CM Cup-2024 relay torch reaches Bhadradi-Kothagudem district

PNS ■ BHADRADRI KOTHAGUDEM

The CM Cup-2024 relay torch on Tuesday reached Bhadradi-Kothagudem district. Sports Authority Chairman Shivasena Reddy, Collector Jitesh V Patil, District Superintendent of Police Rohit Raj, DCMS chairman Kotwal Srinivas and Aswaraopeta MLA J Adinarayana, Kotha welcomed the relay torch and received it at the ChalamalaSrinivasa Rao Memorial Park in Kothagudem. Later, they

flagged off relay torch rally with the participation of students, youth and sportspersons in large numbers in the event.

Shivasena Reddy said that the objective of the CM Cup is to divert the attention of the students and youth towards the sports and develop Telangana as a destination of sportspersons. He said that all amenities for sportspersons would be provided in the district. Pending indoor sports stadium works would be completed. He offered his cooperation to develop a

sports stadium in kothagudem if suitable site is provided to the sports authority.

The CM Cup will bring to light many unsung sportspersons. At least 500 sports persons will receive the top honours after the sports cup. They will be given training in the sports academy to groom them for the forthcoming Olympics events, he said quoting it as the desire of CM A Revanth Reddy. Collector Jitesh V Patil has appealed to sports persons to make good use of the facility.

ACROSS THE STATES



Maha: Man duped of Rs 14 L by cyber fraudsters

Police in Maharashtra's Panvel town has arrested a Delhi-based man who allegedly duped a local resident of Rs 14.2 lakh by impersonating a bank official and offering a personal loan. Arrested accused Ashik Ali alias Arif Allanur alias Pappu Khan (32) was suspected to be part of a sophisticated racket that targeted private bank customers, and three more persons were wanted in the case, said a police official of the Panvel cyber cell on Tuesday. The racket was involved in cases of cyber fraud in Chhattisgarh and Telangana too, the official said. The accused gained the victim's trust by sending him a counterfeit ID card of a bank official through WhatsApp, and offered him personal loan. They then hacked his net banking account, duping him of Rs 14,20,000, the official said.



One more held in Baba Siddique murder case

The Mumbai police have arrested one more person in connection with the killing of NCP leader and former Maharashtra minister Baba Siddique, officials said on Tuesday. The accused has been identified as Harishkumar Balakram (23), hailing from Bahraich in Uttar Pradesh, an official said. Balakram was working as a scrap dealer in Maharashtra's Pune, he said, adding the accused was also part of the conspiracy to kill Siddique. He was nabbed from Bahraich, the official said. With this, four persons have so far been arrested in connection with Siddique's killing. Police had earlier arrested Haryana resident Gurnail Baljit Singh (23), Uttar Pradesh native Dharmaraj Rajesh Kashyap (19), both alleged shooters, and "co-conspirator" Pravin Lonkar from Pune.

No bad impact on locals..

Continued from page 1

would not be just a military establishment, but a strategic asset of national importance. Allaying concerns about the impact of the project on the environment, he said that all environmental conditions are being taken care of. Arrangements will be made for the rehabilitation of the affected people at the time of construction, he added. He termed sustainable development as one of the priorities of the Centre, stating that it is being ensured that the

VLF station does not affect the environment. Rajnath added that the VLF station will open new vistas of employment and development for local people. "During its construction, skilled and unskilled workers nearby will get employment. After that, when the station starts functioning, there will be ample employment opportunities for the people. This station will not only increase employment but also work as a growth pole, providing an impetus for economic development in surrounding areas," he said.

Hyderabad tops in private..

Continued from page 1

global geopolitical tensions and higher interest rates. He said, "Private equity investments in offices, largely driven by foreign players, have slowed down due to external factors. However, India's real estate market remains stable, supported by investments like the ADIA/KKR deal in Reliance Retail's warehousing assets." The total value of private equity investments in the first half of FY25 stood at \$2.3 billion, a slight decrease from \$2.4 billion in the same period last year. However, the average deal size increased by 23%, with fewer deals but larger investments, primarily led by the \$1.54 billion

Reliance-ADIA/KKR warehousing deal. This transaction accounted for 67% of all investments made during the period. The top 10 deals accounted for 97% of the total PE investments, with Hyderabad topping the charts for city-specific deals. Other cities such as Mumbai saw their share of investments drop significantly from 23% to 9%, while Bengaluru and Hyderabad experienced notable growth. The number of deals declined by 29%, but the substantial increase in average deal sizes offset the overall reduction in the number of transactions. Residential real estate also saw a rise in private equity activity, accounting for 17% of the top 10 deals, a jump from 4% in the same period last year.

EC sounds poll..

Continued from page 1

will be held on November 13. Bypolls to the Kedarnath assembly seat in Uttarakhand and the Nanded Lok Sabha seat in Maharashtra will be held on November 20. Bypolls to the Basirhat Lok Sabha seat in West Bengal and Milkipur in Uttar Pradesh were not announced as election petitions are pending for the two seats. Kumar said elections will be held in both the states

on Wednesdays to address the problem of urban apathy. The BJP is keen to retain power in Maharashtra along with allies Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and the NCP led by Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar. The BJP led Mahayuti alliance is facing a challenge from the Maha Vikas Aghadi coalition of the Congress-NCPSP-Shiv SenaUBT, which hopes to repeat its performance in the Lok Sabha elections.

India seals big-ticket deal to procure 31 Predator drones from US

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Tuesday sealed a mega deal with the US to procure 31 Predator high-altitude long-endurance drones from American defence major General Atomics under the foreign military sales route at a cost of nearly US\$ 4 billion to crank up Indian military's combat prowess along the contested borders with China.

The deal, signed in presence of top defence and strategic brass of India in the national capital, marks a significant upswing in military ties between the two countries, officials said. The procurement of the drones was finalised just weeks ahead of the US presidential elections.

Besides the main contract, a separate agreement was inked between the defence ministry and General Atomics Global India Pvt Ltd for performance-



The deal, signed in presence of top defence and strategic brass of India in the national capital, marks a significant upswing in military ties between the two countries, officials said

based logistics for the drones through depot-level maintenance, repair and overhaul of the platforms in India.

Last week, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi cleared the procurement of the MQ-9B 'hunter killer' drones.

Vivek Lal, the Chief Executive of General Atomics Global Corporation who played a key role in the negotiations on the deal, was pre-

sent at the signing ceremony.

The drones are being procured at an estimated cost of around US\$ 4 billion, the officials said.

India is acquiring the drones primarily to crank up the surveillance apparatus of the armed forces, especially along the contested frontier with China.

In June last year, the Defence Ministry approved the procurement of the MQ-9B Predator armed drones from

the US under a government-to-government framework.

The MQ-9B drone is a variant of the MQ-9 "Reaper" which was used to launch a modified version of the Hellfire missile that eliminated al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in the heart of Kabul in July 2022.

While the Navy will get 15 Sea Guardian drones, the Indian Air Force and the Army will get eight Sky Guardian drones each.

Murmu calls for deeper economic ties between India, Algeria

PNS ■ ALGIERS

President Droupadi Murmu has called for deeper economic cooperation between India and Algeria, underlining that the African nation's rapid growth and expanding economy offer many opportunities in various sectors. The President in an address to the Algerian-Indian Economic Forum on Monday emphasised India's rapid rise and impressive progress in 'Ease of Doing Business', and invited Algerian companies to join India's 'Make in India' and 'Make for the World' initiatives.

"The stepping up of the India-Algeria relations is based on our shared values, common challenges, and mutual trust," Murmu said at the event jointly organised by the Algerian Economic Renewal Council and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and



Industry (FICCI).

The President said Algeria's rapid growth and expanding economy offered many opportunities in various sectors and urged Indian companies to remain invested in the scope of the Algerian economy presented, a statement from the President's Office said.

Noting that overall trade between India and Algeria stood at USD 1.7 billion, the President said the economic ties between the two countries have, however, not been able to tap its full potential, adding that India would be happy to share its experiences with its Algerian partners.

Govt to reclassify temples..

Continued from page 1

also create new vacancies. Currently, there are around 12,000 temples across Telangana, many of which are operating with minimal staff. Larger temples that draw hundreds of devotees daily and generate substantial revenue are still managed by lower cadre staff. This disparity in management has sparked concern among religious organisations, particularly as festivals and daily operations of larger temples require more skilled personnel to ensure smooth functioning. Sources said that temples that need an EO of

Deputy Collector grade are now operating with EOs of Deputy Commissioner or Tahsilardar level. When reclassification takes place, temples will be grouped based on criteria like annual revenue, the number of devotees, and the size of their premises. This will allow for a more structured staffing approach, ensuring that temples are adequately staffed based on operational scale. For instance, larger temples like those in Vemulawada and Bhadrachalam, which attract thousands of devotees during peak seasons, will benefit from higher-level staff appointments and better management.

Continued from page 1

Foreign Minister Melanie Joly did not rule out imposing sanctions against India saying "everything is on the table".

In a related development, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau spoke to his British counterpart Keir Starmer and discussed "developments" related to what the Ottawa described as "targeted campaign against Canadian citizens by agents linked to the government of India".

On its part, India strongly rejected attempts by Canadian authorities to link Indian agents with criminal gangs in Canada with official sources even saying that Ottawa's assertion that it shared evidence with New Delhi in the Nijjar

India-Canada ties hit rock..

Continued from page 1

case was simply not true. The sources also rejected Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations that India was engaging in activities including carrying out covert operations targeting Canadian nationals in his country. At a press conference, Trudeau, pointing fingers at India on the Nijjar case, said Canada will never tolerate the involvement of a foreign government in threatening and killing Canadian citizens on Canadian soil.

On Monday, India expelled six Canadian diplomats and announced withdrawing its high commissioner from Canada

after dismissing Ottawa's allegations linking the envoy to a probe into the killing of Sikh extremist Nijjar. Joly, replying to a question at Trudeau's media briefing, did not rule out further action against India. "So today was a really important step. When you look at what is available in our toolbox, expelling diplomats is one of the highest and toughest measures a country can take under the Vienna convention...Everything is on the table," she said.

The ties between India and Canada came under severe strain following Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau's allegations in September last year of a "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Nijjar. New Delhi rejected Trudeau's charges as "absurd". In his comments at the media briefing on Monday, Trudeau, referring to findings by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) claimed that it has "clear and compelling evidence that agents of the government of India have engaged in, and continue to engage in, activities that pose a significant threat to public safety".

"This includes clandestine information gathering techniques, coercive behaviour targeting South Asian Canadians, and involvement in over a dozen threatening and violent acts, including murder.

KTR booked..

Continued from page 1

he has fallen on Musi River. Do you know why? To save his chair. Of the Rs 1,50,000 crore project a bag containing Rs 25,000 crore will be sent to Delhi. That's why they are driving you away." Suguna contends that these remarks are not only defamatory but also damaging to the Congress and the Chief Minister. She claimed that the statements were baseless, aimed at causing unrest among the public and could create enmity between political parties. The police conducted a preliminary inquiry under Section 173(3) of the BNSS and booked KTR under Sections 352, 353 (2), and 356 (2) of the BNS, which pertain to offences carrying a sentence of three to seven years.

Irrigation Dept to go for..

Continued from page 1

flexibility in interest payments. He also emphasized that these long-term loans would be crucial in speeding up the completion of projects, thus aiding in the creation of new irrigation capacity. The Minister directed officials to ensure that these loans are allocated to key projects in underdeveloped areas, particularly in Mulugu district, which has a significant tribal population, and the fluoride-affected areas of the erstwhile Nalgonda district. Uttam stressed the importance of utilizing these loans for projects like SLBC, Palamuru-Rangareddy, Dindi and other projects planned in Nalgonda, Khammam, Mahbubnagar and

the northern districts of Telangana. The long-term loans, he said, will play a vital role in the rapid development of the state's irrigation infrastructure. The Minister asked Irrigation Secretary Rahul Bojja to coordinate a detailed review of loan possibilities with Finance Secretary Ramakrishna Rao. The aim is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the feasibility and administrative clearances for these projects. The Telangana government is hopeful that securing long-term loans will provide the much-needed support to accelerate the development of the irrigation sector, ensuring the timely completion of crucial projects and paving the way for the state's growth.

Will BRS contest in..

Continued from page 1

could give the BRS a competitive edge, despite the party's recent defeat in its home state. After rebranding the TRS as the BRS, KCR shifted his focus to Maharashtra, holding several public meetings and even leading a rally of 600 cars from Hyderabad to the state. However, after the party's defeat in Telangana, KCR appeared to withdraw from Maharashtra, leaving some of the leaders who joined the BRS from other parties to seek their paths. Now, with the Maharashtra election schedule released, there is widespread speculation about whether KCR will return

to the spotlight and lead his party to the polls. Maharashtra will see polling in its 288 Assembly constituencies on November 20, with the vote counting is set for November 23. For KCR, this could be an opportunity to expand the BRS' footprint beyond Telangana. Many party leaders have said that contesting in Maharashtra would allow the BRS to test its impact and political reach after the name change. KTR has also frequently expressed his vision of the BRS competing on a national level, drawing comparisons to Telugu cinema's pan-India success. During his tenure in

power, KTR publicly stated that if Telugu movies could gain nationwide recognition, the BRS should similarly aim for a national presence. As Telugu cinema continues to dominate, the key question is whether the BRS will enter the Maharashtra election race. Critics say that BRS's participation in Maharashtra could indirectly benefit the BJP. "If BRS decides to contest now, it could be seen as a move that ultimately helps the BJP," one political analyst speculated, highlighting the potential for controversy should the party choose to participate. With the election schedule now out, all eyes are on KCR's next move. Will the BRS enter the fray in Maharashtra, or will the party maintain its current stance? For now, the political landscape is in suspense as the state prepares for the election.

ASSEMBLY POLLS

BJP looks to build on gains, Oppn to comeback after setback

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

If the BJP's win against odds in the Haryana polls helped it blunt the impression of an ascendant Congress, the ruling party will look to decisively turn the tables on the INDIA bloc in the elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand where regional satraps are being seen as lynchpins to the opposition's campaign.

An impressive performance in Jharkhand and, especially, Maharashtra assembly polls next month by the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance will lay to rest the doubts over the party's political dominance after its underwhelming performance in the Lok Sabha polls and strike a body blow to the opposition. However, a strong opposi-

tion show in the two states promises to revitalise its ranks following the Congress defeat in Haryana, where the party was seen as the favourite.

While the Congress is the biggest opposition party in Maharashtra, its allies Sharad Pawar, who heads an NCP faction, and Uddhav Thackeray of the Shiv Sena (UBT) are being seen as the two main faces of the alliance. The former Union minister is considered as the key strategist of its campaign.

In Jharkhand, Chief Minister Hemant Soren-led Jharkhand Mukti Morcha is the principal opposition party.

With 48 Lok Sabha seats and home to the country's leading business houses, Maharashtra is considered a big prize in the national political sweepstakes.



BSP to contest on its own in Maha, Jharkhand polls: Mayawati

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati on Tuesday said that her party will contest on its own in the upcoming state elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand as well as bye-elections in nine assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh.

In a series of posts on X in Hindi, Mayawati welcomed the announcement of the poll schedule and said it is the responsibility of the Election Commission to ensure that the elections are held in the shortest possible time and are free from the curse of money and muscle power. "The BSP will contest elections alone in both these states...", she said, adding it is to ensure that its people remain united and strive to come to power as part of their



mission to protect dignity and self-respect inspired by B R Ambedkar.

"The BSP will field its candidates in the by-elections being held on nine assembly seats in UP and will fight this election on its own strength with full preparation and vigour," the former chief minister said in another post.

Assembly polls in Maharashtra will be held in a single phase on November 20.

In Jharkhand, elections will be held in two phases on November 13 and 20, the Election Commission announced on Tuesday. Voting in the bypolls will be held on November 13. The counting of votes will be held on November 23.

The Election Commission announced the bypolls for nine of the 10 vacant seats of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly.

No politics over nation's..

Continued from page 1

Revanth assured that the government continued the project following Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's directives and he instructed officials to proceed with the work without compromising on India's defence needs. In an appeal to environmentalists, Revanth urged them to focus on protecting the environment while ensuring national security, saying that the project is essential for both

the safety of the people and the country.

He stressed that creating controversy over a national security project is not advisable and that political debates should be reserved for election periods.

"All political forces should come together and support national defence," he added.

Revanth reaffirmed his government's full support for the VLF project and committed to its timely execution. He also appealed to Union Defence

Minister Rajnath Singh to allow public access to the Ramalingeswara Swamy Temple. "We respect the sentiments and faith of the people," he said, requesting the Centre to grant locals access to the site. Additionally, the Chief Minister requested that one-third of the seats in the educational institutions established by the Centre be allocated to local residents, as part of the region's development and in recognition of its role in national security.

7 flights get bomb threats..

Continued from page 1

The X handle has since been suspended by the platform after the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) wrote to cyber-security agencies. An Air India Express spokesperson told PTI in a statement that they, along with a few other operators, received a "specific" security threat from an unverified social media handle. "In response, security protocols were promptly activated as directed by the government-appointed Bomb Threat

Assessment Committee. The flight landed safely, and the aircraft will be released for operations following all mandated security procedures," the spokesperson said.

The SpiceJet aircraft landed safely at the Mumbai airport and was directed to an isolation bay as a precautionary measure. "All passengers disembarked normally and security agencies were immediately notified. After thorough security checks, the aircraft has been cleared for further operations," a SpiceJet spokesperson said.

An Akasa Air spokesperson said their flight received a security alert on board.

"The captain followed all required emergency procedures and landed safely at the Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru at 13:39 hours. All passengers were deplaned and the local authorities undertook the necessary safety and security checks after which the aircraft was released for operations," the spokesperson said.

The Air India flight was diverted to the Iqaluit airport in Canada after it became the "subject of a security threat posted online".



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PAPER WITH PASSION

souring relations

New Delhi dismisses the Canadian claims of Indian involvement in the Nijjar case as politically driven

The already tense relations between India and Canada have hit a new low, with both countries expelling each other's diplomats. New Delhi expelled six Canadian diplomats, including Acting High Commissioner Stewart Ross Wheeler after Ottawa's expulsion of 'targeted' Indian diplomats. These diplomats were allegedly involved in 'violent criminal activity in Canada.' The situation deteriorated after Trudeau accused Indian intelligence agents of being linked to the Nijjar's murder in British Columbia in 2023. During a press conference, Trudeau, announced the expulsion of six Indian diplomats from Canadian soil, citing their involvement in a 'targeted campaign' against Canadian citizens. India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has responded with forceful rebuttal, describing the allegations as 'preposterous imputations.' The MEA criticised Canada's decision to expel the Indian diplomats, dismissing the accusations as politically motivated and linked to the Trudeau government's domestic challenges. India on its part has expelled six Canadian diplomats to leave the country by October 19, 2024, and announced the withdrawal of its High Commissioner from Canada.



The root cause of the conflict lies in the ongoing issue of Sikh separatism and Canada's handling of the Khalistan movement. Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a prominent Khalistan supporter, was a Canadian citizen who had long advocated for an independent Sikh state. His murder in 2023 remains a contentious issue, with Canadian authorities suspecting the involvement of Indian agents. India, however, has consistently denied any role in the killing and has accused Canada of providing a safe haven for extremist elements that threaten India's national security. It is rather unfortunate that two friendly countries should snap diplomatic relations with each other. Justin Trudeau's electoral compulsions, with elections just a year away, could be behind his recent actions. Justin Trudeau's perceived support for Sikh separatists, particularly those advocating for a Khalistan, stems from a complex blend of domestic political considerations and Canada's multicultural policies. Trudeau's Liberal Party has historically sought the support of the Sikh diaspora, a significant and politically active community in Canada, which includes a segment advocating for Sikh rights and in some cases, Khalistan. By engaging with Sikh community leaders, including some who may have Khalistani sympathies, Trudeau aims to secure votes in regions with a strong Sikh presence. This standoff could affect many areas where people in both countries could be net sufferers. Trade negotiations, immigration policies, and cultural exchanges between the two countries would indeed be affected. The expulsion of diplomats and withdrawal of ambassadors signifies more than just diplomatic posturing; it represents India's sovereignty, security, and the role of foreign governments in its domestic affairs. With both sides showing no signs of backing down, the road to reconciliation appears to be fraught with challenges.

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PICTALK



An oriental pied hornbill at Ponitara Wild Life Sanctuary, in Morigaon

The untold story of Captain Rameshwar Thapa's heroics



ASHOK K MEHTA

Capt Rameshwar Thapa, Nepal's first civilian pilot to command a Russian Mi17 helicopter, played a pivotal role during the country's Maoist insurgency

When you think of rotary wing aircraft in Nepal, some names will crop up: Tula Bahadur Thapa, Narain Singh Pun, Madan KC, all Army Colonels, but among civilians a pioneer is Capt Rameshwar Thapa, the first Russian Mi17 helicopter pilot who trained the then Royal Nepal Army on Mi17 and was later requisitioned by Security Forces during the Maoist People's War. Let's call the Captain, RT who has written the English version of his book in Nepali, Barud Mathi Uddaa titled Into The FIRE, a book 'based on hard facts'. It encapsulates the Maoist insurgency that aimed to capture the state: they came perilously close to doing it. But for RT's heroic efforts, on April 8, 2005 in saving Khara, the epic battle waged by Maoists, by flying in 20 Special Force Rangers after an SOS- 'if no reinforcements in 20-30 minutes, Khara will go'. Despite his helicopter being hit by Maoists on surrounding hills he made a second attempt in a vertical descent to land reinforcements at base camp. Khara was a battle for prestige and honour for both sides, especially Maoists but Rangers saved the day. At the time, I had written reams on the first and second Khara battles, describing Khara II's criticality. RT rightly calls Khara the turning point, for soon after, their defeat at Khara Maoists sued for peace: choosing ballot over bullet. They signed the 12-point agreement in New Delhi in November 2005 which led to the political transformation of Nepal - restoration of democracy and mainstreaming of Maoists. The rest, of course, is history. Into the Fire essentially covers the personal experiences of a co-pilot elevated to Pilot in Command as Mi17 initially had pilots from Russia and Central Asian Republics. Their mission was rescue, relief, reinforcements, casualty evacuation and acting as morale boosters. The Maoists were terrified of helicopters which were later ingeniously improvised by RNA as armed platforms to drop 81 mm mortar bombs and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). Many battles in both east and west Nepal are described mainly from



the humanitarian angle of saving lives and security posts at great personal risk. RT turns out to be a cat with nine lives having taken numerous hits and a life-threatening crash landing near Everest Base Camp. Initially, he joined Everest Air which was regularly supplying helicopters to the police as they had none; later, he flew for the Armed Police Force and RNA. King Gyanendra who had usurped power first in 2002 and done a coup in 2005, did not allow the RNA to aid or assist the police which suffered on account of it. He did not even allow PM GP Koirala to use it to break the siege of the Holleri post when 76 policemen were taken hostage. Koirala had to resign but Holleri was an avoidable blot on police's unprofessional record. The Army was only pressed into service after Maoists during a ceasefire and talks attacked Army barracks in November 2001 at Dang. RT explains the politics underpinning the King's embargo on RNA. Flying for the army RT became an 'enemy of the Maoists' and was advised to send his family abroad for their safety. Major encounters revive memories of fighting, their horror, ferocity and barbarity. Villages and towns have not forgotten



RT HAS NARRATED SEVERAL HUMAN INTEREST STORIES LIKE ONCE EVACUATING A FEMALE MAOIST WHO LATER BECAME A MINISTER AND MARRIED A FELLOW MAOIST MINISTER

the atrocities committed by both sides. RT has narrated several human interest stories like once evacuating a female Maoist who later became a minister and married a fellow Maoist minister. There is a conversation with elders in a village who tell him that they prefer to give their daughters to RNA rather than letting Maoists take them away to join the movement. His underground life at Oasis Hotel in Nepalgunj is cloak-and-dagger stuff. RT has not shied away from writing about RNA's November 2004 Pandaun, Kailali 'propaganda' attack under the lyricist Divisional Commander, Gen Rajendra Thapa. The Army claimed it had killed 200 to 300 Maoists whereas only 4 to 5 bodies were found (Maoists had an honour code not to leave behind any bodies). One of the Army's self-afflicted disasters was enacted at Pili in August 2004 when an Engineer Regiment was ordered to crash-build a road for King Gyanendra's visit. Their prize was a huge cache of explosives stored at Pili for road construction. Nearly 160 soldiers were killed as RT conducted casualty evacuation flights. Elsewhere he mentions current President Ramchandra Poudel writing an article in Kantipur

daily titled 'Maobadi Paradise: Nirmal Nivas', which was Prince Gyanendra's residence. Having been as 'busy as a bee' in the People's War, as a 24x7 helicopter pilot, his life changed after violence ceased. He mentions India's constructive role in the peace process. In his post-conflict avatar, RT became an aviation company czar, a media mogul - with newspapers, radio and TV - and an interest in politics. His list of awards will fill a page. So will his contribution to corporate social responsibility. Into The Fire: was released in Delhi last month to a packed house. Striking in the book is the note written by Janardhan Sharma who was the architect of the Khara debacle-while recently Nepal's Finance Minister. Sitting next to me on the dais RT was a picture of modesty and humility, few people realised his crucial role in the People's War. Immodestly I could not resist mentioning my book The Royal Nepal Army: Meeting the Maoist Challenge released in 2005. But his is a first-hand account. (The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff; the views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RTI POWER FADES

Madam — It is really unfortunate that the RTI Act, which came into effect in 2005, promising a new era in transparency in government functioning, has almost died its own death, with the executive not showing any keenness to infuse a fresh life into it. The Act has slowly weakened due to unwarranted amendments, overreach of the executive and restrictive judicial interpretations. Lack of adequate infrastructure and shortage of staff in government offices to deal with RTI applications is another cause for worry. Ever since its ratification, several attempts have been made to deliberately dilute this law and hamper access to information by the public.

The proposed amendments were dropped due to widespread public defiance. In the administration and functioning of a democratic government, the right to access and seek information is a sine qua non for transparency, openness and accountability. Unless citizens are empowered with the right to ask questions, democracies cannot and will not survive. The need of the hour is to promote the free flow of information to limit tyrannical tendencies and reinforce democratic ideals.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

RAILWAY SAFETY NEGLECTED

Madam — Gone are the days when a Railway minister used to apologise for a train accident and even tender his resignation for it. Now, it is too much to expect even an explanation for the snail's pace at which the Train Collision Avoidance System is being installed and the lack of manpower that makes even loco pilots do the extra shifts. In such a scenario, there is no wonder why train accidents have become a regular event in our country. Train Collision Avoidance System, which was later renamed as Kavach, is an automatic train protection system that helps prevent collisions if two trains are on the same tracks. Senior railway officials said that a field trial was

Peacekeepers under attack



Just a week ago, Israel's Foreign Minister Israel Katz announced that UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has been banned from entering Israel, accusing him of 'supporting' Hamas, Hezbollah,

Houthis and Iran. Now a new order has been issued from Tel Aviv, which says that all UN peacekeepers should be removed from Lebanon. Israel is accusing without any proof that Hezbollah is using peacekeepers as human shields.

On the contrary, Israel has been continuously attacking the peacekeepers since last week. Dozens of peacekeepers have been injured so far. UNIFIL, a mission of about 9,500 soldiers of various nationalities, was created after Israel invaded Lebanon in 1978. It is currently tasked with monitoring the ceasefire that ended the 33-day war between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006. Israel's actions have been criticised by the whole world, except the US.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshepur

started for Kavach in 2016. But it has been installed only in less than 1,500 km of tracks out of the total 70,000 km covered by the Indian Railways across the country. That means this lifesaving device has so far been placed in only a little over 2 per cent of railway tracks in eight years after its field trials! An RTI reply says that of 1,27,644 sanctioned posts of loco pilots and assistant loco pilots, 18,766-nearly 15 per cent - were vacant as of March 1 this year. Indian Railways have been playing with our lives by not filling up vacant posts and by forcing their personnel, even loco pilots, to overwork. How can a loco pilot remain alert if he has to do extra shifts?

Sujit De | Kolkata

LAW AND ORDER CRISIS

Madam — The shooting of Baba Siddiqui could not have come at a worse time for the Mahayuti government in Maharashtra, as elections to the assembly are just around the corner. The opposition has been handed over an issue of

law and order in the state which is certainly going to be used as ammunition against the government in the electoral campaigning. There is no doubt this issue will resonate with the people of the state. If important political leaders and ex-ministers are not safe, what hope is there for the common citizen? Another disturbing fact is that the alleged kingpin is overseeing operations from jail. With the right connections, jails seem to have become a holiday resort with all facilities available, like cell phones and wi-fi. The assailants are said to be in the ages of 19-21, and another one is supposedly said to be a minor. The lack of education and scarcity of jobs play their part in getting the young people sucked into the criminal world. Usually, the criminals come from the Northern Hindi belt. Those in charge of the states must find ways and means to stop the young people from entering the world of crime.

Anthony Henriques | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

The invisible battle for mental health in India

Mental health remains an afterthought in our healthcare narrative. The true healing encompasses both body and mind

As a psychologist, I've seen how health in India isn't just a battle of the body—it's a struggle of the mind. Behind every disease is a person dealing with fear, frustration and, at times, loneliness. Whether in rural areas, where diseases like tuberculosis persist or in urban centres where lifestyle illnesses are on the rise, the emotional toll is often invisible but deeply felt.

In rural India, patients face challenges that go beyond medical diagnoses. I remember a man from a small village battling tuberculosis, but what weighed on him most wasn't just his illness—it was the isolation. He felt forgotten and cut off from the world because healthcare facilities were far away, and his family didn't know how to support him. This emotional isolation is something many rural patients experience, and it can be as damaging as their physical symptoms, compounding their sense of hopelessness. In cities like Gurgaon, the struggles are different but equally pro-



found. I think of Anjali, a young woman overwhelmed by anxiety. To the outside world, she seemed to have it all—a great job, a busy social life, and a bright future. But inside, she was spiralling. She hesitated for months before seeking help, afraid that admitting to her struggles would make her appear weak. This fear of judgment keeps many people from asking for help, and it's heartbreaking to see how common this is in urban environments. Mental health remains an afterthought in our healthcare system. We focus on physical symptoms—treating heart disease, diabetes, and other

conditions—but the emotional weight people carry is often ignored. I've seen people suffer for years in silence, feeling their emotional pain isn't valid because it can't be measured like a physical illness. There's an urgent need for change. India's healthcare system mirrors this divide. In cities, private care offers options, but mental health services are still limited and expensive. In rural areas, mental health is rarely even discussed. Socioeconomic barriers, especially for women, make it even harder to access mental health care. Women often put their health—both emotional and physical—on the back burner,

prioritising their families' needs over their own. One of my patients, a mother of two, delayed seeking help for her anxiety for years. She was exhausted, overwhelmed, and losing her sense of self. But like so many women, she felt guilty for even considering that her health deserved attention.

This is a common story—too many women in India silently endure mental health struggles, dismissing their needs as unimportant, further isolating themselves in the process. We need to change this narrative. Mental health is not a luxury or a sign of weakness. It is an integral part of overall well-being. We must make mental health care as important as physical health in our conversations and our healthcare system. Only then can we address the full scope of health challenges in India—because real healing isn't just about the body; it's about the mind too.

(The writer is Psychologist and founder - Kavita Kabira wellness clinic; views are personal)



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The connection between a clean space and a peaceful mind is undeniable



RAVI VALLURI

When I recall our college days, particularly the hostel rooms, it takes me on a nostalgic trip. The days were full of fun and frolic, books scattered around, beer and rum bottles lying randomly, with cigarette butts strewn rather carelessly. The rooms were full of stench.

Most of the guys would ogle, there was no Google back then, at the girls. Posters of Pink Floyd, the Beatles, and Led Zeppelin populated the grubby and unwashed walls of the rooms. The politically inclined would paste large printed pictures of Che Guevara, Marx and Lenin among others, professing their ideological baggage unequivocally.

Some rooms were relatively cleaner and tidily kept. In our hail-fellow-well-met attitude we ended up ostracising such students. But they were our Gurus during examination times, much to their chagrin. A close friend had put up a poster which read: "Cleanliness is the sign of a sick mind." His room was particularly unclean and stained.

Cleanliness is both the abstract state of being clean and free from dirt, and the process of achieving and maintaining that state. However, to my mind cleanliness and spirituality are intertwined like Siamese twins. The human mind normally slips into a state of meditation and involuntarily has a spiritual experience at places which are relatively clean. Cleanliness is positively next to godliness.

India has of late embarked upon a major cleanliness drive where villages, bijou towns, cities, rivers, among others, places of historical importance and important religious places are being refurbished. This is indeed a positive statement made by the government. A gurdwara is the place of worship for Sikhs. People from all faiths and those who do not pro-



fess any faith too, are welcomed in Sikh gurdwaras. To me gurdwaras are among the cleanest spots in the country and it is a lesson in humility to observe how the devout keep it absolutely spick and span. The mind gravitates to the pristine spirit and listens to the soulful and mellifluous Gurubani being sung. The human mind, which is normally canonaded by innumerable thoughts, gradually settles down and is at rest and peace.

It would be interesting to mention that Sri Harmandir Sahib and Sri Darbar Sahib are informally referred to as the Golden Temple. Guru Ram Das constructed the Golden Temple in 1577. He was the fourth Guru in the pantheon of Sikh Gurus. A Sikh friend mentioned that a gurdwara is a community asset and serviced by unpaid and committed volunteers, those who perform seva from the kitchen to the shoe rack.

Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of peace and non-violence, championed the cause of truth only as he could. His autobiography, The Story of My Experiments with Truth, like his life, documents every aspect where he does not disseminate anything. During my days of quotidian drinking, I drank heavily and remained inebriated. In that state of arrogance and hubris, I walked into the holy precincts of the Golden Temple carrying a packet of Wills Navy Cut. The act was certainly sacrilegious. For perpetrating this sinful act, I could have been trolled on social media. Today, I regret the mistake committed and apologise sincerely from the depths of my heart. I am sober today because of Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and have given up drinking, smoking and eating non-vegetarian fare. The twisted personality in me is making amends and I hope those afflicted with these vices seek the grace of a Guru to extricate themselves from this cesspool of negativity and embark upon the voyage to discover the quintessential quality of cleanliness and spirituality.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

Migration issue polarises Canada ahead of 2025 election

Canada is struggling to reconcile the benefits of foreign influx with stagnant wages, strained services and a housing crisis; analysis by AMAL CHANDRA and AJAY P KARUVALLY

Canada has recently cut down on international student permits and tightened eligibility for work permits in a bid to cut down on the number of temporary residents. As the federal election approaches in October 2025, immigration remains the most contentious issue in Canadian politics. "Immigration is an advantage for our economy — but when bad actors abuse the system and take advantage of students, we crack down." Said Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, in a post on X. However, things are a little more complicated. Canada presents a unique case of population dynamics, with rapid growth despite record-low birth rates. Between 2023 and 2024, Canada's population surged by 3.2 per cent, outpacing even some African nations known for their high population growth. While the population is increasing rapidly, the total fertility rate (TFR) of 1.33 children per woman in 2022 was the lowest in Canadian history. Canada's population growth, despite a very low TFR, is a testament to the power of immigration. In 2023, 97.6 per cent of the growth in the Canadian population came through immigration.

This reliance on immigrants is a long-standing strategy to offset the country's ageing population. While the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily slowed population growth to just 0.4 per cent in 2021, immigration quickly rebounded, fuelling a rapid recovery in population growth. A significant portion of Canada's immigrants come from India, making up 10.8 per cent of all immigrants in 2023. The proportion of Indians among all the immigrant groups entering the country has increased from 9.6 per cent between 1991 and 2000, to 18.6 per cent between 2016 and 2021. Projections for the period between 2022 and 2026 suggest this trend will continue to accelerate.

Canada's Immigration Dilemma: Canada's immigration system comprises four main programs: economic, family, refugee, and temporary work. The first three lead to permanent residency, while temporary workers must follow specific pathways with quotas and criteria to attain permanent residency. The preferred route for international students is the Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP), which is issued to foreign students who have completed a diploma or degree at a Canadian institution. This permit allows them to qualify for permanent residency programs. While all immigration programs have grown, the 127 per cent surge in international student permits issued in 2023 compared to 2006 is particularly remarkable. A 2015 study showed that between 20 per cent and 27 per cent of international students transitioned to permanent residency within ten years of receiving their first study permit. This conversion rate is likely even higher in more recent years, reflecting the growing appeal of Canada as a destination for long-term settlement through the student migration route.

Economic Growth or Illusion? The influx of immigrants and their economic activity has fuelled Canada's GDP growth (1.8 per cent average from 2000 to 2023), but population growth is masking underlying economic challenges. The GDP per capita rate for the same period from 2000 to 2023 is only



CANADA'S IMMIGRATION SYSTEM COMPRISES FOUR MAIN PROGRAMS: ECONOMIC, FAMILY, REFUGEE, AND TEMPORARY WORK. THE FIRST THREE LEAD TO PERMANENT RESIDENCY, WHILE TEMPORARY WORKERS MUST FOLLOW SPECIFIC PATHWAYS WITH QUOTAS AND CRITERIA TO ATTAIN PERMANENT RESIDENCY

0.7 per cent, among the lowest in the G7. The Canadian economy and the living standards of its population have largely stagnated over the last decade.

While immigrants are contributing to economic growth, the GDP per capita rates are declining. Many new immigrants earn less than the national average, and there are doubts about their ability to achieve upward mobility as rapidly as past generations of immigrants, especially given that the majority are temporary residents.

The Government's Immigration Gamble: To course-correct a stagnating economy and compensate for poor growth rates, Canadian policymakers have made a bet on immigration. By letting in massive numbers of permanent and temporary residents, Canada has prioritised short-term growth, in hopes this can translate to a sustainable long-term growth strategy through the upward mobility of the recently introduced immigrant cohorts. While it may be too early to say this is not working, Canadian public opinion against immigration is at an all-time low. Many Canadians feel the rapid influx of immigrants is exacerbating critical issues like the housing shortage and the strain on social services, including healthcare and emergency response. Despite placing their hopes on immigration, the government has failed to make parallel investments in infrastructure to support both immigrants and the existing population.

Wages in Canada have struggled to keep pace with inflation and there is rising concern among Canadians that immigrants are

suppressing wages. Although evidence suggests that immigrants have little to no impact on the average wages of native workers, the perception of such effects tends to fuel stronger anti-immigration sentiments. Corporations, however, have capitalised on this dynamic, employing temporary workers, including international students, in low-wage, precarious jobs. The promise of permanent residency keeps them in the system, even when working conditions are poor.

For corporations, this represents a windfall of cheap labour. Coincidentally, working these low-paying jobs means the immigrants are unlikely to undergo the upward social mobility the government is hoping they would. Rising Hostility and Public Sentiment As frustrations over the government's immigration policies mount, this frustration is being increasingly manifested as resentment toward immigrants themselves. Public sentiment has noticeably shifted in recent years, with more Canadians expressing negative views toward international students and other immigrants. While this is hard to quantify and prove, public sentiment analysis using machine learning models on social media platforms like Reddit provides a useful indication.

We analysed all the comments under posts containing the word "international students" in the r/Canada subreddit (community) from 2010 to 2022. While the r/Canada subreddit is not in any way a reflection of Canadian society, it could be a fair representation of a microcosm of Canadian centrist views on immi-

gration. Till 2015, There was minimal discussion or negative sentiments related to international students (see figure below). Starting from around 2015, the number of negative comments saw a sharp rise. This trend peaks significantly after 2020, indicating a growing negative discourse, especially in recent years. The number of positive comments seems to plateaued after 2017. Although positive sentiment persists, sentiment analysis reveals a shift in public discourse toward increasingly negative views on the broader issue of international students in recent years.

Conclusion: A Broken System For many international students and temporary immigrants, these growing negative sentiments could lead to increased hostility and more barriers to integration. Instances of food bank usage, cultural misunderstandings, and economic struggles may further inflame these tensions. Canada's immigration system, which lacks a strategic vision, seems to benefit neither Canadian citizens nor immigrants.

Without meaningful reforms, only corporations exploiting cheap labour will see long-term gains, while social unrest and economic stagnation will continue to grow. The future of Canada's immigration policy hinges on the ability of the government and its citizens to address the current challenges and find a path forward that benefits all residents.

(Chandra is an author, policy analyst and columnist and Ajay P Karuvally is a Research Fellow at The International Institute of Migration and Development; views are personal)

The divisive legacy of British colonialism: A persistent threat to India's unity

Politicians continue to exploit social divisions for electoral gains, while foreign forces seek to undermine India's unity

The legacy of British colonialism in India remains a contentious issue, with far-reaching consequences that continue to impact the country's social fabric. In the contemporary context, this can be seen in the practice of politics by the opposition parties, particularly the Indian National Congress (INC).

The colonial era strategically exploited India's inherent social and cultural diversities, creating fault lines that persist today. These divisions, crafted to serve the interests of the British Empire, have become entrenched in India's societal landscape, posing a significant challenge to national unity. Post-1857, British authorities, scholars, and missionaries collaborated to divide Dalits, tribals and Muslims



SHIV PRAKASH

from the Hindu community. This agenda leveraged scholars and missionaries to separate Dalits and tribals through conversion and social manipulation, as detailed in Arun Shourie's seminal work, "Missionaries in India." By creating artificial distinctions and fueling social conflict, the British successfully fostered alliances and divisions that endured long after

independence. Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently highlighted Congress's departure from its founding principles, embracing leftist ideologies instead. Modi cited Congress's original stance on issues like Swadeshi, Swavalamban, and Panchayat Raj, and Mahatma Gandhi's opposition to religious conversion and cow slaughter.

Gandhi's post-1920 emphasis on eradicating untouchability, casteism, alcoholism, and women's oppression, and promoting national unity, has given way to divisive rhetoric. Congress's current leadership, exemplified by Rahul Gandhi, has strayed from these ideals. Gandhi's recent US visit sparked controversy, as he claimed Sikhs face identity crises in India, despite no evi-

dence. His comments fueled separatist sentiments among Khalistani supporters, echoing the tactics employed by British colonialists. Meanwhile, in Sikh communities, Max Arthur Macauliffe sowed seeds of separation, as detailed in Khushwant Singh's "The Sikh Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors." These foreign interventions fabricated logic, distorted literature, and spread misinformation to execute their divide-and-rule policy.

Gandhi's stance resonates with the British-era concept that India is not a nation but a union of states. This contradicts the ancient Indian ethos, affirming India's nationhood. The Vedas proclaim, "Vayam Rashtra Jagryam Purahitah" (We are the guardians of the

nation). Even former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's wish to have his ashes immersed in the Ganges reflects his devotion to Mother India. The British exploited these divisions, nurturing enduring fault lines evident in the Direct Action orchestrated by the Muslim League, resulting in the brutal massacre of 16,000 Hindus in Calcutta alone. Notable figures like Jaipal Singh Munda and Jogendra Nath Mandal eventually broke away from the Muslim League, recognising the sinister intentions. Mandal resigned from the Pakistan government and returned to India, highlighting the atrocities faced by Dalits and tribals.

Today, India must recognise and learn from this history,

acknowledging the artificial divisions created by British colonialism and guarding against similar tactics employed by contemporary forces seeking to exploit these fault lines for political gain. Citizens and political parties must remain vigilant, prioritising national unity over sectarian interests.

The 1946 Jharkhand, Chota Nagpur Pakistan Conference and Jogendra Nath Mandal's alliance with the Muslim League exemplified this strategy. British authorities fueled fears among Dalits and tribals, claiming the "Hindu Raj" would oppress them. This manipulation ignored the historical social cohesion and shared struggles of India's diverse communities. Mahatma Gandhi's vision for

a unified India contrasts sharply with the divisive agenda of some contemporary politicians, who seek to resurrect the British-era fault lines. Gandhi's emphasis on eradicating social evils and promoting national unity has given way to identity politics and vote bank manipulation. India's democratic fabric demands that citizens and leaders recognise and resist these divisive forces, promoting national unity and social cohesion. The country must acknowledge its complex history and address the lingering consequences of colonialism. By doing so, India can overcome the artificial divisions imposed upon it and forge a path toward true unity and progress.

Despite progress, India faces

significant challenges in overcoming the legacy of colonialism. Politicians continue to exploit social divisions for electoral gains, while foreign forces seek to undermine India's unity. The rise of social media has amplified divisive rhetoric, making it easier to spread misinformation and fuel tensions. The divisive legacy of British colonialism remains a pressing concern for India. By acknowledging this history and resisting divisive forces, India can build a more unified future. Citizens must prioritise national interests over sectarian agendas, and leaders must work toward inclusive governance.

(The writer is National Joint General Secretary, Organisation BJP; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



Gold retreats from record level; silver plunges Rs 1,000

Gold prices retreated from record high in the national capital on Tuesday, declining Rs 50 to Rs 78,650 per 10 grams following fresh selling by stockists and retailers, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity rose Rs 200 to revisit the all-time high level of Rs 78,700 per 10 grams on Monday. Silver prices plunged Rs 1,000 to Rs 92,500 per kg against the previous close of Rs 93,500 per kg. In addition, gold of 99.5 per cent purity decreased Rs 50 to Rs 78,250 per 10 grams. On Monday, it had finished at Rs 78,300 per 10 grams to reclaim its record high. Traders attributed the fall in yellow metal prices due to lacklustre demand from local jewellers. In the futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for December delivery rose Rs 54, or 0.07 per cent, to Rs 76,100 per 10 grams.



Govt to sell up to 5 pc in Cochin Shipyard

The government on Tuesday said it will sell up to 5 per cent stake in Cochin Shipyard at a floor price of Rs 1,540 a share starting October 16. Offer for sale in Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) opens tomorrow for Non-Retail investors. Retail investors and Employees of CSL can bid on Thursday, 17th October. Department of Investment and Public Asset Management Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey said on X. The government will divest 2.5 per cent equity or 65.77 lakh shares, with an option to sell an additional 2.5 per cent. At a floor price of Rs 1,540 a piece, the share sale of 5 per cent stake would fetch about Rs 2,000 crore to the exchequer. The floor price is at a discount of close to 8 per cent over Tuesday's closing price of Rs 1,672. Shares of Cochin Shipyard settled at Rs 1,672 per piece on the BSE, up 3.03 per cent.



Domestic air passenger traffic rises 6 pc

Domestic carriers flew 1.30 crore passengers in September, which is 6.38 per cent higher compared to the year-ago period, according to official data released on Tuesday. In September last year, airlines carried 1.22 crore passengers. IndiGo's market share rose to 63 per cent while that of Air India climbed to 15.1 per cent in September 2024, as per the data released by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). AIX Connect, which was merged with Air India Express this month, topped the list of airlines in terms of On Time Performance (OTP) at 70.1 per cent, replacing Akasa Air, whose OTP slipped to 62.1 per cent. The data showed that Vistara's market share dipped to 10 per cent and that of AIX Connect slipped to 4.1 per cent last month. The overall domestic market share of Air India Group comprising Air India, AIX Connect and Vistara touched 29.2 per cent. In September, Akasa Air and SpiceJet carried saw 5.73 lakh and 2.61 lakh passengers, respectively. While Akasa Air's market share stood at 4.4 per cent, that of SpiceJet dropped to 2 per cent.

Central banks are like wicketkeepers: RBI DG

Says always in spotlight during failures

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank of India Deputy Governor Swaminathan J has likened central banks to wicketkeepers in cricket or goalkeepers in football who often go unnoticed in successes but are always in the spotlight during failures.

In his address at the RBI@90

High Level Conference on 'Central banking at Cross Roads' on Monday said over the years, the role of central banks has significantly evolved.

Initially seen as the lender of last resort, today, central banks are equipped with a broad range of tools -- regulatory, supervisory, and monetary -- to ensure the stability of the financial system.

The financial sector, he said, is the backbone of the economy, enabling efficient allocation of resources, managing risks through various instruments, and ensuring smooth payments and settlements. It performs crucial functions that

support investments and drives economic growth.

Therefore, the financial sector becomes the cornerstone of a well-functioning economy.

However, the financial sector is vulnerable to risks -- especially systemic ones that, if left unchecked, can have far-reaching consequences, the deputy governor said.

On the one hand, financial risks can build up over time, especially in periods of economic euphoria and on the other, the growing interconnections between financial institutions, markets, and the broader economy make the system more open to shocks, he said.

"In this increasingly volatile environment, building resilience is crucial to maintaining financial stability. However, resilience is a balancing act -- too much emphasis on safeguarding can stifle innovation and growth, while too little can expose the system to significant vulnerabilities," he said.



Sensex falls by 153 pts, RIL major drag after weak Q2 results

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex closed lower by nearly 153 points on Tuesday due to selling in index major Reliance Industries, Bajaj Finance and HDFC Bank as weak quarterly results and spike in inflation dented investor sentiment.

Paring early gains, the BSE Sensex declined 152.93 points or 0.19 per cent to settle at 81,820.12. During the day, it fell by 337.48 points or 0.41 per cent to a low of 81,635.57.

The NSE Nifty settled lower by 70.60 points or 0.28 per cent to 25,057.35 with 30 of its components closing down, 18 with gains and two unchanged.

From the 30 Sensex firms, Bajaj Finance, Reliance Industries, Tata Steel, JSW Steel, Tech Mahindra, Tata Motors, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Maruti were the biggest laggards.



Reliance Industries Ltd, India's most valuable company, on Monday reported a 5 per cent fall in the July-September quarter net profit as weak oil refining and petrochemical business hurt operational performance.

"The domestic market experienced a downturn, influenced by a mixed global trend and partial profit-booking. Although declining crude prices are beneficial for the domestic economy, they signal weakening global demand. Additionally, India's CPI surged driven by food prices,

India-Canada diplomatic row 'Don't see impact on trade ties'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The escalation in the diplomatic row between India and Canada will not have an impact on the bilateral trade and investment ties between the two countries, government sources said on Tuesday.

They also said that the bilateral trade value is not significant and Canadian funds get route their investments through Singapore, the UAE and the US.

"India is a preferred investment destination," they said.

Canada is India's one of the primary sources of lentils and now that can come from Australia, they said, adding that Indian students and professionals would also have huge opportunities in different countries.

The bilateral merchandise trade between India and Canada actually grew slightly from \$8.3 billion in 2022-23 to \$8.4 billion in 2023-24.

India's imports from Canada increased to USD 4.6 billion, while exports saw a marginal dip, falling to USD 3.8 billion.

During April-July this fiscal, India's exports stood at



The bilateral merchandise trade between India and Canada actually grew slightly from \$8.3 billion in 2022-23 to \$8.4 billion in 2023-24

USD 1.3 billion, while imports were USD 1.37 billion.

Think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) too has stated that the diplomatic tensions between India and Canada have so far not impacted the bilateral trade in goods between the two countries.

However, it added that as this dispute drags on, both nations will need to carefully manage their actions to avoid a full-blown economic fallout.

India on Monday announced withdrawing its

high commissioner and other "targeted diplomats and officials" from Canada after strongly dismissing Ottawa's allegations linking the envoy to an investigation into the killing of Sikh extremist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, in a major downturn in already frosty ties between the two nations.

India's decision came shortly after the Canadian Charge d'Affaires Stewart Wheelers was summoned to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and was told bluntly that the baseless "targeting" of Indian High

Commissioner Sanjay Verma and other diplomats and officials was "completely unacceptable".

The strain started when Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau accused India of involvement in the killing of a Canadian citizen and Sikh separatist leader.

This allegation led to a back-and-forth expulsion of diplomats and paused Free Trade Agreement (FTA) talks.

India has received USD 4 billion foreign direct investments from Canada during April 2000-June 2024.

Finance minister to embark on 11-day tour to Mexico and US

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will embark on an official visit to Mexico and the USA to participate in the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governor (FMCBG) and fund bank annual meeting.

During her maiden visit to Mexico from October 17-20, Sitharaman will also hold a bilateral meeting with her counterpart Rogelio Ramirez de la O, Minister of Finance and Public Credit of Mexico.

Besides, she will also hold discussions with several members of the Mexican Parliament to strengthen parliamentary cooperation and foster economic development, the finance ministry said in a statement.

Sitharaman will also visit the TCS headquarters in

Guadalajara -- a significant contributor to the Mexican IT ecosystem and known as the 'Silicon Valley' of Mexico with a significant presence of major global IT and tech companies.

Among other engagements, Sitharaman will deliver a keynote address at the India-Mexico Trade and Investment Summit with participation from key industry captains from both the countries.

During the visit to the USA from October 20-26, she will participate in the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, the 4th G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governor (FMCBG) Meetings, besides the G20 Joint Meeting of FMCBGs, Environment Ministers, and Foreign Ministers; and G7 - Africa Ministerial Roundtable.

Gadkari urges automobile industry to back ethanol, flex fuels

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday asked representatives of the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) to look into ways of making ethanol and flex fuels more acceptable to the public.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), in a post on X said, Gadkari chaired a review meeting with representatives of SIAM at Transport Bhawan to discuss the readiness of the automobile industry for ethanol and flex fuels.

The dialogue discussed how the industry is preparing to launch ethanol-powered vehicles in the coming months, it added. Gadkari also engaged in an insightful discussion on how a shift to biofuels from fossil fuels will aid India in being self-reliant.

DPIIT relaxes quality control order for cookware, utensils

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) on Tuesday said it has relaxed the mandatory quality control norms for cookware and utensils for micro units.

The quality control order (QCO) on cookware, utensils and cans for foods and beverages was issued last year to cut imports of sub-standard goods and promote domestic manufacturing. "To enhance ease of doing business, several relaxations have been introduced in the QCO, which includes exemption from the QCO for very small micro-enterprises (i.e. micro-enterprises registered under the Udyam portal) where the investment in plant and machinery does not exceed Rs 25 lakh, and the turnover does not exceed Rs 2 crore," it said.

Cybersecurity jobs jump 14 pc over past year; Bengaluru tops list: Report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Increasing focus on data safety witnessed an average 14 per cent rise in job postings for cybersecurity professionals over the last one year, according to a report released on Tuesday.

The report by global job site Indeed is based on data derived from job postings and job clicks on its platform between September 2023 and September 2024.

"As our lives move online, companies are focusing on keeping data safe, which is driving the demand for cybersecurity experts. It's a fast-growing field with lots of opportunities," Indeed India Head of Sales Sashi Kumar said quoting the report.

Cybersecurity job postings jumped 14 per cent over the past year, reflecting the



increased demand for experts, he added.

Meanwhile, the report revealed that Bengaluru leads the country in cybersecurity job openings, accounting for nearly 10 per cent of listings, followed by Delhi-NCR (4 per cent), remote jobs (2.2 per cent), Hyderabad (2 per cent), and Mumbai (2 per cent).

Bengaluru's dominance stems from its position as India's top tech hub, home to major IT companies, startups, and global firms, the

report noted.

As digital operations expand, businesses in the city are ramping up their focus on cybersecurity, creating a surge in demand for professionals, it said.

Delhi-NCR ranks second, accounting for 4 per cent of cybersecurity job openings, due to its status as a major corporate hub, housing numerous multinational companies, government institutions, and financial organisations, the report added.

Trade deal with India remains 'priority', says UK business minister

PNS ■ LONDON

A trade deal with India remains a "priority" for the UK, Business and Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds said during the Labour Party-led government's flagship International Investment Summit in London which coincided with the launch of a new Industrial Strategy green paper.

"The Gulf and India are the priority. I think there are clear economic and commercial reasons why we should pursue those," Reynolds said at the Guildhall on Monday.

"Trade and international investment lie at the heart of our plan to drive growth for the whole country. That's because we know the UK has so much potential as one of the largest, most open economies, a legal system that sets global standards, a regulatory environment with some of the strongest safeguards for investment and the greatest incentives for innova-

tion. We benefit from a skilled and diverse workforce, supported by an immigration system that draws talent from around the globe," he said.

The UK is negotiating a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and Bilateral Investment Treaty with India, which has completed several rounds of negotiations under the previous Conservative government and is expected to pick up from the fourteenth round.

Soon after the general election in July, Reynolds indicated that teams would be "entering negotiating rooms as soon as possible" towards completing the FTA, which is aimed at significantly enhancing the GBP 38-billion a year bilateral trade partnership.

The Department for Business and Trade (DBT) indicated that while a timescale for the negotiations to restart remains unconfirmed, the minister's comments reiterate the commitment to an India-UK FTA.

AI-led firms see remarkable growth: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Companies embracing AI-led processes globally are experiencing remarkable growth, surpassing their peers with higher revenue growth and greater productivity, according to a report by Accenture.

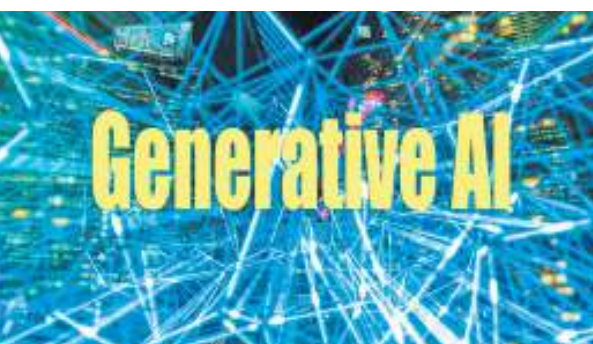
In India, the percentage of organisations fully modernised with AI has surged from 8 per cent in 2023 to an impressive 25 per cent in 2024, marking a significant leap in operational efficiency and revenue generation, the report said.

The findings are based on a survey of 2,000 executives across 12 countries and 15 industries, including insights from 200 senior executives based in India.

The report, titled "Reinventing Enterprise Operations with Gen AI," highlighted that globally, organisations that have adopted intelligent operations are achieving 2.5 times higher revenue growth and 2.4 times greater productivity than their peers.

This trend underscores the transformative power of Generative AI, which has become a catalyst for innovation across various sectors.

Notably, 79 per cent of Indian companies reported that their investments in generative AI and automation have met or exceeded expectations, prompting 64 per cent to plan further enhancements by 2026. Despite these advancements,



the survey indicates that many organisations still face challenges in fully harnessing the potential of AI.

Approximately 64 per cent of companies worldwide struggle with operational readiness, primarily due to inade-

quate data foundations and a lack of talent reinvention strategies. In India, 58 per cent of executives expressed concerns about their workforce's preparedness for the rapid advancements in AI technology.

In India, the percentage of organisations fully modernised with AI has surged from 8 per cent in 2023 to an impressive 25 per cent in 2024

Accenture Group's Chief Executive for Operations Arundhati Chakraborty emphasised the urgency for businesses to adapt, and said Generative AI is more than just technology--it requires a mindset change that impacts

the entire enterprise. "Most executives understand the urgency of reinventing with generative AI, but in many cases their enterprise operations are not ready to support large-scale transformation."

"...an end-to-end perspective leveraging talent, leading practices and effective collaboration between business and technology teams is essential for intelligent operations," Chakraborty said.

Outlining four key strategies, the report said centralised data governance, talent-first strategy, collaborative innovation, and utilising cloud-based process mining are essential for business leaders aiming to enhance operational maturity,

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
ROADS & BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT
E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
NIT No. 06/AEE/DB/EBD/2024-25/le-proc/827 Date: 09.10.2024
Name of work: Providing Civil and Electrical renovation work in M.P Cell Telangana Bhawan, New Delhi. (2nd cell). ECV: Rs. 5,36,936.60/- Bid submission start date & time: 17-10-2024 from 2:30 PM, Bid submission closing date & time: 25-10-2024 up to 2:30 PM, Bid Evaluation opening Date & time: 25-10-2024 after 3:00 PM, Further details can be seen at e-procurement market place at www.tender.telangana.gov.in Sd/- Executive Engineer (R&B), East Buildings Division, Hyderabad.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
NIT No. 26/EE/CIR-20/SLPZ/GHMC/1/2024-25 Date: 14.10.2024
Category of work: Civil Works, Estimate Amount: Rs. 22.50 Lakhs, Start Date / Last Date & Time for Receipt of Bids: 16.10.2024 @ 1.30 PM / 23.10.2024 @ 1.30 PM. Name & Address, Officer Cell No: EE, CIR-20, SLPZ, GHMC, 9154834248. Sd/- Executive Engineer, Circle-20, CHMC. S.O. No. 535/PPCL/AD/11/2024-25, Dt. 15-10-2024

VERSATILE VIXEN READY TO RULE THE SCREEN

AARTI SREENATH
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Hasleen Kaur is no stranger to transformation. From dazzling pageants to gracing magazine covers and now throwing punches on international sets, Kaur's journey has been anything but predictable. It all began with the Miss India pageant—a moment she fondly recalls as the “big stepping stone” that opened countless doors.

“It gave me the platform I needed. Suddenly, I was joining agencies, meeting directors and attending events. It was everything a young girl dreams of when she enters a pageant,” she says. But while modeling introduced her to the camera, her first attempt at acting came with a sobering reality. “My first movie didn't do well,” she admits. “I realised I had a lot to learn.”

Transitioning from modeling to acting wasn't without its challenges. “When you're a model or Miss India, the roles that come your way are often quite limited. People tend to see you in a certain light and those roles don't always allow you to experiment as an actor.” For her, the initial hurdle was breaking through the preconceived notions of what a model-turned-actress could do. She explains that in the acting world, especially when compared to actors trained at prestigious institutions like NSD or FTII, or those with formal training abroad, the path wasn't as straightforward. “It takes time for people to warm up to you. I'd often get comments like, ‘Oh, we didn't expect this from you.’ And I'd wonder, is that a compliment or not?”

This slow acceptance wasn't the only challenge; the learning curve was steep. “If I look at my first audition compared to what I do on screen now, it's completely different. Back then, I didn't even know basic things like where my eyeline should be or how to interact with the camera,” she admits with a laugh. The journey from those early auditions to finding her rhythm as an actor took time, but she's grateful for it. “Der aaye durust aaye,” she says. Though she hasn't yet ventured into Punjabi cinema, her connection to Punjab is undeniable. “I haven't done anything in the Punjabi film industry yet,” she says, “but I did a Netflix show called CAT, which was based in Punjab.” As someone who has watched the industry's growth from the sidelines, she expresses excitement about the future. “The Punjabi film industry has grown so much, and I'd love to work with actors like Diljit Dosanjh, Gippy Grewal, Amrinder Gill, Satinder Sartaa, and Jassi Gill. It's a big industry with a dedicated fan following,” she adds, her enthusiasm clear.

Though her experience is still building, she recognizes the rich cultural tapestry of Punjabi cinema, eagerly anticipating the day she dives into this vibrant world.

Then came Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar, a film that became a turning point in her career. Working alongside Ranbir Kapoor, Shradha Kapoor and Dimple Kapadia, she found herself learning from some of the industry's best. “That film opened my eyes to what acting is all about. Watching them perform, seeing how they prepare for scenes—it was a whole new world.” With each step, she was growing, evolving, and solidifying her place in the industry, one scene at a time.

Landing the role of Ranbir Kapoor's sister in Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar was both a thrilling and surreal experience for her. “Working alongside Ranbir was like... OOFFF!! Whoa!!” she exclaims, reflecting on the iconic actor she used to admire from afar. “I remember swooning over him with my college friends, and now, sharing screen space with him felt like a ‘pinch me’ moment.” Despite his stardom, she describes Kapoor as an incredibly humble and helpful co-actor. “He's very considerate of everyone on set, whether you're a newcomer or a veteran. He doesn't treat you like a rookie and goes out of his way to make you comfortable. We'd rehearse scenes together, and he'd give me tips, like where to stand or how to hit my mark. He's just so accommodating.” To prepare for the sibling dynamics in the film, she drew inspiration from

her relationship with her own brother, Harsimran. “That brother-sister bond, the quarrels, the emotions—it all came from personal experience,” she shares, adding that this helped her portray the natural tension in their characters' relationship.

As she ventures into new genres, she has taken action with *Ruthless Bastards*, an international project that demanded both physical and emotional preparation. “Action is no joke! Hats off to all the actors, directors and stunt teams. I trained for about three weeks, but it was so demanding,” she admits. “They say it's like dance choreography, but it takes an immense amount of energy to get those punches right, with the correct momentum and velocity. Screen fighting is different from real fighting—you're not actually hitting someone, but you need to make it look convincing.” The cold Canadian weather during the shoot added to the challenges. “I remember packing a punch and feeling something off in my back. Turns out, I had a major muscle spasm and had to see a chiropractor.” Despite the physical toll, she found the experience exhilarating and is eager to do more action roles in the future.

Having worked across multiple platforms, she highlights the creative differences between OTT shows and traditional cinema, with one of the most significant being the length of format.

In *Raat Jawaan Hai*, she plays opposite seasoned actor Barun Sobti and their on-screen chemistry was crucial to the storyline. “Barun is such a grounded actor. He gives so much importance to his co-actors. From the first moment on set, he made sure I was comfortable,” she shares. Playing husband and wife in the show required a certain level of intimacy and Barun's approach helped ease any first-time jitters. “He's so easygoing. No airs about him at all. He'd pace around, chat casually, and make you feel like you've known him forever. We'd figure out our lines together, rehearse how we'd say them, and it felt like a real partnership.” His relaxed demeanour on set allowed for a natural and genuine portrayal of their characters' relationship. In *Raat Jawaan Hai*, her character Swadha is a working mother juggling her career as a lawyer and a young child. This role resonated with her on a deeply personal level. “I'm not a mother yet, but I've always believed that when I do start a family, I want to keep working,” she reflects. “Swadha's storyline felt like my own dreams playing out on screen. She has a supportive husband who's willing to stay at home and share the responsibility, and I loved how emancipating that felt.” The show touches on themes of parenthood, equal partnership and modern family dynamics and for her, it was a refreshing portrayal of the kind of family life she envisions for herself in the future. “It's a very liberating storyline and it aligns with how I'd want things to be in my own life someday.”

Navigating through diverse projects, she emphasises the importance of authenticity in her roles. “I draw inspiration from real-life people and experiences, often reflecting aspects of my own life in the characters I portray,” she shares. “Sometimes I pull from memories or people I know. I find that when you can feel for the character, you can truly convey their emotions. I believe in grounding my performances in what I've seen and felt in real life. I aim to capture those moments as authentically as possible.”

Reflecting on the evolving landscape of female narratives in Indian cinema, she acknowledges the progress but also recognizes the work that remains. However, she notes that many films still revolve around male protagonists, often sidelining female narratives unless they are in completely female-led stories. “What I love about projects like *Raat Jawaan Hai* is how the male characters are portrayed. Khyati Putran, the writer, has created male roles that reflect real people—flawed but relatable. It's

refreshing to see men written as they are, without unnecessary conflict. And when women write women, it's even better because they understand the intricacies of those experiences.”

Looking ahead, she shares her aspirations: “Oh, yes. I'd love to play one of those superhero Marvel films where I'm doing a lot of action.” Having gained some experience in action sequences, she expresses excitement about the physicality it requires, stating, “I've got a glimpse of what action is, and I'm also working on myself to be more physically fit after my back spasm.” She's open to exploring all genres, even villainous roles.

With her fearless attitude and unapologetic approach, Hasleen Kaur embodies the spirit of female empowerment in Bollywood. In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, she discusses her transition, working alongside Ranbir Kapoor and her latest project, *Raat Jawaan Hai*



Prevent heart disease with 'ABCDE' algorithm

Most heart problems are asymptomatic at early stages as they generally develop slowly over many years. Damage to the arteries, which can lead to heart attacks and strokes, results from many small choices you make throughout your life, including your dietary habits, physical activity levels, weight management, ability to cope with stress, and whether or not you smoke. That's why, whether you're in your 20s, your 50s or beyond, prevention is the kindest gift you can give your heart and is definitely better than cure. A simple ABCDE algorithm for the prevention of heart disease includes: Assessing your risk, blood pressure control, cigarette cessation and cholesterol control, diabetes treatment and diet optimisation and exercise.

YOUR 20s AND 30s: STAY STRONG

1. Quit all forms of smoking

Quitting smoking is undoubtedly the best thing you can do for heart health. Any form of smoking let it be active or passive is bad for heart. DE addiction using different methods must be tried. Physical activity seems to prevent the urge to smoke, so going to the gym more often can help you kick the habit.

2. Mediterranean diet

A diet rich in fruits and vegetables, healthy oils (olive oil, avocados, fish oil), whole grains (brown rice, oatmeal, barley, whole wheat), lower fat dairy (skim or 1 percent milk), lean protein (fish, lean meat or poultry, beans and legumes, nuts, and exclusion of saturated fats and trans fats when cooking proteins), less processed food (choose whole wheat instead of white bread, brown rice instead of white rice), less sugar and spices instead of salt (aim to eat less than 2,400 mg of sodium a day in order to lower blood pressure).

3. Reduce stress

It's better to offload stress with exercise, yoga or social activities than alcohol, emotional eating or binge-watching TV

4. Anger management and relaxation techniques

This is especially helpful if you're hot-tempered. Individuals experiencing frequent outbursts are at three-times higher risk of premature heart disease and five times higher risk of heart attack.

YOUR 40s: BUILD GOOD HABITS

1. "10000" daily step count

Sitting is sometimes called—the new smoking. Studies state that being excessively sedentary (prolonged sitting) poses a similar risk for heart disease as smoking.

Brisk walking for 30-45 minutes per day or 150 minutes per week has shown to significantly reduce the occurrence of risk factors in many studies. Studies have shown that a daily step count of 10000 steps is best in the long term to reduce incidence of cardiovascular diseases.

2. Reduce outside eating
Eating home-cooked food often results in consumption nutritionally balanced meal with higher nutritional value and fewer calories.

3. Attain targets

It's a good idea to have your blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar and general health assessed every one to two years (more often if you're having symptoms of health problems)

4. Control your weight

A healthy diet and regular exercise will go a long way toward maintaining your weight in a range recommended by your doctor. If you're overweight, ask your doctor about joining a gym or other ways to drop excess pounds. Waist circumference is another important number to track. Larger waistlines are linked to a higher risk of heart disease, diabetes, heart attack and stroke. Belly fat indicates visceral fat, the worst kind of fat, which is stored deep in the belly around vital organs. Ideally, your waistline should be under 35 inches if you're a woman and under 40 inches if you're a man. Maintaining a BMI less than 24.5 is ideal.

5. Stress management

Using food, alcohol, sleeping pills, cigarettes or drugs that aren't prescribed by you only introduces new health problems. Try yoga, other forms of exercise and other healthy ways to manage stress.

YOUR 50s: STAY ON TRACK

1. Healthy lifestyle

The right diet and exercise matter more than ever because the risk of heart problems rises with age. After menopause, women's heart risks are no longer lower than men's due to loss of oestrogen effect. Aim for at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise five days a week, or as doctor recommended.

2. Know your warning signs and symptoms

Not all heart-related conditions first show up as chest pain. Fatigue, leg cramps and nausea can all flag problems. For men, difficulty getting or maintaining an erection could signal artery damage that's restricting blood flow—and if it's happening in your genitals, it could be happening in your heart as well.

3. Sleep management

One common condition called sleep apnea, in which your airway is briefly blocked during sleep and you stop breathing, is linked to heart disease. Sleep factor can be a risk factor for many cardiac conditions like accelerated atherosclerosis, resistant hypertension, atrial fibrillation, heart blocks and pulmonary hypertension. Weight loss remains an important consideration in management.

4. Know "heart attack" symptoms

Prompt response and treatment can save your life, your partner's or that of someone you know. This symptom includes chest pain or jaw pain, left hand pain, sweating, shortness of breath and nausea/vomiting.

YOUR 60s: BEAT THE RISKS

1. Know your risk of heart attack

Using key measures like blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar and sometimes other tests, such as a coronary calcium scan, your doctor can calculate your odds of having a heart attack or a stroke over the next 10 years.

2. Change your life style

It's never too late to make lifestyle tweaks that improve your heart health. Try using an app that helps you count your daily steps, for example, or look for ways to eat more fruits and vegetables.

3. Manage chronic diseases.

When you keep your blood sugar in the recommended range if you have diabetes, or consistently take blood pressure medication as prescribed, you go a long way toward lowering your risk of a heart attack or stroke.

4. Involve in exercises

This move can help protect you against loss of muscle mass as you get older, and it improves the muscles' ability to draw oxygen from the blood. This reduces the need for the heart to pump more blood to the muscles, reducing heart stress

YOUR 70s & BEYOND: FOCUS ON HEALTH

1. Regular update with doctor

Bring all your medications to each appointment, and keep track of your medical history. Frequent follow up of sugars, blood pressures and your lipids can be important for your physician to know your medications are up-to-date.

2. Never ignore warning signs

If something feels—off or different for you, get help immediately. Time can make a big difference.

3. Keep up with preventive check ups

As you age, you're more vulnerable to the effects of common illnesses, so it's important to get vaccinated against flu and pneumonia moreover in people with existing heart diseases.

(The author, M Sudhakar Rao, is a Consultant-Cardiologist, at Manipal Hospital.)

FUSION OF SELF-LOVE & ELECTROPOP!

SELF-LOVE, EMPOWERMENT AND INFECTIOUS BEATS COME TOGETHER IN MANSHEEL GUJRAL'S DEBUT EP. THE PIONEER HAS HER ONBOARD FOR AN EXCLUSIVE CHAT, AS SHE DISCUSSES THIS UPLIFTING ELECTROPOP COLLECTION, WHICH IS MORE THAN JUST MUSIC

SHIKHA DUGGAL
shikhaduggalwork@gmail.com

Mansheel Gujral, a rising star, is about to release her eagerly awaited debut EP. Three of the EP's most famous electro pop songs are included. Listeners have embraced the first two singles, *Chehra* and *Dooriyan* overwhelmingly. Mansheel is also well-known for her soulful Bollywood songs! She has sang hits like *Humsafar* from *Badrinath Ki Dulhania* and *Channa Ve* from *Bhoot*. With latest EP, Mansheel makes a significant impact by offering listeners a new side of her music: the EP is emerging as India's definitive electro pop sound. Mansheel leaves a lasting impression on listeners with it!

A Sardarni, who loves going to Goa—her experiences from each of these locations have merged to form her life. She found that combining these languages comes naturally to her so she has had the good fortune to be exposed to a wide variety of musical genres and styles during her upbringing. —I really believe that music, regardless of language, has the ability to evoke strong feelings. It never feels forced because singing and fusing two worlds has always been a part of my path. The direction of the style is essentially determined by the composition and music.

Beginning to accentuate the concepts of perhaps some romance and self-love in an exclusive chat with us, the singer comments. —Honestly, I don't think it's a conscious choice every time. As a musician, I believe that my work is a reflection of who I am; I write what feels right. I always tried to write the melodies in a way that would really fit with the singing style I was going

for. Everything just seems to come together and shine out on its own once the melody is solid, in my opinion. The intention is to produce a smooth blend that precisely complements the melody and the music to create a novel atmosphere.

Romance and self-love are the main themes of the multilingual, English, Hindi and Punjabi are used in the songwriting! Every song is designed to encourage listeners to get up and dance. High-energy electropop songs with Punjabi folk influences can be found; they're ideal for all of life's special occasions. About her EP, Mansheel Gujral says, —Making the decision to become a professional musician is not simple. Sometimes you have to wait years to be able to identify as a practicing artist. I wanted my debut EP to emerge from a position of acceptance because the full EP would be released soon along with the last single. Finding the tone and aesthetic I desired as a self-reliant artist took some time. I started working on it and it was simply a cheerful, bouncy, typical love song. However, after I was done, everything changed! It turned into the song I wanted to listen to repeatedly all of a sudden and I felt really proud of myself for accomplishing that.

She finally succeeded after years of compiling many voice memos and melodies on her phone! So, in short, it's an introspective piece. The song *Chehra* will always serve as a constant reminder to her to pursue her artistic goals. It doesn't matter if she doesn't succeed or if it doesn't seem like the appropriate choice—what counts is that she is being authentic. She is sure she will find her groove sometime along the route. It all comes down to making the leap! —You Get What You Give by New Radicals is one of my favourite songs and I love the lyrics. It serves as a wonderful reminder that each of us has a distinct voice that is just waiting to be heard. I

want these songs to become the soundtrack of people's lives. With new EP, I hope listeners find songs they can sing along to and enjoy during every moment, whether it's a road trip with friends or a night out. The sound of this EP was born from my love for melodies. In electropop, pop and Punjabi folk, I found the perfect synthesis of worlds that felt like home. It's been a joy to sing these songs live and see the euphoric reaction of listeners.

She believes that as a person, she is born with a sense of longing; her parents are from Pune, her workplace is in Mumbai and her heart is in Goa. It is the feelings that she thinks the song captures. Dooriyan is her way of accepting that she doesn't want to fully embrace life! Mansheel's career in the music industry started in 2014 when she competed on India's *Raw Star*. Her obvious singing talent first drew attention from the public when she appeared on the national reality show. Since then, she has established herself in the Bollywood film industry working on hit songs with renowned composers like Sachin-Jigar, Honey Singh, Akhil Sachdeva and Bally Sagoo.

—I've been fortunate enough to contribute my voice to numerous well-known songs. I was an interpreter of the talented music directors I collaborated with on those tunes. Through my EP, I'm developing my ability to channel my own vision. This has been such a learning experience. It has improved my voice awareness and enabled me to use my voice in ways I never would have imagined. However, making my own EP is a whole different story. It's not only singing; I love watching my works come to life. Because I think my voice can achieve that, I want to give my audience everything! I'm really into electro pop right now, and I want people to groove to my music. I would also love to explore other

genres when the moment feels perfect. I believe my vocals already show off to my audience in the songs I've sung for movies,” shares the electropop sensation! Since she was a little child, she has also been studying folk and classical music. Her roots are in Indian music because, at the age of 13, she travelled to Punjab to receive training in Punjabi folk music. She was introduced to the world of worldwide music as well as the then-emerging Indian pop culture while growing up in the 1990s and watching MTV and VH1. New sounds and genres became available to listen to thanks to the internet mp3 revolution. It has always been her goal to include that feeling throughout her art. Since she speaks Hindi and Punjabi at home, fusing these languages with other languages felt like the most natural way to convey who she is. —Any artistic work's real beauty lies in allowing people to discover their own happiness or interpretation. Since art is subjective, I would really enjoy it if one listener took the music and gave it a personal meaning. I've had a lot of experience working with talented music directors and have contributed my voice to several genres of music over the years, so I feel like I really know my voice and know how to make the most of it. I've gotten better at modulating my voice to fit the demands of the tune and it really helps to practice this skill every day. I also stick to my vocal range and have discovered that, like anything else, using a mic on stage or in a studio is a talent that takes practice. Thus, when creating the EP, my years of experience have been put to use,” notes the singer.

The vocalist Mansheel prefers her music to be natural to her; she doesn't try to overthink things. She is currently completely focused on electro music, although her fans have always enjoyed her renditions of love songs. She wants her music to be an enjoyable mash-up of all the things she loves! Thus, she intends to increase both of them and perhaps even surprise herself with a novel endeavour.

Join Mansheel on this exciting journey. Experience the celebration of self-love!

CULINARY JOURNEY FOR HEALTH AND LONGEVITY!



Novotel Hyderabad Airport has announced its Blue Zone Dinner series, held every Saturday during October and November. This exclusive dining experience draws inspiration from the diets of the world's healthiest and longest-living communities, known as Blue Zones, where people enjoy exceptionally long and healthy lives.

This Blue Zone community follows distinct diets rich in plant-based ingredients, whole foods and healthy fats, which have been crafted into an inspiring menu for the series. The specially curated nutritious yet delectable menu brings together ingredients and dishes inspired by these regions, combining flavourful and wholesome choices.

The brains behind Blue Zone cuisine, Chef Amanna Raju, has thoughtfully crafted each meal that combines the best of health and savour.

Foodies will be treated to an array of dishes that blend tradition with nutrition, starting with soups like Asa Soup and Beetroot and Chicken Consommé. The live starters include options such as spiced potato and pineapple skewers, mustard-marinated river

salmon, herb-scented calamari, and grilled prawns with a variety of flavorful marinades. For salad lovers, the menu offers a diverse range of vibrant options, including berry and coconut shooters with fresh mint, avocado mash with blackberry and chili and red wine-poached pears with mango jelly. Non-vegetarian options include char-grilled chicken breast with berry and corn salsa, succulent prawn tapas and chicken pistachio and olive roulade, among others.

The main course features an exciting mix of western and Chinese-inspired dishes. Diners can enjoy options such as spinach and mushroom confit finger millet tortellini with smoked tomato coulis, vegetable chimichangas with Spanish rice, Sopa de albondigas, Gallo pinto and pan-roasted red snapper with spinach and beurre blanc sauce, among others.

With a menu designed to nurture both the body and the palate, this dining experience is a must-visit for anyone looking to enjoy a taste of healthy yet flavourful living. The culinary experience also offers a leisurely ambiance with live cooking stations.

Aisha Sharma launches sustainable fashion initiative



Actor and model Aisha Sharma has garnered millions of followers seeking fashion inspiration from her chic looks. As her position as a style icon grew, she became committed to using her platform to show how fashion can create a positive impact. After much thought, she decided the best way to do this was to lead by example in promoting circular fashion. "I have always loved shopping vintage and thrift, but the concept is still not as widely adopted in India," Aisha explained. "So I wanted to show everyone how I enjoy participating in the preloved community more widely, in the hopes that others will also take this step towards sustainability with me."

In fact, Aisha had been receiving many messages from her social media fans asking her to make her preloved collection available for sale. "I was so happy that many of my followers were also on the same page, wanting to include circular fashion in their closet. So if I can increase visibility for the concept of sharing your pieces for sale and shopping preloved, I knew it would be a great way to serve my fans and bring new people into the sustainability fold."

Aisha is committed to devoting her time and resources to make this an ongoing initiative, to

keep the momentum of a sustainably lifestyle going. "This is a long-term project and I'm excited to keep sharing my favourite finds with you all - look out for future drop alerts!" Already through the pieces she has contributed so far, the environmental savings amount to over 99 thousand litres of water and 132 kgs of carbon when purchased preowned over newly manufactured - these estimates are calculated using India's first environmental footprint calculator built by Dolce Vee, with whom Aisha has partnered for this project. Dolce Vee's Founder Komal Hiranandani added "Aisha's intelligent approach towards building a lasting initiative and her authentic connection with this cause make this project truly exciting. We can't wait for everyone to see her thoughtful curation, from pocket-friendly finds to luxe collectibles."

The first collection is up for sale online on October 22nd on SaltScout.com/DolceVee/AishaSharma, where buyers from around the world can celebrate style and sustainability.

Airbnb announced an exclusive partnership with Fly Homes. This collaboration aims to raise awareness among students planning to study abroad about Airbnb as an option for short-term stays during their transition period before they secure permanent housing in their host country.

Reported data from the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India revealed that over 1.33 million Indian students are currently studying

STUDENT HOUSING MADE EASY



abroad, with projections suggesting this number could reach 2 million by 2027 (as per a Redseer study), making India the world's largest source of international students.

This significant trend underscores the importance of Leverage Edu and Airbnb's partnership, which aims to support students seeking education in key

destinations such as the UK, USA, Australia, Canada and EU countries.

"This could be in the pre-phase, when they are assessing or evaluating universities or even when they finally arrive in the host country and may still be in the process of finalising their permanent housing. It can provide a comfortable, home-like environment

during this crucial period." The partnership will involve targeted informational campaigns across platforms, highlighting Airbnb specifically as an option for students to consider for any requirements for short-term or in-between accommodation. Information about this short-term rental options will be presented during key stages of the university application and preparation process, aiming to help students plan their initial arrival and housing transition more effectively.

PARTY



Indian Railways - South Star Rail has announced a special train to Karnataka, giving people an opportunity to visit temples of Karnataka. Passengers can board from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.



CARE Hospitals in Banjara Hills, has successfully treated a 78-year-old man with a complex medical history of hypertension, diabetes and coronary artery disease (CAD), who had previously undergone coronary angioplasty for stable angina. The patient was frequently admitted to the hospital with hypertensive emergencies, including episodes of pulmonary edema, significantly elevated NT-proBNP levels (1100 pg/mL) and dangerously high blood pressure readings of 220/120 mmHg.

Tulsi Kumar, a celebrated Bollywood singer and producer of children's content on YouTube, is expanding her commitment to children's education by advocating for early childhood reading. Partnering with Oxford International Children's Books, Tulsi emphasises the importance of storytelling in fostering early learning.



FUN

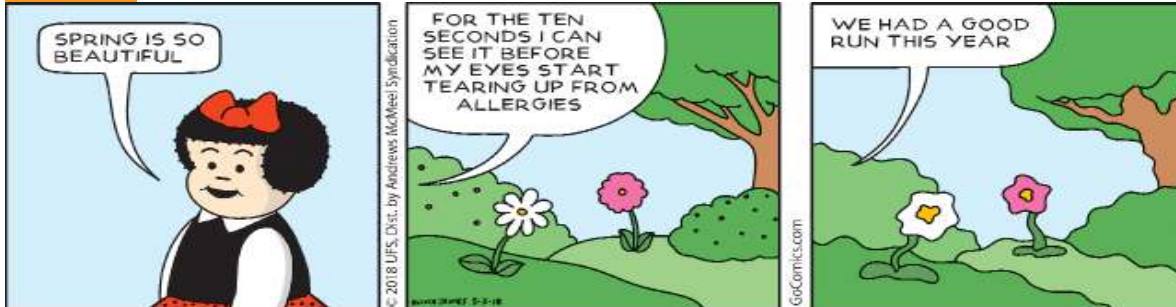
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GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



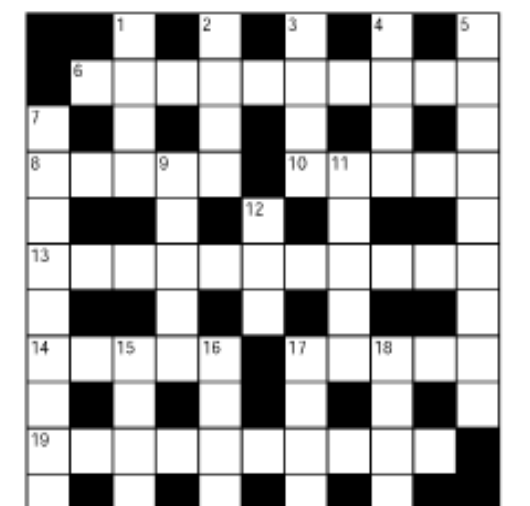
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 6 A traffic circle where roads cross
- 8 A pointy thing that indicates direction
- 10 Snapshot
- 13 A greeting (4,7)
- 14 Salty water from the eyes
- 17 Rubber covers on wheels
- 19 Getting better after illness
- 9 A command
- 11 Bees make this
- 12 A fishing pole
- 15 A curved support under a bridge
- 16 Rescue
- 17 Grow weary
- 18 Wear this on a finger

DOWN

- 1 Bitter-tasting
- 2 Cold winter crystals
- 3 Moist
- 4 A song for one singer
- 5 The most powerful
- 7 Female children

SOLUTION



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

₹120 CRORE BUDGET FOR SAI DURGHA TEJ'S PERIOD DRAMA?

On the occasion of Sai Durgha Tej's birthday, the makers of his upcoming film, tentatively titled *SDT18*, released a glimpse of the project. Rohith KP is making his directorial debut with this film, while K Niranjan Reddy and Chaitanya Reddy are producing it. In the video, Sai Durgha Tej looks completely fit, showcasing a six-pack transformation. This is a stark contrast to when *Bro* was released, where many commented on his weight gain. Now, after watching the teaser, it's clear the actor has undergone a complete makeover, looking lean and losing significant weight.

The teaser also introduces a village set, suggesting the film will be made on a massive budget. A bit of the storyline is teased, showing that the land has long suffered under evil forces, eagerly awaiting its saviour. Now, that wait is finally over.

According to a source, the film's budget is nearly Rs 120 crore. Although Sai Durgha Tej's market has yet to surpass Rs 100 crore, the producers are taking a risk, confident in the film's content. The source also revealed that the story is a period drama, requiring extensive graphic work.

The film is being shot entirely on sets, with villages from the 1950s recreated at Tukuguda, RFC and Saradhi Studios, according to the source. Aishwarya Lakshmi plays the female lead, and the cast includes top actors like Jagapathi Babu and Srikanth. The makers are also planning to cast a Bollywood actor as the villain.

Typically, when a star's birthday arrives, multiple upcoming projects are announced, but Sai Durgha Tej is fully focused on *SDT18*, with no other films announced. This marks his first time playing such a powerful role. The makers also plan to release the film in Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, Kannada and Malayalam.



RAJINIKANTH BACK IN ACTION, HALE AND HEALTHY

Tamil Superstar Rajinikanth fell ill a few days ago and was hospitalized. Before the release of his film *Vettaiyan*, the actor underwent surgery, was later discharged and took time to rest at home. Now, it seems the superstar is back to work, as some of the unit members from *Vettaiyan* recently met with him.

The film was released during the Dasara festival in all languages. The Telugu version is performing well at the box office, along with the Tamil release. Director T J Gnanavel, music director Anirudh Ravichander and the producers met Rajinikanth on Monday and they all appeared happy with the success of their film.

According to the makers, the film has collected a whopping Rs 240 crore, reaffirming Rajinikanth's box-office power. The telugu version was released under the original Tamil title, which some industry insiders saw as a disadvantage. Many thought it was just the Tamil version, but after a few days, the collections surged thanks to Rajinikanth's star power. The film also features legendary actors Amitabh Bachchan, Fahadh Faasil, Rana Daggubati, and Manju Warrier. The makers added that the film is now being shown in over 7,250 theaters. Subaskaran, the producer from Lyca Productions, expressed his gratitude for the overwhelming response, saying, "This is a labor of love, and we are humbled by the support from fans across the globe."

Tick tock! *Rewind* is ready to turn back time

Young actors Sai Ronak and Amrutha Chowdhary are playing the lead roles in the film *Rewind*, directed and produced by Kalyan Chakravarthy. The makers have now announced that the film is set to release on October 18 in South India. Music for the film is composed by Ashirwad. The director expressed confidence, stating that small films have been performing remarkably well at the box office, and he hopes *Rewind* will do the same. "I believe in my content and hope the film will be liked by everyone," said Kalyan Chakravarthy. Promotional videos released a few days ago have received a positive response, according to the director.

The film's story revolves around time travel, with Sai Ronak playing the protagonist. The trailer hints at the actor traveling between the present and future, encountering challenges along the way. While several time travel films have been released in recent years, the director is confident he has introduced a fresh concept. Kalyan Chakravarthy also mentioned that the songs from the film have been well received. He added that he showed the film to distributors, who were highly supportive and liked it very much. "I am very thankful to them for their support," he said.

Get ready to groove! *Srimathi Garu* song from *Lucky Baskhar* released

Tollywood fans, get ready! The vibrant video song *Srimathi Garu* from the much-anticipated film *Lucky Baskhar* has officially launched, featuring a catchy melody that promises to be a chartbuster.

Set to hit theaters worldwide on October 31st, *Lucky Baskhar* boasts a star-studded cast and is expected to deliver an entertaining cinematic experience. Don't miss the chance to enjoy the lively visuals and enchanting music by watching the video. As excitement builds for its release, stay tuned for more updates from the Tollywood scene!



Prashanth Neel pens story for *Bagheera*

After the success of the *KGF* film, director Prashanth Neel has become one of the most sought-after directors in India. Following that, he directed *Salaar* with Prabhas and is now working on a film with Jr NTR. Despite his busy schedule with high-budget projects, he has penned the story

for a film titled *Bagheera*, directed by Dr. Suri. Sriimurali stars as the leading actor. The makers have now begun promotions for this film and announced that the first single will be released on October 17.

Sriimurali previously starred in *Ugramm*, which was Prashanth Neel's

debut film. According to the makers, *Bagheera* promises to deliver an engaging and thrilling cinematic experience. Rukmini Vasanth plays the female lead, while the character actor Prakash Raj has an important role in the film. *Bagheera* is made in Kannada and the makers are confident it will

set trends in Kannada cinema. Asian Suresh is set to release this film in Telugu. They also announced that the film will be released on October 31 to coincide with the Diwali festival. According to the makers, Sriimurali plays an intense and power-packed role in the film.

Priyanka Upendra launches *Ugravataram* trailer, seeks blockbuster success

At the trailer launch event for *Ugravataram*, actress Priyanka Upendra made an earnest plea for audiences to help make her first pan-Indian film a blockbuster. Produced by S.G. Satish under the SGS Creations banner and directed by Gurumurthy, the film stars Priyanka in the lead role alongside a talented ensemble cast that includes Suman, Nataraj, Ajay, Pavitra Lokesh, Sai Dheena, Sudhi Cockroach and Lakshya Shetty.

The event also featured notable personalities like Karate Raju, father of actor Vishwak Sen, actor Satya Prakash, and producer Raj Kandukuri, who participated in the celebrations. The song was unveiled by Karate Raju and Satya Prakash, followed by the trailer launch led by Raj Kandukuri.

Raj Kandukuri expressed his enthusiasm for the film, stating, "*Ugravataram* is ideally timed for Dussehra. This female-driven narrative

highlights pressing societal issues, ensuring it resonates with audiences. Gurumurthy has a proven track record with his past projects, and I hope this film, which releases on November 1st, achieves great success. I also

wish Priyanka Upendra all the best, as such films deserve strong media promotion." Priyanka Upendra reflected on her connection to Hyderabad, sharing, "Hyderabad is a lucky city for me; it's where I first met Upendra

Garu. This film marks my first venture into action and I accepted this role because of Gurumurthy's faith in me. Cinematographer Nandakumar has beautifully captured the essence of our performances, and Nataraj has delivered an outstanding portrayal. Raju Garu has provided memorable songs and dialogues in Telugu, while Krishna Basrur's music is exceptional. I hope everyone watches my first pan-Indian film and helps it become a blockbuster."

Actor Satya Prakash highlighted Priyanka's impressive background, stating, "Priyanka hails from Kolkata, and her performance in this film will remind viewers of Vijayashanthi in *Karthavyam*. Following this project, I believe Priyanka will become a household name. I'm thrilled to see my son acting in this film and I commend Gurumurthy for his dedication as a director. Let's all rally behind the film, set to release on November 1st and ensure its success."



1ST TEST: GILL, JAISWAL CONTINUE GOOD FORM; KOHLI, ROHIT EYE CONSISTENT RUN

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shubman Gill, the torchbearers of India's transition phase, will have to be the team's driving force in its quest to lord over an unsettled New Zealand when the two sides square off in a three-Test series, beginning here on Wednesday. The baton has not been completely passed, but Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma are certainly running their last lap and these two young superstars will have to show that they can carry forward the legacy of the titans. Since a productive series against England earlier this year, Gill is now more familiar and comfortable with the rigours of Test cricket. His last 10 innings contain three hundreds and two fifties, while Jaiswal's last eight outings in Test cricket feature a 214 and five fifties. Those numbers are not to be scoffed at. But at the same time, it is important for them to build on the foundation through this series, a precursor to the much tougher journey to Australia next month. Gill seems to have sorted his issues with the in-coming

deliveries from pacers, but a trace of the old failing still remains. In Chennai, Bangladesh pacer Hasan Mahamud troubled him with nip-backers before eventually grabbing his wicket. Similarly, Jaiswal has a penchant to go for expansive shots against pace bowlers to get dismissed, evidenced by his three dismissals recently against Bangladesh quicks. In all, the left-hander has fallen to pacers 12 times in 20 innings, and he would want a better record before facing a clutch of top-class Australian pacers. While these concerns are not deeply rooted, they serve as cautionary points against a New Zealand attack that has capable hands in pacers Matt Henry, William O'Rourke and the experienced Tim Southee, if he gets to play here after a sharp decline in his form. There is another angle to the emergence of Jaiswal and Gill as the pillars of the Indian line-up, as Kohli and Rohit have not precisely set the field ablaze. Rohit, who has played 15 innings this year, has made two hundreds but managed only one fifty in the remaining 13, totaling 497



runs in eight Tests at just over 35. Kohli, 53 runs shy of 9000 Test runs, has not made even a fifty in six innings this year,

and while Rohit often perishes in his attempt to grab the momentum, his colleague offers a much more curious case. The 35-year-old Kohli

has not been able to convert the two starts he got this year, ending up with 46 (vs SA) and 47 (vs Bangladesh), stirring the uncomfortable memories

of that great slump between 2019 and 2023. The master batter will also have to keep an eye on New Zealand left-arm spinners -

Ajaz Patel and Rachin Ravindra - the tribe which has been a thorn in his flesh in the past. It has been a while since these two stalwarts embossed their mark across a full series, and a nervy New Zealand could be their golden chance to do so. India has only minor concerns, but New Zealand's troubles across batting and bowling departments are more pronounced. Their batsmen struggled copiously against Sri Lankan spinners recently while losing an away series 0-2, and here they will have to negate two modern-day greats in Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja. They took 20 wickets together against Bangladesh and with the Chinnaswamy Stadium pitch expected to give some assistance to spinners, the veterans might be itching to have a bowl here. Besides the duo, the Kiwis will have to contend with the genius of Jasprit Bumrah, who rattled Bangladesh by picking up 11 wickets across two Tests. If they persist with the combination from the last series, Akash Deep will be the third pacer behind Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj. The weather here is expected

to be gloomy over the course of the Test match, and there could be some delayed starts and truncated sessions. The management will take into account the fact that New Zealand, who have already lost Kane Williamson to an injury, were put through the wringer by Lankan spinners recently. In another blow, right-arm pacer Ben Sears has been ruled out of the series due to a knee injury. An uncapped Jacob Duffy, who has played six ODIs and 14 T20s, has been brought into the squad. Teams (from): India: Rohit Sharma (c), Jasprit Bumrah (vc), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, KL Rahul, Sarfaraz Khan, Rishabh Pant (wk), Dhruv Jurel (wk), Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Siraj, Akash Deep. New Zealand: Tom Latham (captain), Devon Conway, Kane Williamson, Mark Chapman, Will Young, Daryl Mitchell, Glenn Phillips, Michael Bracewell, Mitchell Santner, Rachin Ravindra, Tom Blundell (wk), Ajaz Patel, Matt Henry, Tim Southee, William O'Rourke, Jacob Duffy.

Don't want to take undercooked Shami to Australia: Rohit

PTI ■ BENGALURU

India skipper Rohit Sharma has virtually ruled out Mohammed Shami from the upcoming Test tour of Australia, saying that the pacer's recovery from an ankle surgery has been hampered by swelling in knees and it would not be right to take an "undercooked" version of him for the marquee showdown. Shami last played for India during the ODI World Cup final last year and has been recuperating from an ankle surgery after that. "To be honest, right now, it's pretty difficult for us to make a call on him, whether he'll be fit for this series or Australia series. He recently had swelling on his knee, which was quite unusual," Rohit told



reporters here on the eve of the first Test against New Zealand. "He was in the process of getting fit, getting close to 100 per cent, he had swelling in his knee, that put him back a little bit in his recovery. So, he had to start again. Right now, he's at NCA, he's working with the physios and the doctors at NCA," he added. Rohit said the team management wants Shami to regain full fitness before returning to top-flight cricket. "We are keeping our fingers crossed, we want him to be 100 per cent fit. We don't want to bring an undercooked Shami to Australia, that is not going to be the right decision for us. "It is quite tough for a fast bowler, having missed so

much of cricket, and then suddenly to come out and be at his best, it is not ideal," he noted. Rohit said the National Cricket Academy staff will continue to assess Shami's fitness and he might play a couple of internal matches in that process. "We want to give him enough time to recover and be 100 per cent fit. The physios, the trainers, the doctors have set a roadmap for him. "He is supposed to play a couple of (practice) games before he plays international cricket," he added. Shami has played 64 Tests for India, taking 229 wickets at an impressive average of 27.71. India will play five Tests in Australia starting November 22.



New Zealand pacer Ben Sears ruled out of India tour due to knee injury

PTI ■ BENGALURU

New Zealand right-arm pacer Ben Sears has been ruled out of the upcoming three-Test series against India due to a knee injury. The opening Test begins here on Tuesday. Sears' departure to India was delayed after he experienced pain in his left knee during New Zealand's recent tour of Sri Lanka. Scans back home revealed a tear to his meniscus, prompting medical consultations in hopes he could be cleared to play. "However, following the medical advice, the decision was made to rule him out of the series. A plan on the best course of treatment and rehabilitation for the injury will be advised in due course," New Zealand Cricket said. Jacob Duffy has been called in as his replacement and the uncapped 30-year-old right-arm fast bowler will leave for India on Wednesday. Duffy has so far played six ODIs and 14 T20s for the

Kiwis and in 102 First-Class outings he has claimed 299 wickets. "We're obviously disappointed for Ben who made a strong start to his Test career during the home summer and offers a genuine pace option," New Zealand head coach Gary Stead said in a statement. "It remains to be seen how long we'll be without him for, but we're hopeful his road to a full recovery will be a short one. It's an exciting opportunity for Jacob who has been around Test the squad before. With three Tests ahead of us he has every chance of making his Test debut." Stead hoped Duffy's experience in County Championship would be beneficial for the player. "Jacob's recent experience playing for Nottinghamshire in the County Championship certainly pushed his place. His performances in white-ball cricket for the Blackcaps have always been impressive and we're confident he'll be able to contribute if called upon," he said.

Keeping Jasprit Bumrah quiet will go a long way in winning against India: Pat Cummins

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Australia will have to find a way to keep Indian pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah quiet if they are to win the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, reckoned captain Pat Cummins on Tuesday as they draw comfort from success in last two ICC finals against their fierce rivals. The world's top two Test teams will clash in a five-match affair starting on November 22 in Perth and India will enter the contest having held the trophy for nearly a decade, which includes winning two consecutive series Down Under. "I'm a big fan of Bumrah. I think he's a fantastic bowler. Hopefully, if we can keep him quiet, that is going to go a long way to winning the series," Cummins said on the

Star Sports Press Room. "Alongside him, he has got some other guys who haven't played a lot over here in Australia (that) we haven't seen a lot of. We'll see how it goes," he added. Cummins said Australia will lean on happy memories of winning the last two ICC finals -- World Test Championship and ODI World Cup -- against Rohit Sharma's India. "The last two series were a long time ago. We have got over it," he said. "I've never played alongside him (Rohit Sharma), so I don't know him super well. But it has looked like they (Indian team) are pretty organised, pretty well-planned. "Fortunately, over the last few years, we've had some success in the World Test Championship final and (in



a different format for the ODI World Cup. We'll be trying to lean on those memories. As I'm sure they're trying to remember some of the previous series over here as well," he said. Pujara's absence will give a 'different feel' Cummins said playing against Cheteshwar Pujara, whose stoic resistance with the bat laid the foundation of India's away wins in 2018-19 and 2020-21, was 'real Test

cricket'. "It was always great playing (against) Pujara. He was one of those guys who never really felt like he was getting away from you. But then he would (just) bat, bat, bat and bat," he said. "I really enjoyed the contest against him. Some days he won, other days I won. It's going to have a bit of a different feel without him. Pujara is a great player." "(I) had lots of battles against

him over the years. I quite enjoyed them, to be honest. It was real Test cricket. He might score runs, but you always feel like you're in for a chance." Cummins said playing against India's former No 3 batter was a battle of outlasting each other. "It comes down to almost who wants to outlast each other, which I quite like that aspect of Test cricket. It's going to be a shame that he is not there, but I'm sure they'll pick someone else who's in a similar kind of style," he said. Cummins said the India-Australia rivalry will now be "mirroring" the Ashes given that there will be five Tests hereon. "I do think it is," said Cummins when asked if India-Australia rivalry matched that of the Ashes. "Particularly, after the Indian

team won the last couple of series at (our) home. We've had more success against England over the past decade. I think it's right up there," he said. "You know when you play against India, you've got a few Indian fans that are watching. It's a slightly different rivalry to England-Australia rivalry. But again, now having a five-Test match series, it does mirror the Ashes series very closely," he said. Cummins said India's reputation has been consolidated by winning away from home. "Winning (in) Test cricket away from home is as tough as it gets in our sport and India have done that around the world. They are really, really good at home but also, one of the better teams to travel as well that's their reputation," he said.

Latham looking forward to challenge of beating "well-rounded" India

PTI ■ BENGALURU

New Zealand captain Tom Latham on Tuesday conceded that beating a "well-rounded" India would be an enormous task but said his team is ready to face the challenge over the course of a three-match Test series, beginning here from Wednesday. The presence of a host of experienced batters and bowlers, Latham said, makes India a formidable opponent. "You obviously look at the spinners when you come over these conditions. But they've got an equally good seam attack in Bumrah, Siraj, Akash Deep, who's played the last couple of Tests against Bangladesh. So just a well-rounded side," Latham said in the pre-match press meet here on Tuesday. "From a batting point of

view. You have a lot of match winners who can take a game away from you pretty quickly. "We're looking forward to the challenge. Hopefully, we can lean back on the experiences that we've had here the last couple of times that we've toured," he added. In that context, Latham said the Kiwis will miss the presence of former captain Kane Williamson, who has been ruled out of the early part of this tour owing to a groin injury. "It's disappointing not to have Kane here. Fingers crossed he'll be ready as soon as possible. I think Youngie (Will Young) will play. He'll bat at three. He's batted all over the order. I guess it's his opportunity to put his hand up. "Yeah, obviously, disappointing when you



miss a senior guy like Kane, but it gives opportunities for other guys to put their hand up," he said. However, Ben Sears getting ruled out because of a knee injury has opened up a chance for out of form veteran Tim Southee to get a place in the eleven. "Absolutely. I think last time they played a Test here, Tim took 7 for 60. Obviously, Ben Sears has been ruled out, so I guess if we do end up going with the three seamers, then obviously Tim will come right into the equation." Latham admitted that the build-up to this series was not ideal after a 0-2 series defeat against Sri Lanka, but hoped to carry over the learning from that contest. "Obviously, results weren't ideal in Sri Lanka. I think that first Test was a reasonably small margin in terms of the defeat. But we

actually did a lot of good stuff in that tour. "And, yeah, I guess you come here to India, it's slightly different conditions. That wicket at Galle didn't offer a lot from a bowling point of view," he noted. Latham is no stranger to captaincy but being in the hot seat on a permanent basis from the three-match series against India excites the Canterbury man. The 32-year-old was handed the skipper's arm band after Southee stepped down from the role after a poor away series against Sri Lanka. "It's obviously a huge, exciting privilege for me to be in this position. But regardless whether I'm captain or not captain, I'm trying to perform my role as best as I can. "That's not going to be any different being captain," said Latham.