



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

Published From: VIJAYAWADA HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI DEHRADUN



'Absolutely distasteful, disgraceful'

5

INCREASE SHARE IN GROUND-LEVEL AGRICULTURE CREDIT DISBURSEMENT



IIFA win: Mrunal Thakur 'Over the Moon' with EXCITEMENT

P12

QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer

I am being mentally harassed by BRS troll for respecting the weaver community. Such has been the trauma that I have not had anything to eat after I saw those posts. I want KTR to tell me what he would do if his sister, who recently came out of prison, is trolled the way I am being trolled?

-Konda Surekha, Minister Telangana

P4

DON'T MISS...

NTR Trust committed to...

NTR Memorial Trust Managing Trustee Nara Bhuvaneshwari reaffirmed on Monday that the trust remains dedicated to serving the public and expressed gratitude to the people of Rajahmundry for their overwhelming support during Chandrababu Naidu's time in prison. Nara Bhuvaneshwari, wife of former Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, inaugurated the NTR Memorial Blood Bank at Prakasam Nagar, in the presence of MLA Gorantla Butchiah Chowdary. The blood bank, established in collaboration with GSR Memorial...

-PAGE: 4

'Focus on serious issues like...

The Congress on Monday hit back at Home Minister Amit Shah over his attack on party chief Mallikarjun Kharge, saying he should focus on serious issues, such as the situation in Manipur and a caste census. Shah on Monday said Kharge's remarks on Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a poll rally in Jammu and Kashmir were 'absolutely distasteful and disgraceful'. In a post in Hindi on X, Kharge said, 'Home Minister Amit Shah should focus on serious issues like Manipur, census and caste...'

-PAGE: 5

Total employment in mfg industries...

The number of persons employed in manufacturing industries rose 7.5 per cent in 2022-23 to 1.85 crore from 1.72 crore in the previous year, says Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI). The estimated number of persons engaged in this sector in 2022-23 exceeded the pre-pandemic level (2018-19) by more than 22.14 lakh, a MoSPI statement said adding that at the same time, average emolument also registered an increase over the...

-PAGE: 8

India push for victory with...

Trying to force a result in the limited time available, India played a sensational T20-style cricket to take a 52-run first-innings lead against Bangladesh in the second Test, infusing life into the rain-hit contest here on Monday. The sun shone bright in the Kanpur sky after two gloomy days and the on-field action finally began after losing eight sessions. India had six sessions to force a win, and the hosts did everything they could on the fourth day of the match. The pitch hardly offered assistance to India bowlers but...

-SPORTS

'Keep Gods out of politics'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Observing that Gods should be kept away from politics, the Supreme Court on Monday questioned Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's public statement that animal fat was allegedly used in making Tirupati laddus under the previous Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy-led regime. The apex court said the laboratory test report was "not clear at all" and it prima facie indicated that 'rejected ghee' was subjected to test.

"It is very clear from the report that this is not the Ghee which has been used. Unless you are sure, how did you go to public with that?" a bench of Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan said.

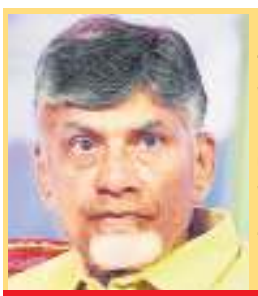
"It is not clear at all and it is prima facie indicating that these were rejected Ghee which were subjected to test. If you yourself have ordered investigation, where is the need to go to the press?" the bench told senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, who was appearing for Andhra Pradesh.

The top court was hearing a batch of pleas, including those seeking a court-monitored probe into the alleged use of animal fat in making Tirupati laddus.

Observing that these pleas pertain to an issue which affects the sentiments of crores of people living in the world, the bench noted the chief minister had gone public making a statement that animal fat was being used to make Tirupati laddus under the previous regime.

It said according to the state, an

- Orders SC on Tirupati laddu row
- Questions CM Naidu's statement



"It is very clear from the report that this is not the ghee which has been used. Unless you are sure, how did you go to public with that?" a bench of Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan said.

FIR was registered on September 25 and a special investigation team (SIT) was constituted on September 26 to probe the matter.

"It could thus be seen that the statement made by the chief minister was even prior to the FIR being lodged and the SIT being constituted on September 26, in as much as the chief minister has gone in public on September 18," the bench said.

"We are prima facie of the view that when investigation is under process, it was not appropriate on the part of a higher constitutional functionary to go in public to make a statement which can affect the sentiments of crores of people," it said.

The bench asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to assist it in deciding whether the investigation by the state-appointed SIT should continue or the probe should be conducted by an independent agency.

While posting the matter for hearing on October 3, the apex court asked the top law officer to ponder over the issue and assist it in this regard.

The bench noted there were some news reports which said executive officer of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) had also made a statement that adulterated ghee was never used.

Rohatgi said some of these petitions were not bona fide and they were meant to espouse the cause of the erstwhile government besides attacking the present government.

Senior advocate Sidharth Luthra, appearing for TTD, said since the ghee which was supplied earlier was found to be contaminated, it was found necessary to get the samples analysed. "Only when the report came, the steps were taken," he said.

Continued on Page 2

TDP defends ghee claims

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In response to certain questions raised by the Supreme Court in Laddu adulteration case, Telugu Desam Party (TDP), the main constituent of the NDA coalition government in Andhra Pradesh, reiterated its stance on the issue and expressed its willingness for a Central probe, even as a State police Special Investigation Team (SIT) is currently investigating the matter.

The Opposition YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) seized on the court's remarks to criticise the TDP, asserting that the 'heinous' publicity surrounding the laddu prasadam issue has caused distress worldwide.

TDP leaders maintained their claim that adulterated ghee was used in the preparation of the famous 'Tirupati laddus', as alleged by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu. TDP spokesperson Pattabhi Ram Kommareddy stated, "We stand by everything we have presented to the public.

There is no going back; 100 percent, adulterated ghee was used, and we have sufficient evidence to prove it. We have placed all of this in the public domain, and the same will be presented before the court."

Continued on Page 2



97% of flood victims receive compensation

CM asks officials to speed up payment to remaining 3% of affected people by resolving technical issues

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu reviewed the compensation disbursed to those affected by heavy rains and floods in the State. Officials briefed the Chief Minister on the financial assistance provided so far, along with the issues and complaints raised by the victims. They reported that Rs 588.59 crore has been deposited in the accounts of the flood victims out of a total compensation of Rs 602 crore.

Payments to farmers under the crop damage compensation scheme total Rs 301 crore, while the remaining amount is allocated to victims whose houses and shops were inundated by the floods. Officials explained that the government utilised Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) to deposit cash into the vic-

tims' accounts, with approximately 97 percent of the compensation successfully credited. However, they noted that payments were not processed for 22,185 victims due to technical issues and errors in their bank account details.

Reasons for the non-deposit include lack of Aadhaar linkage with bank accounts, mismatched Aadhaar information, inactive or closed accounts, incorrect account registrations, and other discrepancies. Victims have been advised to visit their banks and complete the Know Your Customer (KYC) process, which is expected to resolve the issues within two to three days. The officials also informed the CM that money has been transferred to the bank accounts of those who addressed the technical problems on Monday.

SIT probes ghee testing standards at Tirumala

AR Dairy chief files anticipatory bail plea

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) continued its investigation into the adulterated ghee used in the preparation of Tirumala Srivari Laddu, focusing on key issues on the third day, Monday. The investigation team arrived in Tirumala from Tirupati around 10 am and extensively examined the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) flour mill and laboratory. They also inspected the godowns where the raw materials for the preparation of 'prasadam' are stored, assessing the quality of the materials already in stock.

SIT officials inquired into how TTD staff check the quality of the materials procured for making prasadam. They further questioned the TTD staff regarding the testing standards for the ghee used in the preparation and sought clarification from technical staff on the standards followed. During the investigation, officials collected samples from the ghee tankers that arrived in Tirumala and closely monitored the testing process. The SIT officials intended to investigate the employees involved in laddu preparation; however, they could not do so due to time constraints. In the evening, the SIT officials left Tirumala for Tirupati.

SIT officials inquired into how TTD staff check the quality of the materials procured for making prasadam. They further questioned the TTD staff regarding the testing standards for the ghee used in the preparation and sought clarification from technical staff on the standards followed. During the investigation, officials collected samples from the ghee tankers that arrived in Tirumala and closely monitored the testing process.

Meanwhile, the Tirupati police have registered a case against AR Dairy Foods based on a complaint alleging the supply of adulterated ghee for making 'Tirupati Laddu'. In response, the company's Managing Director, Rajasekaran, filed an anticipatory bail petition in the Andhra Pradesh High Court on Monday. In his petition, Rajasekaran stated that taking action against him without seeking an explanation violates the principles of common law. He requested that no hasty actions, including arrest, be taken against him and affirmed his willingness to comply with any conditions imposed upon the grant of bail, as well as his commitment to cooperate with the investigation. The case is likely to be heard on Tuesday.

Skill Census pilot project launched from Mangalagiri

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a first-of-its-kind initiative in the country, the Andhra Pradesh government launched the ambitious Skill Census project from Mangalagiri constituency on Monday. The pilot project aims to collect skill data from Mangalagiri Assembly Constituency and Tullur mandal, testing the functionality of the skill census mobile application. The pilot is expected to be completed in three days.

The data collection process commenced in 100 village secretariats, with 675 enumerators engaged to gather information from 1,61,421 families, including 1,35,914 households in Mangalagiri constituency and 25,507 households in Thullur mandal.

Continued on Page 2

Enhance school facilities: Lokesh

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Education, IT, and Electronics Minister Nara Lokesh has directed officials to provide comprehensive training and capacity building for principals and secondary grade teachers through the 'Supporting Andhra's Learning Transformation' (SALT) project, aiming to improve educational standards in government schools across the state. Minister Lokesh held a review meeting at his Undavalli residence with senior officials from School Education and Samagra Shiksha on Monday.

During the meeting, the minister urged officials to complete the training of School Management Committees (SMCs) by the end of October. He emphasised the need

Asks officials to create a separate App for School Management Committee (SMC) feedback



for active participation of SMC members in enhancing school facilities and academic results. Minister Lokesh stressed that principals should not take over responsibilities meant for SMC

members in feedback apps related to school management. He also suggested the development of a separate app to gather SMC members' opinions effectively.

Continued on Page 2

Fresh trouble for Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

In more trouble for Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, the Enforcement Directorate on Monday booked him, his wife and some others in a money laundering case linked to the MUDA land allotment case, taking cognisance of a recent state Lokayukta FIR, official sources said.

The ED has pressed sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) to book Siddaramaiah in its enforcement

ED books CM in MUDA-linked money laundering case

case information report (ECIR), the equivalent of a police FIR, they said. According to the procedure, the ED is empowered to summon the accused for questioning and even attach their assets during the investigation.

The Congress slammed the BJP-led central government over the ED action,

alleging the probe agency has become Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "instrument of harassment and vendetta" against his political opponents. Siddaramaiah, 76, had last week asserted he was being targeted in the MUDA issue as the opposition was "scared" of him.

He also reiterated that he would not resign following the

court ordering a probe against him in the case as he has done no wrong and asserted that he would fight the case legally. "It is no secret that the ED has become an instrument of harassment, vendetta, revenge, and vengeance on his political opponents by the non-biological PM," Congress general secretary-in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said on the agency's action against the Karnataka chief minister.

Vizag on track for UNESCO Geopark status

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Visakhapatnam is on its way to joining the prestigious list of 200 UNESCO Geoparks worldwide. The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has shortlisted six potential sites for Geopark status in the country, including Visakhapatnam. This was highlighted at a conference organised by UNESCO and GSI in Delhi.

Other shortlisted sites include Jabalpur Geopark, Poshil Park in Sikkim, Varkala Geopark in Kerala, Ramgarh Geopark in Rajasthan, and Lamayuru Museum in Ladakh. The conference urged state and central governments to work towards gaining UNESCO recognition for these sites. Since UNESCO only recognises two Geoparks per country annually, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) believes Visakhapatnam's long history makes



Visakhapatnam's geological history dates back to 1.7 billion years and includes unique formations like the red mud dunes, Borra Caves, and ancient Buddhist sites such as Thotlakonda, Bavikonda, and Bojjannakonda.

it a strong contender.

"Visakhapatnam has a rich geological and cultural heritage," said Dr. D Rajasekhara Reddy, Advisor to the Geo Heritage Cell and Convener of INTACH. "Geopark status would help bring all its key sites under one authority and promote the city's natural and historical treasures."

Visakhapatnam's geological history dates back to 1.7 billion years and includes unique formations like the red mud dunes, Borra Caves, and ancient Buddhist sites such as Thotlakonda, Bavikonda, and Bojjannakonda. The red mud dunes (Erra Matti Dibbalu) near Bheemili, over 18,500 years old, have already been recognised as a geological her-

itage site by GSI. These dunes, formed by climatic changes and sea-level shifts, add to the city's geological significance. Borra Caves, the old city's heritage structures, and the Simhachalam temple are expected to play key roles in establishing Visakhapatnam as a UNESCO Geopark. "Geopark status will bring international attention and boost tourism in the region," Dr. Reddy added. He stressed the need for the state government to submit a strong proposal to UNESCO to ensure Visakhapatnam's selection. INTACH has been actively promoting Visakhapatnam's geological sites, with Dr. Reddy's team instrumental in securing the red mud dunes' heritage status.

If approved, Visakhapatnam would gain global recognition, showcasing its rich geological and cultural heritage while boosting local tourism and economic growth.

Dadasaheb Phalke Award for Mithun

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/KOLKATA



Veteran actor Mithun Chakraborty, star of films such as "Mrigayaa", "Disco Dancer", and "Prem Pratigya", was on Monday named recipient of the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, the government's highest recognition in the field of cinema.

The announcement was made by Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnav on X.

This comes months after Chakraborty, a member of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), was awarded Padma Bhushan, the third-highest civilian honour, by the Government of India.

Congratulating Chakraborty, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the actor is a "cultur-

al icon" admired across generations.

"Delighted that Shri Mithun Chakraborty Ji has been conferred the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award, recognizing his unparalleled contributions to Indian cinema. He is a cultural icon, admired across generations for his versatile performances. Congratulations and best wishes to him," PM said in a post on X.

Vaishnav said Chakraborty's remarkable cinematic journey "inspires generations". "Honoured to announce that the Dadasaheb Phalke Selection Jury has decided to award legendary actor, Sh. Mithun Chakraborty Ji for his iconic contribution to Indian Cinema," the minister said in the post. Chakraborty, 74, said when he got the news, his life kept replaying in his mind, including the initial struggle for food and shelter.

"I am short of words. It is an occasion which reminded me of the past. I went to Mumbai from Kolkata. In Mumbai, I did not have food and would sometimes sleep in the garden..."

Continued on Page 2

MP inaugurates 'Vessel Communication System'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a major boost to maritime safety, Visakhapatnam MP, M Sribharat, inaugurated the Vessel Communication System (VCS) at the Visakhapatnam Fishing Harbour. The project, undertaken by NSIL (New Space India Limited) under the Central Government's initiative, aims to provide fishermen with essential communication and navigation tools.

Speaking at the inauguration, Sribharat highlighted the significance of the VCS in ensuring the safety of fishermen. "The VCS will serve as a reliable communication platform, enabling two-way contact even across vast ocean distances," he said. "This is a crucial step in safeguarding our fishermen and empowering them to navigate the seas with greater confidence."

Technical experts briefed the MP on the system's advanced features, including an SOS button for emergencies, geo-fencing capabilities, regular weather updates, and information on potential fishing



zones (PFZ). The device is designed with a user-friendly interface to cater to the needs of fishermen.

Sribharat emphasized the importance of the geo-fencing and emergency SOS features in preventing accidents and facilitating rapid rescue efforts. "This technology has the

potential to save lives by providing critical information and assistance in real-time," he added.

Local fishermen expressed their gratitude for the new system. "This VCS will be a game-changer for us," said Ramesh, a veteran fisherman. "In the past, we faced challenges in

communicating with the shore or seeking help during emergencies. Now, we feel more secure and confident." The installation of the VCS is expected to revolutionize communication for those working in the fishing industry and contribute significantly to their safety.

Contract workers stage dharna

PNS ■ KAKINADA

A large number of contract employees, non-permanent workers, and industrial workers, in pursuance of the countrywide call by the CITU, have staged dharna in front of the Collectorate here on Monday in support of their demand for regularisation of their services.

They also raised slogans demanding payment of Rs. 26,000 as the minimum wage and also equal wage for equal work as directed by the Supreme Court. They further demanded immediate withdrawal of the implementation of four labor codes that are detrimental to workers' rights.

CITU district president Duvva Seshu Babji, 104 categories employees sangham state general secretary Challa Rambabu, Urban health centres employees sangham leader Geddada Satyanarayana, Second ANM sangham district president Suryakumari, and Panchayat workers and employees union district convener Mediseti Venkataramana addressed the demonstrators.

CM invited to Dasara festival at Durga temple



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Endowments Anam Ramanarayana Reddy, Principal Secretary and Commissioner S Satyanarayana, and Kanaka Durga Temple Executive Officer (EO) K S Rama Rao formally invited Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu to participate in the upcoming Dasara Sarannavaratri festi-

ties, scheduled from October 3 to 12 at the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri, Vijayawada.

Led by Minister Reddy, the temple officials met the Chief Minister at his residence in Undavalli on Monday. They extended an invitation by presenting an invitation card and Laddu Prasadam to Chandrababu Naidu, request-

ing him to attend the Dasara celebrations along with his family for the 'Durga Devi' darshan.

In this regard, Vedic scholars from the temple offered blessings to the Chief Minister. Minister Ramanarayana Reddy, Principal Secretary Satyanarayana, and EO Rama Rao also gifted a portrait and Laddu Prasadam to Naidu. Additionally, they invited Minister for Human Resources and IT, Nara Lokesh, to attend the Dasara Sarannavaratri festivities atop Indrakeeladri, which will take place from October 3 to 12.

Endowments Minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy, Principal Secretary Satyanarayana, Durga Temple EO Rama Rao, and Vedic scholars inviting Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu to attend the Dasara festivities atop Indrakeeladri at his residence in Undavalli on Monday.

YSRCP NTR district meeting to be conducted after Dasara festivities

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The YSRCP NTR District President, Devineni Avinash, has announced that after the Dasara Festivities, he will organize a district meeting to strengthen the party. He plans to seek suggestions and support from senior leaders to advance the party in the district. He has assured that his party would support the people who faced difficulties during the 100-day rule of the TDP-led NDA government.

The YSRCP NTR district meeting chaired by its president Devineni Avinash held at the Kay Hotel at Ramavarappadu Ring in Vijayawada on Monday. MLCs Talasila Raghuram, Monditoka Arun Kumar, Md Ruhullah, Vijayawada Mayor Rayana Bhagya Lakshmi, former minister Velampati Srinivas, ex-MLAs Malladi Vishnu, Dr M Jagannadh Rao, Krishna - Guntur Graduate MLC Constituency candidate P Gowtham Reddy and others graced the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, Devineni Avinash said that he would strive to strengthen the party in the district. He commented that the NDA is not a good government and that it drowns people. He has come down severely against the government for lathi charges on the flood victims. He assured that his party would support the people in the coming days.

Former Minister V Srinivasa Rao said that they would advance the party under the leadership of Devineni Avinash. His party would fight against the government for cheating the flood victims for neglecting those people by not supporting them, he said. During the YSRCP government, all schemes and benefits would have been implemented from time to time, he reminded. Later, he flayed against the TDP government for not implementing its promises made before the elections even after the 100-day rule was completed.

Ayyanna honoured with Lifetime Award



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh State MSME Minister Kondapalli Srinivas' visit to the US continues successfully. After participating in several programmes in Washington DC, he arrived in Dallas, where he was warmly welcomed by the local Andhra Pradesh NRI (Pravasandhras - representatives of Telugu communities).

As part of the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the Greater Washington Telugu Cultural Association, Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly

Speaker Ch. Ayyanna Patrudu and Minister Kondapalli Srinivas attended as chief guests. During the event, Speaker Ayyanna Patrudu and his wife Padmavati were honoured, with Ayyanna Patrudu receiving the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Kondapalli Srinivas lauded Ayyanna Patrudu's significant contribution to the development of Uttaraandhra, highlighting his pivotal role over the past four decades. He remarked that Ayyanna Patrudu entered politics at a young age and quickly

rose to the position of minister, leaving an indelible mark on the people of the region.

His leadership in key departments and dedication to development were commended by the minister.

Minister Srinivas, along with MLA Dhulipalla Narendra Kumar, who also visited Dallas after their Washington DC engagements, received a grand welcome at Dallas airport by leaders of Telugu communities and NRI TDP members, led by Komati Jayaram, who personally ensured the success of their trip.

CII AP thanks Minister Lokesh for establishing joint consultative forum

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Andhra Pradesh chapter has expressed gratitude to Minister Nara Lokesh for issuing a Government Order (GO) establishing the 'Joint Consultative Forum' between the Government of Andhra Pradesh (GoAP) and CII.

The forum aims to enhance the 'Ease of Doing Business' in the state by fostering collaboration and dialogue among key stakeholders.

The Joint Consultative Forum is a crucial initiative designed to improve communication, address issues, and develop strategies to promote

mutual understanding between the government and industry leaders. This move is expected to facilitate economic growth and development in Andhra Pradesh.

"The partnership with CII will help diversify our industrial base by promoting sectors like renewable energy, IT hardware, biotechnology, and high-precision manufacturing," said Minister Nara Lokesh. "I had mentioned at the special plenary session of the 4th CII Southern Regional Council meeting that our state must rank among the top three industrialised states.

This GO is the first step towards realising the vision of

'Swarna Andhra Pradesh by 2047.'

Dr V Murali Krishna, Chairman of CII Andhra Pradesh, lauded the state government's proactive approach, stating that the forum would enable more inclusive decision-making, ensuring all stakeholders' voices are heard. G Murali Krishna, Vice Chairman, echoed the sentiment, emphasising the importance of collaboration in driving sustainable growth.

CII looks forward to participating actively in the forum, with hopes of strengthening the relationship between the government and the industrial community.

Good response to Ayushman Pakwada rally by NTR Vaidya Seva Trust

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Lakshmi Shah, CEO, NTR Vaidya Seva Trust, expressed pride in organizing the Ayushman Bharat rally, stating it allows them to provide free medical care to the poor and deserving, while renewing their commitment to these services.

Marking six years of the Pradhan Mantri Jana Arogya Yojana, the rally was conducted under the directives of the Union Health Department. A human chain was formed at Mangalagiri Chenetha Circle, followed by a workshop on the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, focusing on raising awareness about digitizing patient records and reports.

'CONG WILL BRING ABOUT CHANGE'

Rahul flays BJP's 'pro-industrialist' policies

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of working for industrialists, as he targeted the BJP-led government at the Centre over issues like farmers' welfare, Agnipath scheme and unemployment.

Addressing a rally in Naraingarh in Ambala district ahead of the October 5 Assembly polls in Haryana, he said the fight was between the ideologies of the Congress and the BJP. He asserted that the Congress would form a government in Haryana and bring about change.

"On the one hand there is justice (Congress) and on the other (BJP) there is injustice



(BJP), he said. He claimed that money keeps flowing into the account of industrialist Gautam Adami "like a tsunami" while the common man

struggles. Rahul Gandhi was joined by his sister and party leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and senior leader K C Venugopal at

the rally. Former chief minister Bhopinder Singh Hooda and his bete noire and Sirsa MP Kumari Selja were also present at the rally as the Congress sought to present a united face amid sharp attack from rival parties, including the BJP, over reports of infighting in its Haryana unit.

As the rally concluded, Rahul Gandhi ensured that all leaders on the stage, including Selja and Hooda, raised their hands together in a show of unity. Addressing the rally, Priyanka Gandhi targeted the BJP government in Haryana, saying those who talk about "changing" the Constitution and "insult" the people of the state must be ousted from power.

TDP defends...

Continued from Page 1

When asked about the possibility of a Central agency investigating the matter, he replied, "We don't have any problem. We have constituted a Special Investigation Team, and they are doing their job. If the Supreme Court decides that Central government agencies should also be involved, we welcome that. We have no issues whatsoever."

Kommareddy emphasised the need for those responsible to be punished, adding, "As the government of Andhra Pradesh, we welcome any decision by the Supreme Court to involve Central Government agencies in the investigation."

The Supreme Court remarked that divine matters should remain separate from politics, questioning CM Naidu's public assertion that animal fat was allegedly used in making Tirupati laddus during the tenure of the previous YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led government.

Skill Census pilot...

Continued from Page 1

A specially developed mobile application will be used for the data collection, and enumerators have already been trained. Technical teams are on standby to assist the field teams, and the mapping of enumerators to families has been finalised.

Staff from Village Secretariats, the Skill Development Department, SEEDAP, and NAC Departments are participating in the Skill Census programme. Continuous monitoring is being conducted from the Skill Development Headquarters, and any issues identified during the pilot will be addressed before rolling out the project across the state. The main objective of the Skill Census is to identify the skills present among the youth and provide them with the necessary training to enhance job opportunities. It may be recalled that the state government had promised to create 20 lakh jobs within five years, and the Skill Census project is a key step in fulfilling that commitment. The project aims to identify skilled but unemployed youth across Andhra Pradesh and equip them with the necessary skills for employment.

This initiative is one of five key promises made by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu upon assuming office, aimed at boosting employment in the state.

'Keep Gods out...

Continued from Page 1

"You had ordered an investigation to SIT and till the outcome of such an investigation, what was the necessity to go to the press?" the bench observed, adding, "At least, we expect the Gods to be kept away from politics."

The bench observed that the report was received in July and the chief minister made a statement on September 18. "Whether that Ghee, of which the sample was not found confirming to the standards, was used in the preparation of laddus?" the bench asked. It asked the necessity to go to the press when the state had ordered an investigation.

"You know, it has not affected the sentiments of one lakh or two lakh persons, but crores and crores," the bench said. "Where is the proof that this was the Ghee which was used in preparation of the laddus?" it said, while asking whether any second opinion was taken on the issue.

Mehta said this was a "matter of faith" and if adulterated ghee was used, it was "completely unacceptable". He said someone will have to go into the question whether adulterated ghee was used, who was responsible and whether it was negligence or deliberate.

When the bench asked Luthra about reported statement of TTD's executive officer, the senior counsel said the petitioners have relied on newspaper reports.

"Take proper instructions and make the stand because what you are saying has grave implications..." the bench said. Naidu claimed earlier this month that animal fat was used in preparing Tirupati laddus during the previous Reddy-led government in the state, triggering a massive political row.

The YSR Congress Party has accused Naidu of indulging in "heinous allegations" for political gains and the ruling Telugu Desam Party in the state circulating a laboratory report to back its claim.

Enhance school...

Continued from Page 1

The minister instructed officials to ensure the immediate provision of teaching and learning materials to schools.

Referring to the 'Vidya Kanuka' scheme, he called for a uniform pattern for boys and girls' attire and made it clear that no political influences should be reflected in the textbooks provided to students.

He expressed concern over the attendance rate, which stands at only 70%, despite the substantial investments made in government school facilities, and called for measures to boost attendance. The quality of bags, shoes, and dictionaries distributed to students was also discussed.

School Education Secretary Kona Sasidhar, Director Vijayaramaraju, Intermediate Education Director Kritika Shukla, Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan State Project Director B Srinivasa Rao, and other officials participated in the meeting.

Dadasaheb...

Continued from Page 1

This kept replaying. After all this, you get this huge honour. I have no words. I can only say I dedicate this award to my family and to fans all over the world.

"You know my life has never been smooth, I did not get anything on platter, I had to fight for everything, but when the result comes like this, you forget all the pain, God has been kind," the actor told reporters in Kolkata. Chakraborty also praised PM Modi.

"I have great respect for PM Modi, he is a fantastic man. I know him, he is a gem of a person," he added. Union Home Minister Amit Shah also congratulated the veteran actor.

"Mithun Ji's illustrious career spanning several decades has not only enriched our films but has also set standards of excellence in acting. All my best wishes to him," Shah said. The award will be presented to Chakraborty at the 70th National Film Awards ceremony on October 8, 2024, Vaishnav said.

The three-member jury - comprising former Dadasaheb awardee Asha Parekh, actor-politician Khushbu Sundar and filmmaker Vipul Amrutlal Shah -- selected Chakraborty for the prestigious honour.

Filmmaker Vivek Agnihotri, who worked with the actor on films such as "The Tashkent Files" and "The Kashmir Files", also wished him in an X post

Parties gearing up for Krishna-Guntur Graduate MLC polls

TDP likely to announce Alapati Rajendra Prasad's name, YSRCP declares Gowtham Reddy as candidate

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The ruling TDP and the Opposition YSRCP are preparing for the registration process of the Krishna-Guntur Graduate MLC election, in response to a notification issued by the Election Commission of India (ECI). The ECI has invited applications from eligible voters to register their names in the Krishna-Guntur Graduate MLC constituency through Form 18 from October 1 to November 6.

This will be the fourth Krishna-Guntur Graduate MLC Constituency polls after the revival of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council. So far, elections have been conducted for this constituency in 2007, 2013 and 2019.

YSRCP president and former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has announced his party's candidate, P Gowtham Reddy, a prominent advocate in Vijayawada. Also, the party leadership has started its attempts to register voters by distributing Form 18. Meanwhile, TDP is likely to choose former minister Alapati Rajendra Prasad as its



Chigurupati



Boddu Nageswara Rao



KS Lakshmana Rao

candidate. However, his name is yet to be announced as there are many aspirants for the seat.

The two parties have started campaigning in the combined Krishna and Guntur districts. They are particularly requesting the youth and employees to register as voters. Both party leaderships have supplied Form 18 documents to the district, Assembly constituency, mandal and village committees to speed up the voter registration process. After losing the Assembly and Parliament elections, the YSRCP leadership is focusing on the upcoming Graduate MLC elections.

PDF wins twice, TDP once

Krishna-Guntur Graduate MLC constituency is a prestigious segment in the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council. The TDP-supported candidate won from this segment for the first time in 2007 and later in the 2013 and 2019 elections, the Progressive Democratic Front (PDF) supported by CPM and its affiliated unions' candidates were elected.

In the 2007 elections, Chigurupati Vara Prasad, chairman of the Sri Krishna Veni Educational Institutions, supported by TDP, was elected to the AP Legislative Council. Later, in the 2013 elections, sitting MLC Chigurupati Vara Prasad was

defeated by PDF candidate and retired teacher Boddu Nageswara Rao. Similarly, in 2019, Teachers' MLC KS Lakshmana Rao contested as the PDF candidate in place of sitting MLC Boddu Nageswara Rao and won. Earlier, he had been elected twice as the Teachers' MLC.

The Left parties are also focusing on the Krishna-Guntur Graduate MLC constituency, and they are yet to announce the candidate. In the combined Krishna and Guntur districts, Left-backed teachers' unions are very strong and after these unions meet, a PDF candidate will be announced, said teachers' union leaders.

Free sand to be available from October 15

Minister Ravindra says the sand issue will be resolved soon

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Mines & Geology and Excise Kollu Ravindra has announced that all sand reaches in the State will be fully opened to supply sand to the public on October 15. He added that the State government will try to start excavating the sand at Botsmen Societies and patta lands. Free sand will be supplied for all from October 15 onwards, he said.

While talking to the press reporters in Machilipatnam on Monday, Minister Ravindra said that the sand issue will be resolved soon. "The TDP-led NDA government under the leadership of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is fixing all systems which were



destroyed during the previous YSRCP rule. Former CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy saw sand as an income source, however,

CM Naidu has decided to supply sand free of cost," he added. Further, he said following

the guidelines of the National Green Tribunal (NGT), the State government temporarily stalled the excavation of sand in many reaches. So far, the State government supplied sand to the public from the stock points and de-siltation. It will supply sand from the reaches in the State from October 15," he announced.

Meanwhile, he stated that the government will overcome the issue of transportation costs to far-off places. Also, he said by paying a nominal charge, people can transport sand on tractors and bullock carts for their personal requirements. He added that the State government will be not opening all reaches at a time due to various cases during the previous YSRCP government.

GVMC to set up own petrol stations to curb irregularities

Irregularities in fuel usage have been a persistent issue



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a bid to address rampant fuel-related irregularities within the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC), Commissioner P. Sampath Kumar has announced plans to establish GVMC-operated petrol stations. This move comes in response to frequent allegations of corruption in the Mechanical Department, which oversees fuel usage for official and departmental vehicles.

Two potential sites have been identified for the petrol stations. One is located in Gnanapuram, where a private individual had previously set up a station on GVMC-owned land but failed to pay the lease. The other site is in Gajuwaka, also owned by GVMC. Once these stations are operational, all GVMC vehicles will be required to refuel exclusively at these locations

has led to several irregularities. Some officials are even accused of using GVMC fuel for their personal vehicles," a GVMC official disclosed.

Reports indicate that drivers from various departments, including Malaria, Public Health, and Horticulture, have allegedly collaborated with petrol station staff to divert diesel. These issues were also raised during a recent council meeting, prompting the Commissioner to take swift action.

To prevent further misuse, GVMC is planning to equip its proposed petrol stations with high-security cameras that will record vehicle numbers, fuel quantities, and speedometer readings. These details will be logged into a special device, while GPS-tagged data will be sent to a command control centre to ensure transparency.

"By integrating technology into the refueling process, we can put an end to these irregularities. Our goal is to create a foolproof system that ensures accountability," Commissioner Sampath Kumar added.

City MP Sivanath recalls services of Adusumilli

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath has said that the services rendered by Adusumilli Jayaprakash to the city of Vijayawada from 1983-1985 as the first generation member of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) are commendable. Former MLA Adusumilli Jayaprakash 10th day ceremony was held at Seshasai Kalyana Vedika on Monday. MP Kesineni Sivanath along with Gudivada MLA Venigandla Ramu paid floral tributes to the portrait of former MLA Jayaprakash. They met the family members of Adusumilli Jayaprakash and

expressed their deepest condolences and gave them courage.

The MP said that we have lost a leader with values and praised the services of Adusumilli for working on the principles he believed in without backing down.

After the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh, Adusumilli stayed away from active politics and played his own role as an analyst of current politics.

MP Sivanath praised him as a real leader in providing services to the people of Vijayawada beyond politics.

Jayaprakash breathed his last on September 20 due to ill health.

UBI employees contribute to Flood Relief Fund

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The employees of Union Bank of India have generously donated one day's pay, totalling Rs 5,90,01,087, to the Chief Minister's Flood Relief Fund. The contribution was formally presented by MD & CEO A Manimekhalai to Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Monday.

The cheque handover ceremony was attended by S Ramasubramanian, Executive Director, Union Bank of India; CVN Bhaskara Rao, General Manager, Union Bank of India and convener, SLBC Andhra Pradesh, and the Employees of Union Bank of India.



Lulu Mall project in Vizag gains momentum

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The construction of Lulu Mall in Visakhapatnam, which has faced multiple delays, is gaining momentum following a recent meeting between Lulu Group Chairman MA Yusuf Ali and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu. This significant development has raised hopes for the project, which is expected to create around 15,000 jobs.

In 2018, the Lulu Group signed an agreement with the TDP government to develop a large mall on 13.83 acres of Beach Road property. The project involved a Rs 2,200 crore investment for a mall, convention centre, and other commercial spaces, with an estimated job creation of 10,000 positions. Of the land, 11.23 acres belonged



In 2018, the Lulu Group signed an agreement with the TDP government to develop a large mall on 13.83 acres of Beach Road property. The project involved a Rs 2,200 crore investment for a mall, convention centre, and other commercial spaces, with an estimated job creation of 10,000 positions. Of the land, 11.23 acres belonged to APIIC, while 2.60 acres were secured from the CMR Group's Vishwapriya Function Hall

to APIIC, while 2.60 acres were secured from the CMR Group's Vishwapriya Function Hall.

The project initially progressed well under Chandrababu Naidu's leadership. However, it was halted in 2019 when the YSR

Congress Party (YCP) came to power, led by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. The YCP government cancelled Lulu Group's contract, citing irregularities in the land allocation.

Consequently, the Lulu Group shifted its focus to

other States, such as Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Kerala, where they developed large malls, leaving the Visakhapatnam project stagnant.

The YSRCP government attempted to attract investors by proposing the develop-

ment of a shopping and residential complex on the site, but the plan did not generate sufficient interest. In 2022, the land was put up for sale, but even that failed to attract buyers due to inconsistent government policies and reluctance of investors.

Now, with Chandrababu back in power, optimism surrounding the Lulu Mall project has been reignited. Reports suggest that Yusuf Ali is eager to revisit the original agreement. A renewed contract could lead to an even larger investment. The proposed mall is expected to feature a convention centre with a seating capacity of 5,000, eight multiplex theatres, a hypermarket, an amusement park, and other modern amenities.

Officials are optimistic that the revival of this project will significantly boost Visakhapatnam's economy by transforming it into a major retail and entertainment hub. Representatives from the Lulu Group are expected to visit the city soon to finalise the terms, bringing the long-awaited mall one step closer to reality.

Collector orders swift action on PMVKY applications

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad has directed officials to scrutinise all applications received under the Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Yojana (PMVKY) by October 10. During a coordination meeting, Prasad emphasised the importance of timely action. "It is crucial that all applications submitted by October 10 are reviewed without any delay, and the verification process must be completed by October 20."

The meeting, attended by senior district officials, focused on the PMVKY, a comprehensive plan for the next 100-day targets for government departments, Swarna Andhra@2047, and Visakha Vision @ 2029.



Prasad expressed dissatisfaction with delays in processing applications. He warned: "Any further negligence in reviewing the applications will not be tolerated. The responsibility lies with the officials to ensure there are no pending applications beyond October 28."

Prasad stressed the need for increased public awareness about the PMVKY, directing

authorities to organise awareness meetings in all constituencies by October 5. "The public must be informed about the scheme, and it's our duty to ensure that applications are processed efficiently," he said. He instructed departments to prepare advance plans for Visakha Vision @ 2029 and Swarnandhra Vision @ 2047, aiming for a 15 per cent economic growth rate each year.

All documents must be submitted to the Chief Planning Officer (CPO) by October 1, followed by a meeting with public representatives and stakeholders between October 3 and 5 to finalise decisions. Key officials, including Joint Collector K. Mayur Ashok and District Revenue Officer K. Mohan Kumar, attended the meeting.

Vellampalli seeks CM's apology over 'Tirumala Prasadam' remarks

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Vellampalli Srinivas Rao has demanded that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu apologise to the devotees of Lord Venkateswara for his remarks regarding Tirumala Prasadam.

Responding to media queries at the YSR Congress Party central office, Vellampalli Srinivas Rao stated that Chandrababu's comments about adulteration in the Tirumala laddu prasadam were criticised by the Supreme Court. He pointed out that even the government lawyer, representing the case in the Supreme Court, clarified that the ghee used was not adulterated, contradicting Chandrababu's allegations.

Vellampalli added that since

the day Chandrababu made these claims, crores of devotees have been distressed. He criticised the Chief Minister for making such irresponsible statements without proper evidence. The Supreme Court also questioned why Chandrababu raised concerns about adulteration without seeking a second opinion, he said.

The Supreme Court further questioned why the issue was kept confidential from July 23 to September 18 and asked why there was a need to form a Special Investigation Team (SIT). Vellampalli expressed confidence that the truth behind the matter would soon come to light and advocated for a judicial inquiry by a Supreme Court judge, which he believed would reveal the complete truth.

Malladi dares BJP to speak on SC remarks on 'Tirupati Laddu' issue

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP Central Constituency Coordinator and former MLA Malladi Vishnu stated that the Supreme Court's remarks regarding the adulteration of Tirumala Prasadam are a slap in the face of the coalition government. He emphasised that the Apex Court has seriously considered Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's damaging comments about the preparation of laddus and the inappropriate politicisation of religious sentiments.

Vishnu noted that the Supreme Court has questioned the existence of evidence regarding the use of adulterated ghee. He further remarked that a person in a responsible constitutional



position should exercise caution before making statements that could hurt religious sentiments.

Malladi Vishnu asked why the Chief Minister remained silent from July, when the report surfaced, until September. He stated that once the ghee is rejected, the question of using it for prepar-

ing prasadam does not arise. He urged Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan to respond to the questions posed by the Supreme Court.

Recalling that the YSRCP's concerns about 'TTD Laddu' have proven to be valid, Vishnu challenged BJP leaders, who had shown undue enthusiasm without verifying the facts, to speak up now. He demanded that the Chief Minister offer an unconditional apology for confusing crores of devotees over the past ten days. Furthermore, he called for the immediate resignation of both Chandrababu and Pawan Kalyan for spreading misinformation and tarnishing the reputation of Lord Venkateswara.

Indian philosophy is the only solution to global problems: Venkaiah Naidu

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Former Vice-President of India, M Venkaiah Naidu, has stated that Indian philosophy offers solutions to many of the global challenges faced today.

Speaking as the chief guest at a seminar organised to commemorate the birth centenary of renowned Indian philosopher Acharya Kotha Satchidananda Murthy, Naidu stressed the importance of Indian thought in addressing modern issues. The event, held on Monday at the Professor Satchidananda Murthy Centre for Studies in Afro-Asian Philosophy at Nagarjuna University, also saw the unveiling of a statue of Acharya Murthy by Naidu, who paid floral tributes to the philosopher.

In his address, Naidu emphasised the need to integrate philosophy into the education system from an early stage. He remarked, "Philosophy, as a distinct discipline in modern education, has significantly contributed to



human and societal development. However, incorporating it systematically into the curriculum from childhood will be highly beneficial for our nation in the long run."

Highlighting the uniqueness of Indian thought, Naidu said, "We must reconnect with our roots if we are to thrive as a diverse society, and the world should follow suit. Our education system needs reform, and the new education policy is

working in this direction." He noted that the Indian subcontinent has long been at the forefront of vitality and life consciousness. Naidu further pointed out the rich diversity of secular and

non-secular schools of thought in India, encompassing science, logic, and spirituality. "No other country has such a comprehensive system," he said, acknowledging the sacrifices made by many great personalities in spreading the light of philosophy in this land.

He paid tribute to philosophers like Jiddu Krishnamurti and Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, noting that Acharya Kotha Satchidananda Murthy followed in their footsteps by making Indian philosophy universal. "Their passion for acquiring and sharing knowledge is an inspiration for today's generation," Naidu remarked.

Other speakers at the event included K.S. Chalam, former UPSC member, Prof. Kotha Ramesh, Prof. Ashok Vohra from the University of Delhi, and MLA Mandali Buddha Prasad. MLA Kamineni Srinivasa Rao and Nagarjuna University Vice-Chancellor, Prof. K. Gangadhar Rao, were also present.



NTR Trust committed to serving people: Bhuvaneshwari

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

NTR Memorial Trust Managing Trustee Nara Bhuvaneshwari reaffirmed on Monday that the trust remains dedicated to serving the public and expressed gratitude to the people of Rajahmundry for their overwhelming support during Chandrababu Naidu's time in prison.

Nara Bhuvaneshwari, wife of former Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, inaugurated the NTR Memorial Blood Bank at Prakasam Nagar, in the presence of MLA Gorantla Butchaiah Chowdary. The blood bank, established in collaboration with GSR Memorial Foundation, is the fourth of its kind, following similar centres in Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam, and Tirupati.

Addressing the media, Bhuvaneshwari stated that the trust has collected 4.08 lakh units of blood from donors, providing it free of cost to those in need. She also highlighted the trust's other initiatives, including a junior college

Nara Bhuvaneshwari, wife of former Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, inaugurated the NTR Memorial Blood Bank at Prakasam Nagar, in the presence of MLA Gorantla Butchaiah Chowdary. The blood bank, established in collaboration with GSR Memorial Foundation, is the fourth of its kind, following similar centres in Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam, and Tirupati

in Gandipeta and scholarships worth ₹2 crore for meritorious students.

She acknowledged the support of volunteers, blood donors, and others who have contributed to the trust since its inception 27 years ago. She further outlined the healthcare services offered under the 'Sanjivani' programme, which includes mobile clinics operating in places like Kuppam and Saluru.

Bhuvaneshwari noted that the trust has organised 13,542 health camps, benefiting over 20 lakh people, and provided medicines worth ₹21.60 crore

free of cost. The trust also extended assistance to victims of the Godavari floods. She assured that many more services would be introduced in the future. During the event, she flagged off an NTR Memorial Trust blood bank ambulance.

MLA Gorantla Butchaiah Chowdary praised the widespread impact of the NTR Memorial Trust across the state. NTR Memorial Trust CEO Rajendra Kumar, GSR Memorial Foundation Managing Trustee Venkata Lakshmi, and Dr. Gorantla Raviram Kiran were also present at the event.

Tourism Minister underlines need for protection of environment

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Minister for Tourism and Cinematography Kandula Durgesh emphasised the need of protecting the environment and claimed that organising of 'Swachh Hi Seva' programme was a grand success in the state.

The Minister, flanked by Collector P Prashanthi and Municipal Commissioner Ketan Garg, participated in the Swachh Hi Seva programme organized on the campus of Arts College. A huge human chain with over 21000 students was formed on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the Tourism Minister said that



Swachh Hi Seva programmes were organized in 13,326 village panchayats and also in all cities and towns successfully.

He called upon people to maintain cleanliness to protect

the environment. Keep clean not only your house but also the surroundings, he told the people. Collector P Prashanthi, Municipal Commissioner Ketan Garg also spoke.

All set for pension disbursal to 2.64L people in Eluru dist today

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector K Vetri Selvi stated that all arrangements have been made to disburse social security pensions to 2,64,966 beneficiaries on Tuesday.

The Collector revealed that ₹113.24 crore would be distributed to the beneficiaries under the social security pension scheme on 1st October. She held a meeting with officials on Monday to review the arrangements.

The disbursement of pensions will begin at 6 a.m. on 1st October. As many as 5,174 village and ward secretariat staff will participate in the process, personally handing over the pensions to the beneficiaries at



their homes.

All efforts have been made to ensure 100% disbursement on 1st October itself, the Collector emphasised. "Beneficiaries who are unable to receive their pensions on 1st October can collect them on 3rd October, as 2nd October is a public holiday for Gandhi Jayanthi," she added.

Minister hands over ex gratia to kin of lightning victims



PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

Minister for BC Welfare S Savitha handed over the ex gratia payment to the kin of the lightning victims on Monday.

The Minister went to Diguva Gangampalli Thana in Gorantla mandal in Sri Satya Sai district and visited the kin of the couple Dadharath Naik and his wife who were killed when lightning struck on them when they were in a cattle shed three days ago. She paid tributes to the deceased couple.

The Government announced Rs 4 lakh ex-gratia each to the deceased couple and Rs 37,500 to each perished cow. The Minister handed over Rs 8 lakh ex gratia for the death of the couple and Rs 75,000 ex gratia for the death of two cows in the lightning incident. The Minister handed over the ex-grati cheque to Jagadish Naik, the son of the deceased couple. RDO Bhagyarekha, Animal Husbandry JD Subhadhas and Tribal welfare officer Mohan Rao were among those who accompanied the Minister.

Durga Temple earns Rs 2.05 cr

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada has earned Rs.2,05,75,873 hundi income for 18 days. The average income per day is Rs.11.43 lakh. The temple authorities conducted hundi counting at Sri Mallikarjuna Maha mandapam on Monday. Temple Deputy Executive Officer (DyEO) Ratna Raju and other officials supervised the hundi counting.

In addition to the 266 grams of gold ornaments and 5.562 kg of silver jewelry, devotees also offered the following currencies to the goddess Sri Kanaka Durga: 568 USA Dollars, 5 Canadian dollars, 185 UAE Dirhams, 31 Omani Riyals, 2,500 Nigerian Nairas, 35 Malaysian Ringgits, 20 British Pounds, 1 Kuwaiti Dinar, 5 Saudi Riyals, 110 Singapore dollars, 10 British Pounds, 23 Malaysian Ringgits, 10 Scottish Pounds, 50 Australian Dollars, and 118 Qatari Riyals. Besides, devotees contributed Rs 75,396 through e-hundi.

DEIC set up at Paderu Govt Sarvajana Hospital

To provide comprehensive care for children under 18 suffering from various health conditions

PNS ■ PADERU

In a crucial step towards ensuring the complete well-being of children in rural areas, the Central and State governments have established the District Early Intervention Centre (DEIC) at Paderu Government Sarvajana Hospital under the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK), part of the National Health Mission. The DEIC provides comprehensive care for children under 18 suffering from various health conditions, including birth defects, diseases, deformities, and developmental delays. These conditions, commonly referred to as the 'four D's' in paediatric care, are being addressed through early detection and timely intervention.

Dr. C Jamal Basha, District Medical and Health Officer, emphasised the importance of this initiative, stating, "Our aim is to identify health issues early on and ensure timely intervention. We are committed to providing specialised care to children who may otherwise not have access to it."



Healthcare workers from all primary health centres in the district are actively involved in the programme, conducting door-to-door visits to screen children for genetic disorders, neural tube defects, Down syndrome, cognitive impairments, clubfoot, heart disease, hearing loss, vision problems, dental issues, autism, mental disabilities, and other concerns.

"These door-to-door visits are crucial for detecting issues that might go unnoticed," said an RBSK programme officer. "Once identified, children are referred to the DEIC at Paderu, where expert medical professionals provide necessary treatments."

The DEIC is staffed by a multidisciplinary team, including a paediatrician, medical officer, paediatric dentist, physiotherapist, clinical psychologist, audi-



ologist and speech therapist, optometrist, staff nurse, lab technician, early intervention specialist, special educator, social worker, and manager. This ensures that children receive comprehensive care for a wide range of medical conditions.

While the position of paediatric specialist at Sarvajana Hospital is currently vacant, officials confirmed it will be filled soon. "We are actively working to fill the paediatric

specialist position to further strengthen our capacity to provide specialised care," said a DEIC spokesperson. Every six months, healthcare staff conduct follow-up visits to reassess children and identify any new cases. "Our goal is to make sure no child falls through the cracks," added Dr. Basha. "With the continuous support of the Central and State governments, we are hopeful of achieving that."

VRA murdered

PNS ■ KADAPA

In a shocking incident, miscreants killed Village Revenue Assistant (VRA) by exploding gelatin sticks in his house when he was asleep at Kottapalli in Vemuru mandal in Pulivendula constituency in the wee hours of Sunday.

Police said that the deceased VRO Narasimha and his wife Subba Lakshmi were asleep in their house. Miscreants placed gelatin sticks under the cot and connected them to a battery and exploded it. VRA Narasimha

was killed instantly while his wife Subba Lakshmi was critically injured.

It is learnt that the police held one person Babu in connection with the incident. Sources said that the VRA had stolen some gelatin sticks from the stock point, owned by a YSRCP leader.

The injured Subba Lakshmi was admitted to the RIMS hospital.

The police visited the house and registered a case. The motive for the murder using gelatin sticks is yet to be ascertained, police said.



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Konda Surekha, the Minister for Forests, Environment and Endowments in the Congress government cried like a child while addressing the media on Monday at the Gandhi Bhavan due to abusive trolling by BRS activists.

Surekha said that she went to Medak district as the in-charge Minister. The BJP's Medak MP, M. Raghunandan Rao, explained the problems of handloom workers and offered a handloom garland respectfully on her neck.

She said that she examined the handloom garland when Raghunandan offered it and found that it is a respectable yarn for weavers.

Surekha warned BRS chief K. Chandrasekhar Rao and Working President KT Rama Rao and asked them to show the trolls to his sister and mother. She made it clear that she would not remain silent if trolling continued.

She said that leaders from all parties call her 'Akka' and her husband 'Bava', she said and

Minister Konda Surekha cries citing trolls by BRS activists



added that people would revolt against BRS activists.

Surekha said that BRS leaders won with the votes of handloom workers and humiliated the child of Padmashali. Do you create trouble in families, she asked.

KCR did not give a minister post to women thinking that he would have to give her (Konda Surekha) a minister post. After coming to power a second time, there were huge changes in the BRS. BRS leaders were behaving

madly because of money, she said.

Konda Surekha turned emotional many times at the press conference and shed tears several times while speaking.

She said, "I am unable to eat or sleep. Some people are trolling me. They are harassing me mentally. The families of Padmasalis are suffering a lot. If someone goes to the BRS office to support me they are assaulted. They have lost power and are running crazy campaigns. They are

trolling beyond words."

"Aren't you sad about your sister who went to jail recently? They are making others troll on social media by giving them money. What if KTR and Harish trolled the women of their families? I am asking KCR's wife to see the trolls of BRS leaders. We will definitely chase KCR away if he fails to apologise," she said.

Meanwhile, BRS MLA T. Harish Rao emphasized that respecting women is everyone's responsibility and that disrespectful behaviour towards women will not be tolerated.

"Neither the BRS nor I, personally, will overlook such actions," he said. Expressing concern over the distress caused to Konda Surekha, Harish added, "I regret the inconvenience caused to you."

Volunteers stage dharna demanding wage arrears

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Several volunteers staged a dharna in front of the Collectorate here on Monday demanding payment of four months pending wage arrears and also the continuation of their services as promised by the Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu during electioneering.

AP village and ward volunteers union leaders D. Ramesh, N. Nagalakshmi, Santhoshini and Varun Kumar while addressing the volunteers alleged that after coming to power Chandrababu Naidu had conveniently forgotten his

promise and even after four months no clarity was given on their fate.

They demanded action against those who forcibly took resignations from the volunteers and also reinstated all those once again as volunteers. Later they called on the Joint Collector Meena in a delegation comprising CITU district Treasurer Malaka Ramana, Working Committee member Mediseti Venkataramana, volunteers Santhoshini, N Nagalakshmi, B Kumary, K Durgadevi and Varalakshmi.

They also submitted a memorandum listing their demands.

ACROSS THE STATES



AFSPA extended in Manipur for six more months

The government on Monday extended the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) by another six months in Manipur excluding 19 police station areas falling under the Imphal valley and a region that shares its boundary with Assam. In a notification, the state government's Home Department said the extension will come into effect from October 1. "The state government is of the opinion after analysing the prevailing law and order situation in the state that it is not expedient to have a detailed assessment on the ground as security agencies are preoccupied with maintenance of law and order," the notification said. The issue of declaration of Disturbed Area status is very sensitive and may likely attract public criticism and resistance if proper care is not taken, it said. "The governor of Manipur hereby accords approval to declare the entire state of Manipur excluding the areas falling under the jurisdiction of 19 police stations... as Disturbed Area for a period of six months with effect from 1st October" the notification signed by Commissioner (Home) N Ashok Kumar read.

Denial of speedy and timely justice can be disastrous: SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Denial of speedy and timely justice can be "disastrous" to the rule of law in the long term, the Supreme Court said on Monday, stressing courts should nip in the bud any attempt to delay proceedings without any valid justification. The apex court observed that the administration of justice feeds on the faith of the citizenry and nothing should be done to even remotely shake that faith and confidence. A bench of Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan said the victim, the accused and the society at large have a legitimate expectation that justice will be available to the parties within a reasonable time.

"It is beyond cavil that speedy and timely justice is an important facet of rule of law. Denial of speedy and timely justice can be disastrous to rule of law in the long term," the bench said. "Even if the parties involved in a case themselves, with no



valid justification attempt to delay the proceedings, the courts need to be vigilant and nip any such attempt in the bud instantly," the top court said. It set aside an April 2021 order of the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court which had ordered further investiga-

"We are constrained to observe this because of late we notice that pleadings/petitions with outrageous and ex facie unbelievable averments are made with no inhibition whatsoever. This is especially so in some family law proceedings, both civil and criminal," it said.

It said that reading some of the averments made "we are left to wonder whether at all the deponents were conscious of what has been written purportedly on their behalf, before appending their signatures".

The bench said these "misadventures" directly impinge on the rule of law, because they add to the pendency and the consequential delay in the disposal of other cases which are crying for justice.

"It is time that such frivolous and vexatious proceedings are met with due sanctions in the form of exemplary costs to dissuade parties from resorting to such tactics," the bench said.

Union minister dares Cong to restore Article 370 in J&K

PNS ■ JAMMU

Accusing the Congress of speaking in different voices on Article 370, Union minister Jitendra Singh on Monday dared the opposition party to declare that they will restore it in Jammu and Kashmir if they return to power.

Singh, minister of state in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), also hit out at the Congress for raising the issue of restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir in the election campaign, contending that it has already been promised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah at public meetings and in Parliament.

Singh claimed that the Congress leaders spoke in favour of removal of Article 370 in the Jammu region and took an exactly opposite stand in the Kashmir valley.

"I dare the Congress to declare that they will restore Article 370 if elected to power. The Congress may please its alliance partner National Conference in this manner, but will antagonise voters

across the country," the three-term BJP Lok Sabha member from Udhampur told PTI Videos in an interview here.

In 2019, the Centre scrapped the special status granted to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir through Article 370 and 35A. It also bifurcated the state into two Union territories - Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

On the issue of restoration of statehood, Singh said the prime minister, in his public meetings, has made the promise and the Union Home Minister has also given an assurance in Parliament on the issue.

"The opposition is trying to be over smart. They know very well that the Centre will restore statehood and are hence raising the issue every now and then," the Union minister said.

Singh said the people of Jammu and Kashmir were eager to bring the BJP back to power as they have experienced equitable development under Prime Minister Modi's leadership.



US Mission opens 2.5 lakh addl visa slots for Indians

The US Mission in India has opened an additional 250,000 visa appointments for Indian travellers, including tourists, skilled workers and students, officials said on Monday. "The recently released new slots will help Indian applicants take timely interviews, facilitating the travel which is the backbone of the people-to-people ties that underpin the US-India relationship, they said. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Joe Biden set an ambitious goal to improve and expedite the visa process and I am proud to say that we have delivered on that promise. Our consular teams at the embassy and four consulates work tirelessly to ensure that we meet the surging demand," said US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti. More than 1.2 million Indians have travelled to the United States in 2024, a 35 per cent increase over the same period in 2023.

'Absolutely distasteful, disgraceful' BJP slams Kharge for remarks about Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday slammed Mallikarjun Kharge, terming his remarks about Prime Minister Narendra Modi "absolutely distasteful and disgraceful".

It also said Modi became the prime minister for a third consecutive term with the people's mandate and not because of the Congress president's grace.

Addressing a poll rally in Kathua district of Jammu on Sunday, Kharge had said he will not die until Prime Minister Modi is removed from power and had asserted that the Congress will fight for the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir.

Reacting to his remarks, Shah said in a post on X, "Yesterday, the Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge Ji has outperformed himself, his leaders and his party in being absolutely distasteful and dis-



graceful in his speech. In a bitter display of spite, he unnecessarily dragged PM Modi into his personal health matters by saying that he would die only after removing PM Modi from power," he said. Shah said Kharge's remarks showed how much "hate and fear" the Congress people have of PM Modi that they are thinking of him "constantly". "As for the health of Kharge Ji, Modi Ji prays, I pray and we all pray that he lives a long, healthy life. May he continue to live for many years and may he live to see the creation of a Viksit Bharat by 2047," he added.

'Focus on serious issues like Manipur, caste census' Congress hits back at Shah

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday hit back at Home Minister Amit Shah over his attack on party chief Mallikarjun Kharge, saying he should focus on serious issues, such as the situation in Manipur and a caste census.

Shah on Monday said Kharge's remarks on Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a poll rally in Jammu and Kashmir were "absolutely distasteful and disgraceful".

In a post in Hindi on X, Kharge said, "Home Minister Amit Shah should focus on serious issues like Manipur, census and caste census."

"Your government's own survey says 92 per cent of the employees cleaning urban sewers and septic tanks come from SC, ST, OBC categories," the Congress chief said.

"The BJP is against a caste census because then it will be

known that through what kind of work SC, ST, OBC, EWS and all other categories are earning their livelihood. What is their economic and social status. What kind of targeted

benefits of government schemes should they get," Kharge said.

He asserted that the Congress is firmly committed to getting a nationwide caste census conducted. "We will get it done," he added.

Kharge tagged the screenshot of a report in "The Hindu", which said in a first-of-its-kind attempt to enumerate people engaged in the hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks in India's cities and towns, government data gathered from more than 3,000 urban local bodies in 29 states and Union territories shows that 91.9 per cent of the 38,000 workers profiled so far belong to Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST) or Other Backward Classes (OBC) communities.



VHP urges govt to repeal Waqf Act

The Himachal Pradesh unit of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) on Monday urged the Modi government to repeal the Waqf Act, claiming it was enacted just to appease Muslim voters. Himachal VHP state secretary Tushar Dogra alleged the Waqf Act enacted and then amended to appease Muslim voters, and to hand over properties of Hindus and the government to Muslims. He was speaking at a webinar organised by NGO Umang Foundation here. The demand comes even as the issue is being discussed at the government level. The government introduced the Waqf (Amendment) Bill in Lok Sabha last month and it was referred to a joint parliamentary panel. In a statement issued here, Dogra said, "In 1995, only 4 lakh acres of land was in possession of Waqf Boards in the country. But now, they have more than 9 lakh acres of land in their possession due to this draconian law." He said the Waqf Act empowers waqf boards to claim any public and private property without showing any documents and onus to prove the ownership goes to the real owner.

Cong will form govts in Haryana and J-K: Jairam Says Oct 8 results will mark 'countdown' to PM Modi's 'exit'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Monday exuded confidence that his party will form governments in Haryana, and Jammu and Kashmir, while claiming that the Assembly elections' verdict on October 8 would mark the "countdown" to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "exit" from the Centre.

He also accused the BJP of injecting "Vitamin-P for polarisation" in the assembly polls campaign for Haryana, and Jammu and Kashmir, and said the people would give it a "thumbs down" as they had done so in the Lok Sabha polls.

"June 4, 2024 (Lok Sabha poll results) was the first signal that the time for the non-biological PM is getting over and I think October 8 will be the second signal, and sometime in November the third signal would come when the elections are held for Maharashtra and Jharkhand," he said.

"As far as Haryana, and J&K are concerned, I think it is very



clear that the Congress is going to get a very clear and decisive mandate in Haryana, and in J&K, where it is in alliance with the National Conference. This is the countdown to the exit of the non-biological PM," Ramesh said.

Asked about the BJP's recent "PoK will be part of Jammu and Kashmir" pitch and Pakistan finding mention in the election campaign, the Congress general secretary said this was nothing new and was part of the BJP's "communal propaganda".

The BJP does not realise that

the words that they use at the time for campaigns in domestic elections have tremendous foreign policy implications, he said.

The things that Union Home Minister Amit Shah has said about the people from Bangladesh, it has become a "big irritant and sore point" in bilateral relations with the neighbouring country, Ramesh alleged.

"So foreign policy is foreign policy on which there is a broad continuity and consensus in India but the BJP has made foreign policy an instrument of domestic political campaign

which is not going to help us in our foreign policy. It is not helping us domestically, it certainly won't help them domestically," Ramesh said.

"I am not surprised that they are trying to inject a highly polarised agenda but that is not just in J&K, they do it state after state. They only know Vitamin P for polarisation. They believe in two Vitamin-Ps -- P for polarisation and P for power," Ramesh said.

But polarisation did not work in 2024 and on June 4 as the people of India gave a "decisive thumbs down" to polarisation, the same thing will happen in Jammu and Kashmir, and Haryana, the Congress leader said.

"They (the BJP) are going to do it in Maharashtra as well and Himanta Biswa Sarma, who is going to be their star campaigner in Jharkhand, has upped the polarisation ante there," he said.

"This is the only oxygen that they (the BJP) have. This is the only campaign they know," Ramesh said.

Naxalism in final phase, will be uprooted: CRPF ADG

PNS ■ BHOPAL

Naxalism is largely confined to two or three districts of Chhattisgarh and left-wing extremism will become history in the next one-and-a-half years, asserted a top officer of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) on Monday.

Amit Kumar, Additional Director General (ADG) of the CRPF, which is among security forces engaged in anti-Maoist operations, noted the Naxal movement is in its last phase.

"The Naxalite movement is passing through its last phase. In the national scenario, except for two or three districts of Chhattisgarh, it is in complete control in all other areas," Kumar told reporters in response to a question.

The ADG was the chief guest at the passing out parade of a new batch of sub-inspectors at CRPF's Recruitment Training Centre at Madhya Pradesh's Neemuch town, around 400km from state capital Bhopal.

He maintained that some other states, which used to be affected by left-wing extremism



Five naxals surrender, two arrested in Chhattisgarh

PNS ■ SUKMA/BIJAPUR

Five Naxalites, including a woman, surrendered before police in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region even as two Maoists were arrested from the forest, an official said. The Naxalites turned themselves in before senior police and CRPF officers citing disappointment over atrocities committed by senior cadres and "inhuman" and "hollow" Naxal ideology in Sukma on Monday afternoon, the police official said.

in the past like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka and Kerala have now become Naxal-free.

Study reveals growing trend of solo ageing among elderly in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi, Sep 30 (PTI) A recent study has shed light on the increasing trend of solo ageing among India's elderly population, one of the key reasons for this shift is the increasing preference for financial and social independence.

Conducted in September to coincide with the International Day of Older Persons on October 1, the study by Agewell Foundation titled 'Study on Solo Aging with Special Focus on the Status of Older People Living

Alone' surveyed 10,000 elderly individuals across rural and urban areas.

According to the study, 14.3 per cent of elderly respondents reported living alone, with a higher prevalence in urban areas (15 per cent) compared to rural regions (13.4 per cent).

Among those living alone, 41.9 per cent—including 46.5 per cent of elderly women—had been living independently for more than five years.

Despite the challenges of solo ageing, 46.9 per cent of these respondents expressed happi-

ness with their lives, while 41.5 per cent admitted dissatisfaction.

One of the key reasons for this shift towards solo ageing is the increasing preference for independence, both financial and social, the study said.

More than 31 per cent of elderly respondents stated that people opt to live alone for independence, while 26.7 per cent pointed to the socio-economic changes such as the migration of younger generations and the rise of nuclear families.

Additionally, 21.5 per cent noted that privacy and person-

al space were critical factors in choosing to age alone.

The study also highlighted the emotional and mental health challenges associated with solo ageing.

Nearly 41 per cent of elderly respondents living alone reported that their mental health had been negatively affected, while approximately 32 per cent felt it had improved. Loneliness remains a pervasive issue, with 10.4 per cent of respondents saying they always feel lonely, and 21.2 per cent admitting to feeling lonely often.

No infighting in BJP; confident of forming govt for third time: Haryana CM Saini

PNS ■ NARNAUL (HARYANA)

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has asserted that there is no infighting in the BJP and his party will form government for a third consecutive time as there are no takers for the Congress' "jhooth ki dukan".

He also attacked Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi ahead of the second leg of the Congress leader's "Haryana Sankalp Yatra", terming it as "political tourism".

"No senior leader from the



Congress was campaigning in Haryana and now Gandhi is venturing on political tourism.

He is welcome to see the development we have done in the state in the last 10 years. However, he will be faced with questions from voters about the 'kharchi' and 'parchi' that was rampant during the tenure of Bhupinder Hooda," Saini told PTI in an interview here.

The former Congress president will launch the second leg of his Haryana poll campaign from Naraingarh in Ambala district on Monday by addressing a public meeting.

On reports of infighting in the BJP with two senior lead-

ers -- Rao Inderjit Singh and Anil Vij -- staking claim for the top post, Saini, who has been fielded as the CM face by the BJP, said the party is united.

"There is no infighting, no factionalism, we are all united. They (Singh and Vij) are our senior leaders and are at the forefront of our election campaign. The BJP is a democratic party, anybody can raise their claim. The Parliamentary board will decide and the decision will be acceptable to all of us...there is no fight, there won't be any fight," Saini said.



www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

Cauldron boiling

West Asia is once again on the precipice of a larger conflict, as tensions between Israel, Hezbollah and Iran reach a boiling point

The situation in the West Asia is becoming critical and it would not be surprising if the region is embroiled in a full-fledged war. The assassination of Hezbollah's long-standing leader, Hassan Nasrallah, marks a significant escalation in the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Lebanese militant group. This development could pull not only Iran but also the United States into a broader and potentially devastating confrontation. Hezbollah, reeling from the assassination of its leader and the destruction of much of its command structure, finds itself at a critical juncture. With over a dozen of its top commanders eliminated and its communications infrastructure crippled, the group faces significant operational challenges. However, expecting Hezbollah to capitulate is unrealistic. The group, which has thousands of fighters and a sizable arsenal of long-range, precision-guided missiles capable of hitting major Israeli cities, has vowed revenge. With pressure mounting from within its ranks, there is a strong likelihood that Hezbollah

will attempt to launch a major offensive against Israel, potentially overwhelming Israeli air defences. If such an attack takes place and results in significant civilian casualties, Israel's response is expected to be swift and devastating, targeting Lebanon's infrastructure or even expanding the conflict to Iranian territory. Such a scenario could ignite a much wider conflict that drags the entire region into chaos.

For Iran, the loss of Nasrallah is as much of a blow as it is for Hezbollah. Iran, which has yet to respond to the assassination of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh, is now facing heightened pressure from hardliners to retaliate. Iran's influence extends across the

region through a network of militias known as the 'Axis of Resistance,' which includes Hezbollah, the Houthis in Yemen, and various groups in Syria and Iraq. While Tehran will likely use these proxies to increase pressure on Israel, its response is expected to be measured to avoid triggering a full-scale war. Israel's intentions are now clearer than ever. The assassination of Nasrallah signals that Israel has no interest in halting its military campaign, despite international calls for a 21-day ceasefire, including one from its closest ally, the United States. Israel believes it has Hezbollah on the defensive and aims to continue its offensive until the group's missile threat is neutralised. A broader war would have catastrophic consequences, not only for the parties directly involved but for the entire region. Lebanon, already on the brink of economic collapse, could be devastated and any escalation could disrupt global oil supplies, sending shockwaves through the international economy. The coming weeks will be crucial in determining whether this conflict spirals into a wider regional war or if diplomatic efforts can halt the violence before it escalates further. As of now, this volatile region stands on the edge of a conflict with no clear resolution in sight. This is high time for the UN to step in and the West to make efforts for rapprochement else this region is going to burn for sure.



The deceptive facade of China's military

Despite technological advancements, setbacks like the Zhou-class submarine sinking, reveal a widening gap between China's military claims and actuality



BHOPIINDER SINGH

Deception is at the heart of Chinese strategy and operations, especially on matters, the military. Ancient Sinological philosophers like Sun Tzu (The Art of War) had propounded extensively on cheating (likening it to a 'magic weapon') as a vital underpinning of deceptive warfare. The Chinese PLA Navy Submarine Academy has formally distilled four examples of deception in war (under the manual, 'Essentials of Sun Tzu and the Art of War and Submarine Operations'). Firstly 'Show yourself to intimidate the enemy', then 'Show the false to confuse the enemy', thirdly 'Create momentum to harass the enemy' and lastly 'Deceive to obstruct the enemy'. Herein, untruth is a natural necessity as per their established treatise. India would be well versed in how the Chinese would talk about the 1962 Indo-China War but remain conspicuously silent on the reversal of fortunes about the 1967 Nathu La and Cho La border clashes. While an estimated 340 Chinese soldiers had died then (88 on the Indian side) - true to their downplaying style, they only accepted a figure of 32 fatalities. The Chinese are similarly circumspect or lying about the essential outcomes of the China-Vietnam War of 1979. This deliberate fudging of facts was to repeat itself in the 2020 India-China skirmishes on the Line of Actual Control (LAC). While India acknowledged the loss of its Bravehearts in the bloody encounters, the Chinese shied away from acknowledging any of their own - this when the US pegged the Chinese fatalities as 20-35, the Russians estimated Chinese loss of about 45, whereas the Australians insisted at least 41 Chinese killed. Almost a year later, the Chinese sheepishly admitted four fatalities killed in the Galwan clashes, as they gave away gallantry awards. True to their practised instincts, the Chinese always overstated their gains and downplayed their losses to deceive the onlookers (especially their citizenry) to retain 'manufactured' optics of infallibility and invincibility, even when the reality was a lot more



unheroic. This sovereign impulse of fake claims, downplaying failures, and overstating their capabilities has been elevated to a fine art, as is the won't of any authoritarian state reeling from regime insecurities.

It routinely manifests in their claims of making advancements in technologies, weaponry and platforms that are ostensibly cutting-edge and even ahead of peers like the United States or Russia. The reality is essentially predicated on reverse-engineering technologies that could be brazenly stolen or surreptitiously acquired - but the claim of 'homegrown' is gleefully posited.

A lot of 'fifth generation' fighters, Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles, Hypersonic technologies to Chinese nuclear submarines remain in public news but are essentially untested or unsubstantiated in live combat. While it has a considerable industrial base and budgetary allocation granted to its Defence Industry, like everything else in the Chinese realm, claims remain more impressive than reality. With this murky backdrop, came the recent news of the sinking of the latest Chinese nuclear submarine. The fact that the Zhou-class of attack submarine sank even before going into service, speaks volumes of the gap between purported tech-



AS IF ON THE REBOUND AND TO STITCH A COUNTER-NARRATIVE, CHINA IS BELIEVED TO HAVE FIRED AN INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILE INTO THE PACIFIC OCEAN, IN A MOVE THAT SEEMS DESIGNED TO DISTRACT AND DEFLECT FROM THE EMBARRASSING NEWS OF ITS SUNK SUBMARINE

nological advancements as opposed to factual efficacy. Incidentally, the US Deputy Secretary of State, Kurt Campbell, had confirmed that the Russians were helping China develop this submarine technology and that it too wasn't necessarily homegrown, as claimed. While this sinking of the submarine is believed to have happened in May earlier, it was never owned up by the Chinese and it took satellite images to unravel the sinking of the first-in-class nuclear-powered Chinese submarine. It is certainly a major setback for China's priority weapons programs that is key to its expansionist and hegemonic aspirations. As if on the rebound and to stitch a counternarrative, China is believed to have fired an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile into the Pacific Ocean, in a move that seems designed to distract and deflect from the embarrassing news of its sunk submarine and to reiterate its prowess and capability. Coming as the testing does after more than four decades over the Pacific Ocean, it is unmistakably a 'signal' move to suggest that the 'Dragon' still retains sharp claws and fangs. Incidentally, the missile is part of the PLA's Rocket Force that was subjected to a sweeping corruption crackdown, purge, and complete overhaul last

year - something that could be inflicted again on the PLA Navy leadership, which was in charge of the sunk submarine. Already the chorus of sub-standard Chinese weaponry has gained decibels from traditional clients like Pakistan or from emerging ones like Bangladesh, who complained about the quality of spares for its navy. Russia's decline on the global stage as a military supplier has not resulted in an automatic transfer of business to the Chinese manufacturers, as earlier thought and the growing perception of 'Made in China' has a lot to do with the reactions. With the US returning to the Pakistani arms market (Islamabad accounts for over 50 per cent of Chinese exports), and the overall pressures of economic slowdown haunting the Chinese economy - Beijing is in a tight spot to invest, innovate, and deliver weaponry that truly delivers what it claims. It is premature to write off China's 'Military-Industrial complex just yet, but the chinks in its armour are getting routinely exposed. While still a 'value player' for the desperate, authoritarian or 'paradise' countries, its claim to cutting-edge technology is suspect. (The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views are personal)

PICTALK



An artist prepares an environment friendly puja pandal ahead of Durga Puja festival, in Kolkata

PTI

The challenges of parenting in the age of technology

While the challenges are real, so too are the solutions - adaptation and patience remain the cornerstones of successful parenting in these digital times

Conversations these days are rife with the refrain of how challenging life has become and how surfing the turbulent seas is not as easy as it used to be previously. It amuses me that we endorse this view readily despite the conveniences the modern world has introduced to us.



The all-round improvement in quality of life has done nothing much in terms of bringing us the sense of gratification that material accumulation is perceived to bring. Instead, we have only become crazier and more complaining. Among the things that we whine about there is one that stands out - the difficulty of being a parent in these times. It is not like how it used to be when we were kids, they assert and are at a loss to keep their children under control, be it about the use of gadgets or their demands for new-age comforts or following well-meaning advice. Children these days have a way of growing up that parents can't seem to get a grip over, and parents are at their wit's end. Has parenting become so tough now, tougher than what

are not just forms of entertainment; they shape the way children think, act, and even perceive reality. Parents often feel powerless in the face of this digital onslaught, unsure how to manage screen time without seeming authoritarian or disconnected from their children's world. This struggle is exacerbated by the speed at which technology evolves. By the time parents get a handle on one app or platform, their children have already moved on to the next one.

Then, there's the issue of peer pressure, not just on children but on parents too. The 'Instagram-perfect' life adds a layer of stress to parenting that previous generations didn't face. Parents today are not just competing with themselves to be the best versions of their upbringing - they are competing with a curated version of perfection they see online. The pressure to enrol children in extracurricular activities, make sure they're developing emotional intelligence, cultivate leadership skills, and create future 'success stories' can be crushing. Our grandparents' idea of raising children to be 'good'

has been replaced with a need to raise 'achievers,' and this shift in focus can leave parents feeling like they're running a race with no finish line. Despite these challenges, parenting isn't a lost cause. It is, and always will be, a journey of trial and error. The key is finding balance and knowing that perfection is neither attainable nor necessary. A good place to start is by building a stronger connection with your children. Parents also need to accept that they cannot fight all battles alone.

They must seek help. Many of the challenges we face today are new and unfamiliar, but that doesn't mean they are insurmountable. Just as previous generations found solutions to their problems, so too can we, but it will require adaptation, learning, and, most importantly, patience. After all, our children are not just products of their environment - they are reflections of the love, support, and wisdom we give them, no matter how fast the world around them changes.

(The author is a Dubai-based columnist, writing coach. Views are personal)



ASHA IYER KUMAR

PERILS OF MUSI PROJECT

Madam - Congress government's extravagant plan to spend a staggering Rs 1.5 lakh crore on the Musi river beautification project. This expenditure raises serious questions about the government's priorities and its commitment to the welfare of the people of Telangana. As KTR has rightly pointed out, the government's focus on this project while neglecting the Palamuru-Rangareddy project, which is nearing completion, is a clear indication of their misplaced priorities. The Palamuru-Rangareddy project has the potential to transform the lives of countless farmers in the region, yet it seems to be overshadowed by the Musi project, which appears to be more about political gain than public welfare. It is also alarming to note that the estimated cost of the Musi project has tripled from Rs 50,000 crore to Rs 1.5 lakh crore, suggesting a significant financial scandal.

The government must provide a transparent explanation for this drastic increase in expenditure and ensure that the funds are used efficiently and for the benefit of the people. Furthermore, the government has failed to provide clear details about the expected benefits of the Musi project, such as the number of acres of farmland that will benefit, the amount of water that will be stored, and the anticipated industrial benefits. Without such information, it is difficult to justify the massive investment being made in this project.

Juloori B Saraswathi | Hyderabad

HEZBOLLAH LEADER ASSASSINATED

Madam - The unstoppable Israel has once again inflicted another severe wound on Iran when Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah was assassinated in airstrikes by the Israeli defence forces at Lebanese capital Beirut. His death gave jolts to his shell shocked sympathisers in Iran, like the death of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh. But at the same time a cause for celebration for the north-

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

India's dominance in Asia



The Australian think tank 'Lowy Institute' ranked India as the third strongest Asian power in the Asia Power Index. US and China occupied the first and second position

followed by India in the third place. Considering the economic growth, future potential and the diplomatic influence of India on an improvement, India successfully managed to rank better with passing years than the countries like Japan, Australia and Russia. The improvement from the side of India is particularly welcoming because India strives to make continuous improvement in its performance in all respects and also ensure holistic growth of Asia for a better future together.

The journey of India turning into the Asian giant is particularly strategic and India's efforts for industrialisation, infrastructural development, public policy and administration, good governance and holistic development are much appreciated in this regard.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

western Sunni population in Syria for his atrocities and war crimes during the Assad regime in the Civil War. The back-to-back war between Hezbollah and Israel has spoilt the hope of a ceasefire and wreaked havoc on civilians through constant shelling in various human settlements for more causality.

It proves the hypocrisy of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who pretends to gather international support for isolated Israel in the UN General Assembly but on the contrary continues to provoke Iran for a wide-scale regional war and long-running conflict results in vicious ramifications. Lacking international support for war crime and muscle approach, how long Israel will continue to push for war with the help of the US in Gaza, Lebanon and beyond, only time will tell

Janga B Sunuwar | Jalpaiguri

NEPOTISM IN POLITICS

Madam - It refers to 'Stalin to succeed Stalin' (September 29). The biggest threat to Indian democracy is the appointment of Udhayanidhi as Deputy

CM, which has proven the pervasiveness of dynastic politics and the prioritising of family interests over public welfare. It is easy for a son, daughter, or close relative of a leader to take over the political baton, while others have to spend a significant amount of time in the rough and tumble of politics. Political observers say that there is no harm if a political leader's son or daughter, or close relative, chooses to enter politics, but there is a thin line that separates dynasty politics and a worthy kin's choice to take a plunge.

But when we look into the pros and cons of dynastic politics, it highlights the deficiency it could bring to the ideals of democracy, questioning its legitimacy. The trend of dynastic politics will lead to the perpetuation of an elite class that transcends generations and will hamper the smooth inflow of capable, meritorious candidates into politics.

KV Chandra mouli | Mysuru

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN THE SPIRITUAL MEANING OF ZERO

The symbol of zero holds profound meaning, it symbolises eternity



RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Zero is the number people often feel, more so than one, isn't it true? Because more zeroes means more prosperity. However from a spiritual perspective, zero is the point from which all other numbers spring forth. Even visually the number zero is symbolic of a seed, womb or egg from which pure potential emerges. Since the zero also visually resembles a circle, it symbolises eternity, evolution, and infinity. Like an atom is to the physical world and a soul to the spiritual world, the zero is symbolic of both worlds.

Pythagoras viewed the sign of the zero as the container for all things and the birthing place of all other values. The discovery of zero changes the way we calculate, compute and communicate. All these tasks affect almost all fields of human activity today. Zero is counted as an even number along with positive and negative integers. It is important in the number-value system because it defines the value and place of a digit in a number as a thousand, hundred, ten or a million. In a way, it is a symbol that defines nothingness.

While zero is valuable in terms of its contributions to the myriad spheres of human life, it has been used to describe mystical concepts in religious and spiritual philosophies. In Hindi zero is called 'shunya' meaning a void, the supreme state of awareness where everything comes to nothingness. Spiritual seekers perceive this state as 'mukti' or nirvana in which the soul is restored to its original state free from all impressions, influences and impurities of the earthly life. Zero looks like an elliptical circle representing infinity the eternal cycle of cre-



ation. Everything returns to zero or nothingness before being created anew. Hence, most spiritual teachers emphasise attaining the zero state i.e. emptying the mind of all worldly thoughts and detaching from the awareness of the physical body to attain liberation and peace. The egg shaped symbol of the Soul or Supreme Almighty as a point of light surrounded by an oval aura also resembles a zero. In its original state, every soul is like a zero & it has no worldly identity or role but like a seed, it has infinite power and qualities merged within, which manifest when the soul enters the field of karma in this world.

The Supreme Almighty is the eternal seed who always exists in the zero state of awareness, detached from everything yet filled with infinite divine qualities and powers that support the whole creation. It is from this supreme state of nothingness that HE creates a perfect new world whenever the creation becomes degraded and old. Like zero, the soul essentially has an even or positive character. Just as the negative of 2 is - 2 which means lacking in 2, the lack of awareness of positive qualities manifests as negative or odd traits in the soul.

The number zero has very special functions in the calculation. Anything added or subtracted to zero remains unchanged. Any number multiplied by zero gives zero while any number divided by zero gives infinity. Interestingly, when we add zeros after a number, its value grows ten times. These specialities can be ascribed to the Almighty Supreme who remains unchanged in the cycle of eternity.

He does not enjoy the fruits of karma and nothing can be added, subtracted, multiplied or divided from his powers. When we multiply our powers by linking ourselves with him, we too become a zero like him filled with all divine virtues. So let us try our best to remain in the zero state and achieve a higher state of consciousness to live a life that is minus all worries, tension & stress.

(Writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist; views are personal)

Revive shallow aquifers for urban water woes in India

Indian cities, plagued by over-extraction of deep groundwater must turn to the ancient underground reservoirs writes S VISHWANATH and ISHLEEN KAUR



In India, groundwater plays a critical role in meeting urban water demands. These aquifers, found at relatively shallow depths, have served as vital sources of water for centuries. At a time when transporting water across long distances was inconceivable, communities turned to shallow aquifers to meet their water needs. Found at accessible depths, they offered a cost-effective and reliable water supply for the growing populations. The dug wells and step wells, still standing today, are reminders of a time when water scarcity was addressed by harnessing rainwater to recharge shallow aquifers. However, as modern cities grew, the humble dug wells, once a ubiquitous part of the landscape, began to vanish. These wells have now largely been replaced by deep bore wells tapping into groundwater reserves at alarming depths.

India is the world's largest user of groundwater, consuming more than the United States and China combined. Urban areas, in particular, have increasingly relied on groundwater to supplement their needs, leading to a significant depletion of shallow aquifers, and for too long, groundwater management has been side-lined in urban planning. However recent climate challenges—unpredictable rainfall, flash floods, and urban water crisis—have sparked renewed interest in groundwater management. Increasingly, rainwater harvesting and urban waterbody rejuvenation projects are turning toward these natural underground reservoirs as a solution. Aquifers are now being studied for their potential to store excess rainwater and mitigate flooding. The launch of AMRUT 2.0 in 2021 marked a paradigm shift in water management, with groundwater finally being prioritized at the 'urban' scale. The mission recognised the need for cities to not only rely on groundwater but to actively manage



URBAN AREAS, IN PARTICULAR, HAVE INCREASINGLY RELIED ON GROUNDWATER TO SUPPLEMENT THEIR NEEDS, LEADING TO A SIGNIFICANT DEPLETION OF SHALLOW AQUIFERS, AND FOR TOO LONG, GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT HAS BEEN SIDE-LINED IN URBAN PLANNING

and protect it. Under the mission, the Shallow Aquifer Management (SAM) pilot project was initiated in 2022 in 10 cities. This initiative aimed to raise awareness among city officials and communities about the importance of shallow aquifers and demonstrate effective recharge structures to tackle critical issues like groundwater depletion, contamination and urban flooding. It sought to create an environment where cities could integrate shallow aquifer management into broader water strategies. By emphasising both simple and scientifically sound recharge methods, it aimed to revive approaches that have been overlooked in the pursuit of modern infrastructure. The project has yielded valuable insights for cities on effective shallow aquifer management.

This initiative has led to the development of 12 unique approaches and designs for recharge structures, tailored to local aquifer conditions. These ranged from the revival of existing wells and step wells in Dhanbad, Hyderabad, and Bangalore to catchment treatment of areas showing high recharge potential in Pune.

Cities such as Gwalior and Rajkot have undertaken detailed mapping of aquifer systems, and groundwater depths, and created an inventory of recharge structures at the city scale, facilitating informed groundwater management decisions. The project has also shown promising results in showcasing the sustainable use of these recharge structures to supplement water needs for local communities.

In Kanteerava Nagar, Bangalore, a dug well retrofitted under the

project is now supplying water to around 500 households with up to one lakh litre of water being pumped every day for non-potable use. Similarly, in Thane's Yeoor Village, tribal communities are benefiting from water sourced from desilted and retrofitted wells. In Dhanbad and Rajkot, where peri-urban areas heavily depend on shallow wells, the initiative has begun to expand beyond its pilot phase.

Rajkot Municipal Corporation has initiated work on constructing more than 100 additional recharge structures city-wide based on the SAM mapping, showing the renewed awareness and commitment to scale up shallow aquifer management. The project has been able to draw the attention of larger voices in the climate resilience and water security space.

Bangalore's Climate Action Plan has now incorporated groundwater management as a vital aspect of making Bangalore climate resilient. Pune has even established a dedicated groundwater cell in the municipal corporation to ensure that shallow aquifer management remains a priority in the city's future water plans. In FY 2024-2025, the Pune Municipal Corporation has allocated a dedicated budget of INR 1 crore for aquifer recharge structures, showing significant action in this direction. Despite the progress made through the SAM project, much work remains.

Cities need to acknowledge that deep aquifers hold vast reserves of water accumulated over centuries and must be typically reserved for emergencies, such as droughts. In contrast, shallow aquifers hold

immense potential as the first line of defence for daily water needs, making them essential for urban areas. However, as cities grow, the natural processes that recharge these aquifers are being disrupted.

In the current situation, where urban development is increasingly characterised by impermeable surfaces, inhibiting rainwater infiltration and preventing natural recharge, cities need to make conscious interventions towards artificial recharge of shallow aquifers including rejuvenation of lakes, wetlands and river floodplains.

India's groundwater crisis is complex, but the solution may lie beneath our feet. By managing shallow aquifers, cities can foster a more resilient and sustainable future. The SAM project provides a blueprint for this approach, but its lessons must be scaled up and implemented nationwide.

As India faces the dual challenges of urban growth and water scarcity, it is time to embrace the wisdom of our ancestors and integrate it with the science of hydrogeology.

By restoring shallow aquifers and making them a part of an integrated urban water management ecosystem, cities can ensure that this invaluable resource remains a dependable source of water for generations to come. In the words of Kabir: 'The well is one, and the water is the same. Let us remember that the water we draw today must sustain us tomorrow.'

(S. Vishwanath is co-founder Biome Environmental Solutions, Bengaluru and Ishleen Kaur is senior environment specialist, National Institute of Urban Affairs, Delhi; views expressed are their own)

Right-wing and challenge for Indian Muslims: The path to reform and reconciliation

Indian Muslims must embrace internal reforms that align with a modern, secular framework, helping to bridge societal divisions

The rise of right-wing politics in India seems to have solidified its presence, and the deepening of Hindu-Muslim fault lines is likely to persist. While liberal and secular parties may win several State elections, an increase in their numbers in Parliament or State legislatures is unlikely to mend the fragile communal ties. The division between communities has now reached a deeper societal level, presenting a grave challenge for Indian Muslims. To minimise this damage and repair the social fabric, it is essential to promote a counter-narrative grounded in secularism. Indian Muslims must focus on internal reforms that promote secularisation within their own societal framework. While some right-



TARIQ ASHRAF

wing claims about Muslim life may be exaggerated or entirely untrue, certain aspects warrant closer introspection by the community itself. Although the issues have intensified since 2014, their roots can be traced back to much earlier times. As Muslims, it is critical to rework the internal narrative and processes within the community to align with secular

values. The painful legacy of India's partition, drawn along communal lines, has left a heavy burden on the Muslim community. In response, Indian Muslims need to go above and beyond to heal the sentiments and emotions of the majority community. Despite constitutional protections and safeguards, the community needs to focus on changing perceptions at both societal and communal levels. One step toward this change is to reform Muslim personal laws and harmonize them with a modern, progressive social order. Instead of framing personal law reforms as a Hindu-Muslim conflict, Muslims should see these reforms as standalone processes that benefit the community. A close examination of

some outdated practices will reveal that reforms have already taken place in many Muslim-majority countries. The All India Muslim Personal Law Board missed a crucial opportunity to declare triple talaq un-Islamic before the government passed legislation against it. Similarly, the Shah Bano case harmed the Muslim community's interests and fueled the resurgence of right-wing mobilisation. The Muslim Personal Law Board has exacerbated the community's challenges by opposing every proposed reform instead of acting as a forward-thinking, responsible institution. Another significant issue facing Indian Muslims is the lack of leadership from within the intelligentsia. With few exceptions, Muslim leadership has



been monopolised by the clergy, leaving the community without enlightened, visionary, and progressive guidance. The void left by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad has remained largely unfilled. Even leaders like Asaduddin Owaisi, despite their education and goodwill, have failed to adopt a liberal and secular approach in addressing legitimate community concerns. An aggrieved community must commu-

nicate in a conciliatory manner, rather than adopting a confrontational stance. The Muslim leadership's approach to the Hijab controversy clearly illustrates this failure. While Muslim women are entitled to wear the Hijab as a matter of choice and religious freedom, elevating the issue to the extent of students quitting their studies was unwise. It is essential for religion to be separated from public life and confined to the private domain. Although this holds true for all communities, Indian Muslims must make this move more emphatically due to historical reasons. The community needs to create a secular platform to address its concerns. The severe political and socio-economic challenges facing Muslims today

cannot be ignored. One positive step in this direction has been the recent initiative by a group of retired civil servants from Delhi who attempted to engage with leaders from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). However, the initiative failed to gain traction as it was undertaken individually without an organizational framework. To be successful, such efforts must be scaled up to a national-level dialogue with a clear agenda involving eminent citizens from various levels, including state and central governments. It is imperative to address the widespread perception that the Muslim community is resistant to reform, reconciliation, and compromise. Before the Hindu-Muslim fault lines in India reach a danger-

ous level, the country urgently needs a period of cooling off. Many right-wing grievances against Muslims lack substance and truth. In a society governed by constitutional principles and the rule of law, a community cannot be punished for the historical wrongs committed by its ancestors. To address the right-wing narrative effectively, the Muslim community must launch a secular, modern, and progressive narrative based on evidence, rather than countering with equally polarizing rhetoric. It is the only viable option. (The writer has been associated with the Centre for Policy Research, IIM Lucknow, University of Delhi, and Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi; Views are personal)

IN BRIEF



DGCA set to issue electronic licences to ATCOs

Aviation safety regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is all set to issue licenses to Air Traffic Controllers (ATCOs) in electronic form as it looks to go paperless in its functioning and embrace the digital future. The introduction of electronic licenses is designed to significantly improve operational efficiency, enabling ATCOs to access and manage their licenses with ease on self-contained mobile electronic visual display devices, such as mobile phones or tablets, the DGCA said in an official statement. The move is not merely a regulatory update but represents a fundamental shift in the operational dynamics of air traffic management, it said. "In a transformative initiative, the DGCA is set to introduce the paperless Personnel License for Air Traffic Controllers (ATCOs). This innovative move signifies a pivotal shift in the management of personnel licenses, ushering in an era of enhanced efficiency and modernisation within the Indian aviation landscape," the statement said.



Cognizant to establish techfin centre at GIFT City

Global tech firm Cognizant on Monday announced its plans to establish a 'techfin centre' at Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City), Gandhinagar. The new facility, set to launch in February 2025, will serve as a strategic hub for delivering advanced technology solutions for clients in the banking, financial services, and insurance (BFSI) industries, the company said in a statement. The centre will initially house 500 associates, with plans to scale up to 2,000 employees over the next three years, it said. Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel said Cognizant's new centre in GIFT City reflects the state's ability to attract world-class enterprises and provide a robust environment for innovation and growth. "GIFT City's state-of-the-art infrastructure, business-friendly policies, and strategic location are key drivers in shaping it into a global financial and technology hub."



SBI Card launches credit card with Singapore Airlines

SBI Card in partnership with Singapore Airlines Ltd (SIA) on Monday announced the launch of its co-branded credit card with a host of features. KrisFlyer SBI Card is Singapore Airlines' first co-branded credit card in India. This co-branded credit card has been designed to cater to super-premium cardholders, offering exclusive privileges in the air and on ground with the SIA Group that comprises Singapore Airlines, Scoot airline, KrisShop.com, Kris+ lifestyle app and Pelago, a joint statement said. The newly launched credit card is available in two variants, KrisFlyer SBI Card and KrisFlyer SBI Card Apex, it said. With this partnership, KrisFlyer SBI Card customers will unlock a range of accelerated rewards and milestone benefits on their travel spends, it said. Packed with exclusive welcome offers of 3,000 KrisFlyer miles on the KrisFlyer SBI Card and 10,000 KrisFlyer miles on the KrisFlyer SBI Card Apex, the cards aim to redefine the travel experiences of their well-heeled customers, by providing them with unparalleled convenience and luxury.

India should not push for GSP benefits from US as gains are marginal: GTRI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India should accept the withdrawal of benefits under the US generalised system of preferences (GSP) scheme and avoid pushing for its reinstatement as the benefits for domestic exporters were marginal, think tank GTRI said on Monday. It also suggested that India should not seek the resumption of the scheme in the upcoming India-US Commercial Dialogue on October 2. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal is visiting Washington for the dialogue.



He will co-chair the meeting with US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo with participation from industries, startups, and SMEs from both countries. The scheme, it added, is primarily designed for low-income countries, with even major economies like China excluded. As a growing economic power, India should focus on broader, more strategic trade discussions rather than seeking

concessions on relatively insignificant issues, it said.

GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said the primary aim of the dialogue is to strengthen the bilateral commercial partnership, boost investment opportunities, and enhance supply chain resilience. "Given these larger objectives, focusing on reinstating GSP benefits, whose economic impact on India has been minimal, would detract from more significant areas of cooperation. Another important reason is low values of these benefits," he said.

The GSP program, initiated by the US in 1974, was designed to grant duty-free access to specific products from developing countries, providing them with a competitive edge in the American market. However, the impact of GSP benefits on India's overall trade was limited. In 2019, only about 16 per cent of India's total exports were destined for the US, and less than 2 per cent of these exports benefited from the GSP scheme, he said.

FM TO NORTHEAST RRBS Increase share in ground-level agri credit disbursement

PNS ■ ITANAGAR

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday directed the Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) to increase their share in ground-level agriculture credit disbursement with a special focus on horticulture and allied agriculture activities like piggery, poultry, dairy and fisheries, officials said. Chairing a review meeting of the RRBs

in the northeastern states at the civil secretariat here, Sitharaman urged the banks to put greater thrust on the identification of the right beneficiaries while sanctioning loans under various central schemes, they said.

The meeting focused on business performance, upgrading digital technology services, and fostering business growth in



allied agriculture and MSME clusters, they added.

Among those present in the meeting were chairpersons of RRBs and sponsor banks, representatives of RBI, NABARD and SIDBI, and senior officers of all the northeastern states.

Industrial sector growing at fast pace, India can now aim 9 pc growth: NITI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's industrial sector is growing at a fast pace and the country can now aim to achieve 9 per cent plus economic growth, NITI Aayog CEO B V R Subrahmanyam said on Monday.

Addressing a press conference here after release of Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI),

Subrahmanyam said India's manufacturing sector has been generating sufficient number of jobs.

According to the ASI data, the number of persons employed in manufacturing industries rose 7.5 per cent in 2022-23 to 1.85 crore from 1.72 crore in the previous year.

The estimated number of persons engaged in this sector in 2022-23 exceeded the pre-pandemic level (2018-19) by more than 22.14 lakh, a MoSPI

statement said adding that at the same time, average emolument also registered an increase over the previous year.

"The industrial sector in India is growing fast, it is something people have been unnecessarily criticising," he said.

While pointing out that manufacturing growth is broad based and is coming from all sectors, Subrahmanyam said, "India can aim at 9 per cent plus growth."

The Reserve Bank of India has revised upwards the GDP growth projection for the current fiscal to 7.2 per cent from 7 per cent on rising private consumption and revival of demand in rural areas.

He also observed that a lot of people (rating agencies and multilateral agencies) will be revising India's economic growth rate on the upper side. "We have wiped out the effect of Covid," the NITI Aayog CEO said.



India needs more time for transition from coal: Experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the UK officially shut down its last remaining coal power plant on Monday, policy experts said coal will continue to be a part of India's energy mix for the next few decades, given that it is still a developing country with significant energy needs.

The UK on Monday closed its last coal power plant, becoming the first G7 nation to do so amid calls for a global coal-free energy system by 2040.

The world's first coal power plant opened in London in 1882, and until 2012, coal accounted for 39 per cent of the UK's electricity generation.

Global energy think tank Ember said the closure of the UK's last coal plant means that more than a third of OECD countries are now coal-free, with three-quarters expected to eliminate coal power by 2030, in line with global climate goals aimed at limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The International Energy Agency's (IEA) "Net Zero by 2050" report recommends that developed countries phase out unabated coal by 2030, while developing countries should aim to do so by 2040 to remain on track for global net-zero emissions by 2050. The term "unabated" in this context refers to electricity production that does not use technologies designed to capture and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

SILVER PLUMMETS RS 2,000 Gold remains flat at Rs 78,300/10g

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices remained flat at Rs 78,300 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

After rising for nine consecutive days, gold had touched its all-time high mark of Rs 78,300 per 10 grams on Friday.

However, silver plummeted by Rs 2,000 to Rs 92,500 per kg, snapping a three-day rising streak in the local markets on Monday. It had finished at Rs 94,500 per kg in the previous close. In futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for October delivery went up by Rs 42 or 0.06 per cent to Rs 74,900 per 10 grams.

Silver contracts for December delivery declined Rs 586 or 0.64 per cent to trade at Rs 90,812 per kg on



the exchange.

In the Asian trading hours, Comex gold was trading 0.06 per cent higher at USD 2,669.60 per ounce.

"COMEX gold retreated from its peak as softer inflation numbers bolstered expectations of interest rate cuts but also sparking debate about their magnitude," Kaynat Chainwala, AVP-Commodity Research at Kotak Securities, said. Last

week, gold had surged to a record high of USD 2,708.70 per ounce, driven by a significant drop in consumer confidence that heightened expectations for more aggressive rate cuts by the US Federal Reserve.

Geopolitical tensions, particularly the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, further enhanced gold's appeal as a safe-haven asset, Chainwala added.

According to Pranav Mer, VP - Research (Commodity & Currency) at BlinkX and JM Financial, traders are likely to stay cautious amid the possibility of month-end profit-taking and look for crucial data on the manufacturing/services PMI from across regions and US nonfarm payroll data due later on Friday.

Silver, however, was quoted 0.30 per cent lower at USD 31.72 per ounce in the international markets.

Bear attack wipes out Rs 3.57 lakh cr from investors' wealth

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Investors' wealth got eroded by Rs 3.57 lakh crore on Monday as markets took a heavy beating with the BSE Sensex tumbling 1,272 points amid a host of negative triggers -- weak Japanese markets, rising geopolitical risks in the Middle East and selling in heavyweight bank stocks and Reliance Industries.

The BSE benchmark Sensex tumbled 1,272.07 points or 1.49 per cent to settle at 84,299.78. During the day, it plunged 1,314.71 points or 1.53 per cent to 84,257.14.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms slumped by Rs 3,57,885.53 crore to Rs 4,74,35,137.15 crore (USD 5.66 trillion). "Profit-taking in Reliance

Industries stock and banking counters coupled with a slump in Japan's Nikkei index spooked Indian markets that saw both Sensex and Nifty crash nearly 1.50 per cent each. "The sharp rally in recent weeks was the outcome of Fed rate cut and hopes that RBI would also follow suit in its policy meeting, and if the central bank keeps the rates steady it may lead to short term weakness. Globally, if the Israel-Hezbollah war escalates further, nervousness could fuel panic selling going ahead," said Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd.

In Asian markets, Seoul and Tokyo settled with deep cuts, while Shanghai and Hong Kong ended sharply higher. Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 index tanked nearly 5 per

cent on Monday. The Shanghai Composite index surged 8 per cent amid fresh stimulus measures announcement. European markets were trading lower. The US markets ended on a mixed note on Friday.

"Global markets turned topsy-turvy under the threat of rising geopolitical risk in the Middle East and plausible increase in Yen interest rate which can reduce cross-country investments in equity. On the contrary, the Chinese market had a resurgence due to a large stimulus package and cheap valuation.

"India also weakened under the global pressure and premium valuation, while metals are expected to outperform in the near-term," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

India's current account deficit widens marginally to 1.1 pc of GDP

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The country's current account deficit widened marginally to USD 9.7 billion or 1.1 per cent of GDP in April-June 2024, as against USD 8.9 billion or 1 per cent in the year-ago period, Reserve Bank of India said on Monday.

The crucial number representing the country's external sector strength has come on the heels of a surplus of USD 4.6 billion or 0.5 per cent of GDP recorded in the preceding January-March quarter.

The Reserve Bank attributed the year-on-year widening in current account deficit to a rise in merchandise trade gap which was recorded at USD 65.1 billion in Q1 FY25 as compared to USD 56.7 billion in the year-ago period. Net services receipts increased to USD 39.7 billion during the quarter under review from USD 35.1 billion a year ago, the RBI said, adding that computer services, business services, travel services and transportation services have seen a rise.

However, there was a sharp moderation in the net foreign portfolio investment to USD 0.9 billion from USD 15.7 billion in

the year ago, the RBI said. Net inflows under external commercial borrowings (ECBs) came down to USD 1.8 billion during the first quarter, and was lower than USD 5.6 billion registered in the corresponding period a year ago.

In what can be seen as a jump in remittances by the diaspora, the private transfer receipts increased to USD 29.5 billion in Q1 FY25, from USD 27.1 billion witnessed in the same period of last fiscal.

Net foreign direct investment inflows increased to USD 6.3 billion from USD 4.7 billion on year, the RBI said.

Payments of investment income, captured under the net outgo on the primary income account, rose to USD 10.7 billion from the last year's USD 10.2 billion.

Non-resident deposits (NRI deposits) recorded net inflows of USD 4 billion, and was higher than USD 2.2 billion a year ago, the RBI said.

There was an accretion of USD 5.2 billion to the foreign exchange reserves on a BoP (balance of payments) basis in Q1 FY25 as compared to USD 24.4 billion in Q1 FY24, the RBI said.

Total employment in mfg industries rises 7.5 pc to 1.85 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The number of persons employed in manufacturing industries rose 7.5 per cent in 2022-23 to 1.85 crore from 1.72 crore in the previous year, says Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

The estimated number of persons engaged in this sector in 2022-23 exceeded the pre-pandemic level (2018-19) by more than 22.14 lakh, a MoSPI statement said adding that at the same time, average emolument also registered an increase over the previous year.

Also, the average emolument per person engaged in this sector had gone up by 6.3 per cent in 2022-23 in comparison to 2021-22.

The number of total persons engaged in manufacturing industries increased to 1,84,94,962 in



The number of persons engaged in this sector in 2022-23 exceeded the pre-pandemic level (2018-19) by more than 22.14 lakh, a MoSPI statement said adding that at the same time, average emolument also registered an increase over the previous year

2022-23 from 1,72,15,350 in 2021-22. The figure was 1,60,89,700 in 2020-21, 1,66,24,291 in 2019-20 and 1,62,80,211 in 2018-19, the ASI data showed.

The results show that the Gross Value Added (GVA) grew by 7.3 per

cent in current prices in 2022-23 over 2021-22.

The increase in input was 24.4 per cent while output grew 21.5 per cent in the sector in 2022-23 over 2021-22.

The year 2022-23 witnessed a

growth in this sector for majority of economic parameters like invested capital, input, output, GVA, employment and wages and it even surpassed the pre-pandemic level in absolute value terms.

The main drivers of this growth in

2022-23 were industries like manufacture of basic metals, coke & refined petroleum products, food products, chemical and chemical products and motor vehicles, it stated.

These industries, taken together, contributed about 58 per cent to the total output of the sector and showed output growth of 24.5 per cent and GVA growth of 2.6 per cent in comparison to 2021-22.

Among the major states, in terms of GVA, Maharashtra ranked first in 2022-23 followed by Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh. The top five states, taken together contributed more than 54 per cent to the total manufacturing GVA of the country in 2022-23.

The top five states employing highest number of persons in this sector were Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka in ASI 2022-23.





ANANYA PANDAY CALLS FOR GOVT REGULATION TO STOP DEEPPAKES

Actor Ananya Panday, whose upcoming film *CTRL* peeks into the world of artificial intelligence (AI), says government authorities need to come up with certain regulations to prevent misuse of technology. Recently, top movie stars like Aamir Khan, Ranveer Singh, Alia Bhatt and Rashmika Mandanna fell victims to deepfake videos. "It's very scary. As public figures, our faces and voices are out there. (So) I don't know how much we can safeguard. I think it will have to come from regulations by the government, that's probably the only solution," Ananya told in a media group interaction on the green carpet of the IIFA Awards 2024 when asked about deepfake videos of celebrities. Deepfake is a digital method where users can replace one person's likeness convincingly with that of another using AI technology. The trailer of *CTRL* sees Ananya's character ask an AI app to "erase" her lover Joe (Vihaan Samat) from her life after she catches him cheating on her. Produced by Saffron and Andolan Films, *CTRL* will start streaming on Netflix from October 4. The cyber thriller is directed by Vikramaditya Motwane. Meanwhile, Ananya, who was one of the performers at the IIFA Awards 2024, said she was both excited and nervous about her stage act.



KANGANA'S EMERGENCY CLEARS HURDLE; PRODUCERS ACCEPT CBFC CHANGES

On Monday, the producers of Kangana Ranaut's film *Emergency* accepted the alterations proposed by the revising committee of the CBFC. In the most recent court session at the Bombay High Court, the Zee Studios representative told the court they have provided a plan for the changes and are now waiting for the board's response. The news agency verified the progress in the case. An announcement from the agency stated that the next hearing on the issue is scheduled for October 3. "Production company Zee Studio's lawyer told Bombay HC that they have agreed to the suggested changes by the Revising Committee and they have submitted a format for the implementation of the changes suggested by the CBFC. CBFC will respond to this format and the next hearing on the matter is kept on Thursday, 3rd October (sic)," read the post shared by the agency on social media platform X.

Saiyami Kher back on set in Hyderabad!

Fresh off her historic Ironman 70.3 race win in Germany, actress Saiyami Kher wasted no time returning to her professional commitments. Saiyami, who is the first Indian actress to achieve this significant milestone, resumed the shoot of her next film with Sunny Deol in Hyderabad, showcasing her dedication and resilience. Competing in the grueling Ironman Triathlon, Saiyami's achievement is not just a personal victory but a source of inspiration for her fans and fitness enthusiasts across the globe. However, instead of taking a break, Saiyami was back on set, balancing her passion for sports with her commitment to her craft. Speaking about her return to work, Saiyami said, "Finishing *Iron Man 70.3* has been a long-standing dream. So I'm really, really happy I managed to train and race in between a hectic shoot schedule. The race has put me in a very positive frame of mind and I feel rejuvenated. I have really pushed my limits and I'm bringing that same energy back to the set. Working with Sunny sir is a privilege and I'm excited to continue this journey with the team in Hyd." Saiyami's remarkable achievement, coupled with her professionalism, continues to set a powerful example for her fans, reinforcing the message that determination and passion can help one excel in any field. Her film with Sunny Deol is highly anticipated, and the shoot is well underway in Hyderabad. Saiyami's commitment to fulfilling her professional responsibilities right after her Ironman has won her admiration from colleagues and fans alike.

A Star is Reborn fame Kris Kristofferson passes away

Kris Kristofferson, the famous actor and country singer-songwriter, died at 88 years old. His fame was greatly influenced by his involvement in music, as well as his appearances in the *Blade* series and *A Star is Reborn*. He portrayed Abraham Whistler in the movie franchise. His representative confirmed his death in a statement on September 28. The singer's spokesperson's official announcement said he died "peacefully" while being surrounded by friends, family and loved ones in his final moments at his residence in Maui, Hawaii. The statement revealed to people said, "It is with a heavy heart that we share the news our husband/father/grandfather, Kris Kristofferson, passed away peacefully on Saturday, September 28 at home. We're all so blessed for our time with him. Thank you for loving him all these many years and when you see a rainbow, know he's smiling down at us all." Kristofferson left behind his wife, Lisa, eight children and seven grandchildren.



SOPHIE TURNER ON NAVIGATING SINGLE MOTHERHOOD AFTER SPLIT



Sophie Turner recently discussed the difficulties of being a 'single mother' following her divorce from Joe Jonas. The pair had been married for four years when Jonas initiated divorce proceedings against the actress in September 2023. They subsequently posted a joint statement on Instagram, informing their followers of their mutual choice to peacefully end their marriage. Turner disclosed the difficulty of filming her newest six-part crime drama, *Joan*, as she was dealing with her divorce settlement at the same time. During a recent conversation, Sophie Turner shared that she is finding it challenging to raise her two daughters, Willa and Delphine, who she co-parents with her former spouse Joe Jonas, after their separation. Turner pondered her portrayal of jewel thief Joan Hannington in the forthcoming TV show, "If I hadn't been a mother, I don't know if I would have been able to bring the same energy that I did into it." The actress from *Game of Thrones* expressed her wish that single mothers would tune in to the show, recognising the difficulties of being a single mother. She pointed out that Joan's approach may not be perfect, but it's amazing to see her fiercely advocating for her daughter. The actress added, "It's also really important for kids to see just how hard parents work for them." Turner also pointed out that there is a significant amount of stigma associated with motherhood, stating that mothers face criticism whether they choose to work or be stay-at-home parents.

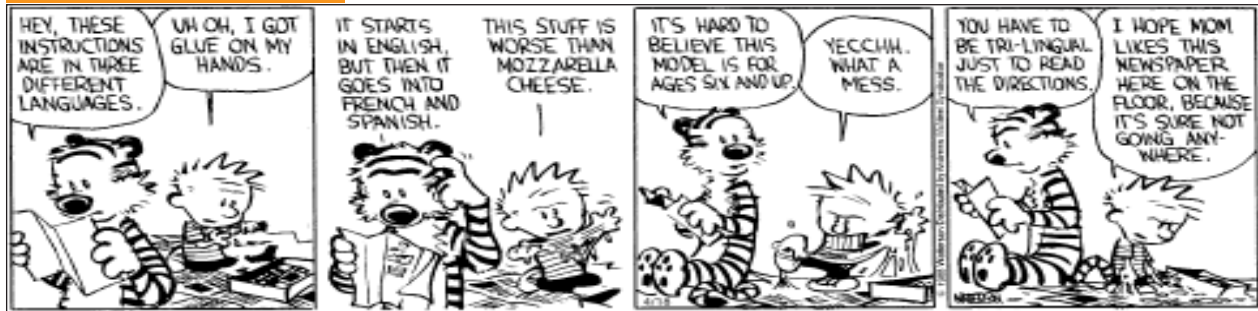
Previously, the board made approximately 13 edits and modifications to the movie before granting it a UA certificate. The editing panel instructed the producers to implement the modifications and secure approval for its screening in cinemas. The cuts involved deleting some violent scenes and a dialogue mentioning Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale as a 'saint or sant'. The film was accused by various Sikh organisations of portraying the Sikh community negatively, leading to the decision being made. The makers had three choices: to agree to the changes, challenge the recommendations in a higher court, or continue discussions with the board to find a compromise. It appears that the creators decided to conclude the ongoing battle in order to ultimately secure the certification and debut the movie in theatres. In *Emergency*, Kangana Ranaut plays the character of former Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. Anupam Kher, Shreyas Talpade, Mahima Chaudhary, Milind Soman and the late Satish Kaushik also have significant roles in the movie. The movie was initially planned to premiere on September 6.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



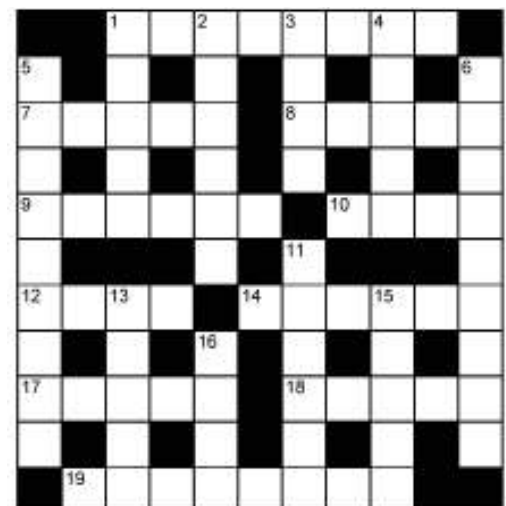
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

ACROSS

- 1 Quiet and calm
- 7 A large bird of prey
- 8 A narrow shelf
- 9 Thin soft paper
- 10 Opposite of false
- 12 Look after for someone
- 14 Captured
- 17 Foe
- 18 This travels on rails
- 19 Checked the size of

DOWN

- 1 Sheets in a book
- 2 A road with trees along both sides
- 3 Long slippery fishes
- 4 Beneath
- 5 A month
- 6 Saying again
- 11 Quicker
- 13 A female relation
- 15 Someone who works on 18 across
- 16 See with these



Vijayawada

the pioneer

Follow us on
@TheDailyPioneer
facebook.com/
daily_pioneer

Tuesday
October 1, 2024

SHIKHA DUGGAL
shikhaduggalwork@gmail.com

With a focus on the harmonious cycles of change and rebirth that the seasons offer, the seventh edition of Echoes of Earth will honour their important role in forming the natural world. This one-of-a-kind festival, which will be held in Bengaluru, will highlight how resilient nature is to these periodic shifts and promote considerate, sustainable lifestyle choices that safeguard the delicate equilibrium of our ecosystem. And then there's Hamza Rahimtula, who is poised to dazzle crowds with his extraordinary talent and a wide range of musical genres! An exclusive conversation with him will reveal how.

"Electronic music through such festivals can share the right ideas that can drive sustainability," the musician starts speaking his heart out. "Festivals are seen by today's youngsters as an opportunity to get together and celebrate life. They socialise with both old and new acquaintances, take in musical influences, share ideas with one another and establish a profound connection with nature. Music events are, in my view, the ideal venues for inspiring people. With people travelling from all across the nation, we can start a chain reaction and propagate trends in these settings." When they return to their individual cities, they can share the concepts they acquired at the festival because the upcoming event is directly exposing people to a wide range of themes, including waste management and the use of recycled materials. Entrancing, in the language of music, as they say.

There are aspects of the festival's philosophy that he personally agrees with. In his instance, the goal is to preserve Rajasthani folk music while current house music serves as a representation of it. "Our sound has evolved through the years and is not only limited to Deep House," the pioneer of house music explains. "Where we play determines what we play. At a festival, it could be energetic peak-time house music, or it could be something a little more subdued and sophisticated for more private settings. The song I'm working on with the Rajasthan Folkstars is also evolving sonically. We've allowed it to open. We've added more and more instruments, such as the



Music festivals power EDM's boom with dash of folk flavour!

Hamza Rahimtula, who views himself as a house music educator, is all set to dazzle the crowd at the seventh edition of Echoes of Earth. In an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*, he speaks of the music festivals, preserving the Rajasthani folk music, the electronic music scene in India and more

Sarangi and Algoza flute, that are frequently used with Rajasthani folk music, to Jassu's Khartal and Firoj's Bhangam and Morchang."

After just returning from a European tour, Rajasthan Folkstars and Hamza Rahimtula will combine traditional music with electronic dance. During their visit to Festival Les Escapes in France earlier this summer, he discovered that all of the cups used to serve drinks are separated at the end of each day so they can be used again the following day. In addition to sustainability, this is a fantastic example of regional festivals working together to lessen their waste output. Thus, "Whether we are performing in India or abroad, the music we create together essentially stays the same. While there is always some variety, we have remained true to our primary concept of providing soundscapes driven by percussion. We want to add a tribal vibe to the festival's layout while blending in the sounds of nature. This offers the listeners a much more primitive sensation that is potent and unifying while also enabling us to connect with them through the surrounding natural environment."

With its integration of art, music, con-

servation and sustainable activities, Echoes of Earth is a celebration of community and the environment rather than just a music festival. "My method of working with musicians has been to record them in the studio while they are present. Bassekou Kouyate, a legendary West African musician, was recorded in Hyderabad and I completed producing the entire song months later. Vocals, a talking drum and an African guitar known as a Ngoni were all recorded and connected to an amplifier and Wah pedal. The capacity to comprehend songs that have been passed down from generation to generation is what I appreciate most about working with musicians that reflect the music of their region; it helps me connect with their community and region on a much deeper level." As a DJ, he is ultimately in charge of getting people to dance; thus, when he eventually finishes a track, he also feels that it should always be dancefloor-oriented!

At the forefront, Echoes provides a wide variety of educational and artistic experiences while being firmly based on the concepts of sustainability and conservation. The Greener Side, a project, is being introduced by the festival this year with much excitement. Its goals are to increase awareness, motivate meaningful conservation

action and cultivate a strong bond with the environment. "At the same time, "electronic music in India is experiencing great growth right now. The focus now is on exporting talent with the appropriate acknowledgment, rather than just importing it. Music festivals are crucial in shaping the future of electronic music, its culture, the artists involved and most crucially, the fans. In a way, it is the duty of festivals to be able to highlight this, as promoters will constantly look at festival lineups to determine who to book. Festivals exhibit good judgment in the artists they book, which helps to grow the market both domestically and abroad."

In addition to providing a wide range of experiences focused on art, environmental education and conservation this year, Echoes of Earth will also help upskill local communities through educational and

skill-building activities. For the reason that, "Winter demands more mystical and dark compositions that are intense in character and raw in energy. Making more upbeat, soulful music is the focus of the summer season. Cantos, a music producer from Sacramento, California, is one person I always look forward to working with.



We've never had to modify one another's viewpoints. The tune never stops moving. Of course, everyone is in their dream scenario in this one." It is, of course, extremely complex with live musicians, particularly if Hamza has to edit recordings to match the schedule. Nonetheless, the outcomes have consistently been satisfying, making the work worthwhile, according to our interviewee. Working with producers, singers and musicians who already understand what he's attempting to do has always been the plan for him. It wouldn't be prudent for him to work with someone whose musical tastes are excessively unconventional.

"We discovered a side of ourselves when performing in Goa earlier this year. We've also written and created a lot of new stuff, which I've been roadtesting at clubs. It would be fascinating to see how that enthusiasm transfers to an outdoor setting. At its core, it nevertheless has a very natural sound, with tribal percussive sounds that evoke a meeting in the forest," he thinks back on happy times. He goes on to tell us that not all folk music is meant to be danced to. Folk music, on the other hand, comes in a multitude of forms and can really get us moving. Since electronic music does not really describe what he creates, he does not consider the term to be suitable. Put another way, Hamza tailors a dance floor experience for people by including dancing components from both techno and folk music. He therefore likes to describe himself as a dance music artist. In conclusion, he thinks that dance music—whether it be electronic, folk, or a combination of the two—has the ability to bind people together because it doesn't require that they comprehend the meaning behind the lyrics. People are moving to the rhythm and the corresponding sounds that enhance the groove!

Hey everyone, Hamza Rahimtula views himself as a house music educator. Sharing this music with the folks on the dance floor is therefore always exciting. He is free to move around and provide people with a dynamic and varied dancefloor experience because there are so many subgenres under one umbrella! His concert at Echoes of Earth will include some of his favourite producers mixed in with a ton of previously unheard material.

Behind spy drama, Berlin's story of deception

TEJAL SINHA
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

Choosing the title *Berlin* for a Hindi film set in 90s New Delhi is something unusual. In Atul Sabharwal's spy drama set in an atmospheric environment, *Berlin* represents a café, also referred to as a coffee house in the past, located in the country's capital city. Hidden within a cloud of cigarette smoke and mystery, it is situated in an inconspicuous square in the diplomatic area of the city. The scene takes place in the winter of 1993, leading up to Russian President Boris Yeltsin's important trip to India.

In the city of secrets, where loyalty is a luxury and truth is a rarity, *Berlin* unfolds a gripping tale of spy craft and conspiracy. Let's take you through some insights that director Atul Sabharwal has to share with us exclusively and to begin with, he expresses his gratitude with a tremendous response: "When you're making a film, you're sort of in a tunnel vision and you don't know how receptive people would be. Also because movies take time to get made, purely as the stories; so from the point you start, there is a certain zeitgeist. By the time you come out, the zeitgeist could shift. When you don't have stars in your film or the so-called marquee stars, you're relying on that zeitgeist to sort of come in your support."

The movie depicts the government interrogating a deaf-mute man (Ishwak Singh) with the help of a sign language specialist (Aparshakti Khurana). As the narrative progresses, the distinction between innocence and guilt becomes unclear, leading to the sign language expert becoming entangled in a risky maze of lies and political machinations.

Now what really went behind, he says, was persistence. "I thought that a film like this, what really got it made was the belief that the studio showed in us because they invested money in it. As much as I thought that it was a difficult one to get made, what I was really surprised was whenever I would narrate it to actors, whether they were willing to do it or not, at least they all enjoyed listening to it. When we narrated to the studio, the team at Zee Studios, it was their enthusiastic response that there was something in it that gave me confidence. It's definitely catching the ears and eyes."

Berlin had its own research that went behind bringing the concept live. Be it the research around the genre or the look of the actors, the research had multiple layers.

As you watch the entire film, one thing that you would closely note is that every character has its own importance, right from Aparshakti as the sign

expert, Ishwak as the dumb-mute man, Rahul Bose as the investigative officer, or even Kabir Bedi as the bureau chief. "I think that's a compliment if you're saying so," expresses the *Jubilee* fame, who further goes on to add, "Any good story should do that whether it was in *Jubilee*. So even if there was a cobbler coming for one scene, one episode, two shots, or even the smaller parts in *Berlin*, if they're relevant to the story, then they tend to stand out and then they tend to feel needed in the story and hence, they find their own importance. So there is no conscious division of that. The only focus is on telling a good story and if you tell that story well, then hopefully the characters will remain memorable."

Watching Kabir Bedi is always a delight and so was it this time too. But guess what? Getting him onboard was not a cakewalk; yes, you read that right? "It was a very small role and he kept questioning me about my importance to this. I had to take him through a lot of discussions, readings and explanations. Like, even till the date of shooting, he was kind of hazy. I then explained to him why only he can do it or somebody of his stature because even though he's there for a very little screen time, the stature that is needed that he's running this office could come only from a person who has an aura. I think that's what convinced him to just do it the way I was saying it."

Berlin was no less than a challenge for him as a filmmaker too, just like any other film. Specifically, "It was challenging in the area of sign language because I had to sort of find a way for us to be able to film the actors while they're doing sign so that their



hands are always visible. So you could not take the camera too close to an actor because that would, you know, then their hand movement will not be seen. It was important to make those decisions as to for how long we should stay a little away from this character. Because once the audience gets into the rhythm of their hands, then you can get closer to the characters to see their eyes and other emotions."

But initially, "How do we shoot sign language so that the meaning is conveyed to the audience as to whether this person is signing, this person is translating and this person is observing, reacting and giving feedback from the side of the glass?"

Well, speaking of working with some great talents, he says, "I enjoy working with veteran actors because there are stories to share. There was a time when we'd stand in line to buy a ticket for their film and I may have loved a certain film or a certain performance of theirs. I have a lot of nostalgia to discuss with them as opposed to the contemporary actors who are exploring themselves as much as I am exploring myself. I enjoy it as long as an actor is great like Apar, Ishwak, or Rahul; it doesn't matter whether I am in love with them in the sense of nostalgia because eventually we all have to do work together. And if an actor is great, then my work becomes that much easier."

While Atul is going to bring us some really interesting projects delving into different genres in his upcoming projects, he, however, tends to gravitate toward tragedies.

LAY BARE LOVE, SITARA WITH SONALI KULKARNI

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Part from the tremendous love that she has received in the Marathi film industry, a talented actress also in the Hindi industry is none other than Sonali Kulkarni. Considered one of the most talented actresses, her latest portrayal of Hema Chechi in *Love, Sitara*, beyond a doubt, the story revolves around the character of Sitara, played by Sobhita Dhulipala, Sonali's character does have its own importance that strengthens and takes the story ahead.

The film is currently streaming on Zee5 and the *Darna Zaroori Hai* actress expresses her gratitude for OTT and says, "I am very thankful to OTT platforms and the audiences. As lives become busier, even making time to watch something with a partner requires effort. OTT offers the convenience of watching a film while com-

muting, stuck in traffic, or relaxing at home. Audiences are wise to choose their genres and promos, which definitely gives a lot of insight as to what to expect—whether it's a film with action or something more emotional."

OTT is definitely a boon; she enthuses and *Love, Sitara* is going to comfort that section of the audience who want to be a part of a family but find themselves lost in city life, alone and struggling to survive. True that! It does.

"It was really nice to realise that every story can be completed—everyone's story has a conclusion if they wish to complete it. The best part is that no matter what decisions people make in their lives, they can reach a culmination. The endpoint is not death; it's finding yourself. No matter what you've been through, you can definitely find yourself."

A dysfunctional family that we see in *Love, Sitara*, we ask her if the movie makes her reflect on her personal equation and any change that the movie enforced on her personal life, to which she shares, "My relationships are funny; I enjoy relating with each person in my family. I'm at a touchwood phase in my life where I love my parents, and they love me. We know each other's eccentricities. My husband and I genuinely like each other, so our bond is growing stronger. With my daughter, who is quite young, I am amused to see her bloom. Currently, the ride has been pretty interesting; I wouldn't call it smooth, as that would make it tasteless and odorless. It's quite raunchy and spicy because we all add our own spices and colors to our interactions. I've come to terms with things, forgiven my past and look forward to tomorrow while staying composed, contented and happy today. So, cheers and I'm looking forward to *Love Sitara*."



INDIA PUSH FOR VICTORY WITH T20-STYLE BATTING

PTI ■ KANPUR

Trying to force a result in the limited time available, India played a sensational T20-style cricket to take a 52-run first-innings lead against Bangladesh in the second Test, infusing life into the rain-hit contest here on Monday. The sun shone bright in the Kanpur sky after two gloomy days and the on-field action finally began after losing eight sessions. India had six sessions to force a win, and the hosts did everything they could on the fourth day of the match. The pitch hardly offered assistance to India bowlers but the hosts still bundled out Bangladesh for 233 in their first innings, built around Mominul Haque's patient unbeaten 107. India then unleashed their batting might on the visitors, striking at 8.22 runs per over to reset the records for fastest team 50 (18 balls), 100 (74 balls) and 200 runs (24.2 overs) in Test cricket. India declared their second innings at 285 for nine to have another go at the visiting batters. At stumps, Bangladesh were 26 for two with Zakir Hasan and Hasan Mahmud becoming off-spinner

Ravichandran Ashwin's victims. They were trailing India by 26 runs. India are going for the kill as an outright victory will consolidate their top position in the World Test Championship (WTC) table. Considering the tougher assignments ahead, especially the Australia Tour, India need to log as many wins as possible against comparatively easier rivals to get some cushion before the tough overseas rubbers. Young opener Yashvi Jaiswal (72 off 51 balls) set the tone with three boundaries in the opening over bowled by Hasan Mahmud and skipper Rohit Sharma (23 off 11) bludgeoned Khaled Ahmed for two consecutive sixes - one landing on the roof of the stadium. It was clear that India were showing an urgency to surpass the Bangladesh total quickly after more than two days' play was lost to bad weather. The onslaught surprised the rival attack but the home fans were rewarded for visiting the stadium. Adopting a see-the-ball and hit-the-ball approach, India completed the fastest team fifty in three overs. Realising the ineffectiveness of his pacers, Bangladesh skipper



Najmul Hossain Shanto introduced spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz and he responded to the call by casting Rohit. Jaiswal completed his fifty with a single off left-arm spinner Taijul Islam and continued in his aggressive fashion. His innings, which contained 12 fours and two sixes, was cut short by Mahmud. The young opener added 72 runs for the second wicket with Shubman Gill (39). Rishabh Pant did not last long but there was no change in approach for the hosts with Virat Kohli and KL Rahul building on the foundation with their swift 87-run stand for the fifth wicket. In a breathtaking show, Indian batters hit 28 fours and 11 sixes, collecting 158 runs in boundaries. In the process, Kohli became only the fourth player in history to complete 27,000 runs in international cricket across formats. Ravindra Jadeja also cherished a rare double of 300 Test wickets and 3000 Test runs. He is the second quickest to complete the double behind England great Ian Botham. He also became only the seventh Indian to take 300 Test wickets when he dismissed Khaled Mahmud.



Samit Dravid misses India U19 first four-day game against Aus

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Injured Samit Dravid was ruled out of the opening four-day game between India U-19 and Australia U-19 and is also unlikely to be fit in time for the second match of the series. The series opener began here on Monday. Samit is currently at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) recuperating from a knee injury that forced him to sit out of the three-match youth one-dayers against the Aussies recently. He was expected to make his India U-19 debut at Puducherry but did not feature in any of the three matches. India had won the series 3-0. "As of now he's at the NCA, recovering from his knee injury. So, I don't know yet. It looks unlikely," head coach Hrishikesh Kanitkar was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo. In fact, for Samit, son of former India captain and head coach Rahul Dravid, this is the last chance to represent India at the U-19 level. He is set to turn 19 on October 11 this year, which will also

make him ineligible for playing for India in the ICC 2026 Under-19 World Cup. "His MRI scan was done during the one-day matches. We thought of giving him a go at the four-day game, but let's see how he progresses at the NCA. We are waiting for their report. We also have a second match," a source close to the development told PTI. The second four-day match will start from October 7 at Chapatuk, hence Samit has another week to recover from the knee injury. Kanitkar said playing four-day red-ball game at the Under-19 stage will help the development of players. "It's a great initiative to play Test games because red-ball [cricket] really tests you. There's enough time for the bowlers to plan and make strategies. So, for both batters and bowlers and even for fielders it's the ideal challenge to see where you stand. "To be able to play against a foreign side is a great thing. I know a lot of people, including myself who played Under-19 cricket against foreign teams and it really helped us a lot," Kanitkar added.

Good to get some overs under the belt at home as we would need to bowl a lot more in Aus: Bumrah

PTI ■ KANPUR

Jasprit Bumrah is gradually increasing his workload at home as the India pace spearhead knows he would be required to bowl a lot more overs during the five Test series in Australia. "Day two and three of the Kanpur Test were wiped out due to a wet outfield at the Green Park stadium here. "Weather is not in your control, it is the way it is. Good to get some time to relax. You've to quickly adjust to the changing conditions here after Chennai, quickly adapt and communicate with others, like

although the number of overs to be bowled will be a lot more in Australia." Bumrah told host broadcaster ahead of the fourth day's play. "There is a very good chance of them doing well (at the Champions Trophy) because they have a balanced team," the 77-year-old said. Hailed as the 'Asian Bradman' for insatiable appetite for runs, Abbas was one of the most elegant batters of his time. He played 78 Tests and 62 ODIs for Pakistan, accumulating 5062 and 2572 runs respectively. Abbar also acknowledged the consistency displayed by India across formats and said the Rohit Sharma-led team will be a strong contender for the upcoming Champions Trophy. "Indian team overall is very good. Their batters are doing well and the bowlers both are good. It is a very balanced team, one that plays soch



about changing lines and lengths," said Bumrah. "The five-Test Border-Gavaskar Trophy begins in Perth on November 22. "Bumrah relishes playing Test matches and is determined to give his best in the format. "My favourite format is the Tests, I've always said that. I'm trying to give my absolute best in this format," said the champion bowler who has featured in 36 Tests since making his debut in 2018.

PTI ■ SHARJAH

Pakistan great Zaheer Abbas feels the comparisons between Virat Kohli and Babar Azam are baseless as the Indian superstar is a lot more consistent than the under-fire Pakistan batter. Once regarded as part of the 'Fab Five' including Kohli, Steve Smith, Joe Root, and Kane Williamson, Babar is currently enduring an extended slump in form. "Yeh fizool ki baatein hai (the comparisons are pointless). Virat Kohli scores in every match the other player (Babar) doesn't score in any match so then how can you compare. The person who scores, he is the bigger player," Abbas told PTI on the sidelines of the Cricket Predicta Conclave here. Kohli has 80 international hundreds to his name while the much younger Babar has scored 31 centuries across formats. Abbar also acknowledged the consistency displayed by India across formats and said the Rohit Sharma-led team will be a strong contender for the upcoming Champions Trophy. "Indian team overall is very good. Their batters are doing well and the bowlers both are good. It is a very balanced team, one that plays soch

Comparing Kohli and Babar baseless, the Indian star way ahead: Zaheer Abbas

samajh kar (thoughtfully)," said Abbas. "They have a very good captain, who understands cricket very well. So, when everything is going in your favour it is smooth sailing. That's the case with India right now. "There is a very good chance of them doing well (at the Champions Trophy) because they have a balanced team," the 77-year-old said. Hailed as the 'Asian Bradman' for insatiable appetite for runs, Abbas was one of the most elegant batters of his time. He played 78 Tests and 62 ODIs for Pakistan, accumulating 5062 and 2572 runs respectively. Abbar also acknowledged the consistency displayed by India across formats and said the Rohit Sharma-led team will be a strong contender for the upcoming Champions Trophy. "Indian team overall is very good. Their batters are doing well and the bowlers both are good. It is a very balanced team, one that plays soch



used to be good. And now the boards are realising that we can't go on without Test cricket. "How many T20s can you play? How many white-ball tournaments can the ICC organise? Maybe 2 or 3 but in the end you have to return to ODI or Tests. "If you continue Test cricket the cricket will last longer. I know people like to get results fast but slowly they will get bored of T20s and we need Tests and ODIs." An increasing number of

players are turning down central contracts from their boards to focus on careers in T20 franchise leagues, a worrying trend that Abbas believes should be addressed. "Test cricket is ultimate. Anyone can win in T20. Teams can win by fluke. But that is not the case in Test cricket as it has two innings. You have the scope to do well in one innings. Test cricket teaches you a lot. "I know a lot of the players don't want to play Test cricket and play T20 instead. That needs to be stopped. They need

to come up with something... "Something like you have to play at least 5 or 6 Test matches a year then you can play ODI or T20s. Every year a minimum number of Test matches need to be allotted," he added. LOSS TO BANGLADESH WAS A HUGE SETBACK: Once a cricketing powerhouse, Pakistan now find themselves in a difficult situation. Their downward spiral began with the Asia Cup last year which was followed by the team's early elimination from the ODI World Cup in 2023 and the T20 World Cup this year. Earlier this month they suffered their first-ever Test series loss to Bangladesh. "Bohot bada dhakka tha (It was a huge setback) that Pakistan lost to Bangladesh. We never thought that not only Pakistan will lose but it will lose so bad. "Pakistan cricket abhi daamadol hai (is not doing great). The performance has dropped. I am hopeful that it will get better. The reasons behind this are many. "It happens, the West Indies used to be the best in the world, that's not the case now. But I'm hopeful that Pakistan cricket returns to the top, the boys are working hard." Pacer Shaheen Afridi replaced Babar as skipper in T20Is after the 2023 ODI World Cup but the former was reappointed as the captain earlier this year. Abbas urged the PCB to take some action before the issue escalates further. "Yes, there have been rivalries in the Pakistan teams in the past but the board should take note of the rivalry between Babar and Shaheen fast. The faster the better because it will keep on escalating. "Rivalry is good, but it should not become serious, if it does, it harms the team," said Abbas. Abbas, former Pakistan player Mudassar Nazar and former Pakistan coach Dav Whatmore spoke at the conclave to celebrate the centenary episode of Cricket Predicta, the largest cricket live stats based show in Asia.

We've players who will help India dominate cricket for 10 years: Laxman

PTI ■ BENGALURU

He accepted the job with trepidation but batting great VVS Laxman says he is now a content man as head of BCCI's Centre of Excellence, having played his part in creating a 'supply chain' that will help India dominate world cricket across formats for at least the next decade. Laxman took over as the head of the erstwhile National Cricket Academy (NCA) in 2021 from his one-time teammate Rahul Dravid, and built on the excellent platform that was already laid out. NCA has been refurbished into a CoE by the Board and was inaugurated on Sunday. Laxman got a one-year extension into the position after his original tenure ended earlier this year. "I can say with a lot of confidence, barring a couple of skillsets, I think, for the next 10 years, we've got a lot of players who will make our country proud. I'm not only talking about men's, but also women's (cricket) as well. We're blessed to have that kind of talent," Laxman told a select media gathering at the Centre of Excellence.

He said India's dominance in world cricket is a perfect reflection of its steady 'supply chain.' "We won the (T20) World Cup (2024) in the West Indies which was a great result. But if you see all the three formats, we have dominated. Not only the rankings, we have dominated (other aspects too). "There is a supply chain as far as cricket is concerned. That means the amount of players we have at our disposal, it is a real blessing." The 49-year-old said grooming the players without tinkering with their natural game, was essential to maintain that supply chain. "The whole idea is to monitor them, how to groom them, so that they realise their potential. It's not that we dictate them (players) that you have to do this or you have to change (technique). "Ultimately the player should feel comfortable, acknowledging and accepting that option. We don't want the player to suddenly feel the burden of whose advice he has to listen to." The former India batter then explained how monitoring of the "targeted" players was done at the CoE.



"When Rahul was the head coach of the Indian team, he used to take care of the contracted players and we at NCA used to take care of the targeted players, emerging players and the under-19 players," he recalled. For this purpose, Laxman said he and the other support staff created a wonderful synergy with various state associations to ensure continuity and similarity in coaching. "...Because ultimately the state association coaches spend a lot more time with a player than what we do. We also have an athlete management system. A profile is created for all the players who come and attend the ZCA and the NCA camps...right from their reports of skills to the fitness to the musculoskeletal screening report. "Now, we are going to even request the state association to follow that process. So, at least 50 players of each state association — 25 men and 25 women — should be there on the watch list. "We will know how the player has progressed and it will become very easy for anyone who is taking care of that player to know what the player has gone through every

year," he elaborated on the process. Along with skill enhancement, Laxman said keeping the players in a good mental state is also important for their growth. "The players themselves are so professional. They understand what is needed for them to be in the best mindset when they are competing at the highest level. As far as the junior cricketers are concerned, we have got mental conditioners who spend 8 to 10 days with the players," he said. IMPORTANCE OF 'A' TOURS: Laxman described the significance of 'A' tours in preparing a player to tackle all kind of conditions. "Every year we make sure that we have at least two A Series. Sometimes it can be challenging because we want to have an A Series whereas the other boards will be busy with their own domestic cricket. Or they may not be ready to accommodate us. "But at least we try to have two A Series. The A programme allows us to go to different parts of the world and get experience. So that when they graduate to the national team, it is not a surprise to them," added Laxman.



Committee Kurrollu deserves National Award: Nagababu

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

NAGABABU HAILED COMMITTEE KURROLLU AS A REMARKABLE FILM AND COMMENDED HIS DAUGHTER NIHARIKA'S PRODUCTION EFFORTS, SUGGESTING THE TEAM CONSIDER NATIONAL AWARD SUBMISSIONS ACROSS VARIOUS CATEGORIES!

Mega Brother Nagababu attended as a special guest at the Committee Kurrollu event, marking the film's 50-day milestone in theatres. Nagababu praised director Yadhu Vamsi for his exceptional narration in the film.

"He narrated the story to me in about one and a half hours and he showed the same on the screen very well," recalled Nagababu. The actor revealed that he couldn't finish watching the film, stopping halfway through due to the depiction of communal clashes.

"I didn't watch the film, because since my childhood, I had heard a lot about the communal and caste issues, so I was vexed with them, hence I had stopped watching the film," said Nagababu. He added that he completed the film on Monday morning. "After watching the entire film, I liked it and it took me back to my younger days and how we were



during our college days," he said. He also compared his real-life election moments, where everyone comes and says that definitely you

will win. "Some years back, when I competed as MP from Narsapuram, everyone came and told me that I would definitely win the election. But

I knew the result and I lost in the election stands in third place," said Nagababu, related to a particular scene from the film *Committee Kurrollu*.

The actor said that after watching this film, he hark back to his younger days. "This film deserves a national award, not just a regional award. There are a few categories, like national integration and also economic issues, that deserve a national award," said Nagababu. He asked the makers and his daughter Niharika, who is the producer of the film, to apply for National Awards in different categories.

Nearly eleven artists were introduced with this film and director Yadhu Vamsi also made his debut as director!

Zebra is going to be a milestone film: Satya Dev

Satya Dev and Dhanunjaya will next be seen in the upcoming film *Zebra*. The teaser of the film was released on Monday, which stars Sathya Raj, Priya Bhavani Shankar, Jennifer from Brazil, Armita Iyengar, Sunil and Sathya. Eswar Karthik from Kannada, who is directing the film, learned Telugu within a short span of time, just so he could direct the film in this language.

Zebra is releasing in Telugu and also in all other languages like Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada and Hindi.

"Director Eswar Karthik approached me and narrated to me a story about a jungle, rabbit, lion and things like that. I asked him whether he wanted my voiceover because he is making a jungle book kind of film. He immediately said that this is the prelude and then narrated the story. When the actual shooting starts, everyone is asking me who is a rabbit or who is a lion kind of question. The film has really come out very nice," said Satya Dev.

He added that the director gave me a big book of this film. "He gave me the entire script and he even mentioned where the music comes in between the story. Though I am looking with a beard now, in this film I acted with a clean shave," said Satya Dev. He added that a lot of actors from different industries, like Kannada, Tamil and Telugu acted in it. "Sathya Raj sir, Sunil, Priya Bhavani Shankar, Jennifer from Brazil, Sathya and Dhana come from different industries and this is a complete national film and I am sure it enthralled everyone," said Satya.

Ravi Basrur of *KGF* and *Salaar*



fame music director provided music for this film *Zebra*. "This film is huge in every way; I am really looking forward to this film," said Satya. Talking about Dhana, he said that both their journeys have been the same. "When I worked in a company in Bangalore, I used to come to Hyderabad and do films. My Kannada friend showed me a short film and he pointed out an actor who acted in that film and also directed it. The actor and director of that short film is Dhana and this happened a very long time ago," recalls Satya about how Dhana's journey started like

him. He added that this is going to be a milestone film in his career. "The producers came forward with this film and put in a lot of budget and this is going to be a milestone film for me and Dhana," said Satya Dev.

About the story Satya Dev reveals that everyone likes money. "Whoever likes money is definitely like this film. *Zebra* is all about white, black money and a lot of other aspects. Cars, bullets, planes and everything is there," said Satya. Manchu Manoj attended the teaser release event as a special guest and he wished the team a great success.

INITIALLY, I WORKED AS GHOSTWRITER: KALI DIRECTOR SIVA SASHU

Prince Cecil and Naresh Agastya acted in a film *Kali* directed by Siva Sashu, which is releasing on October 4. The director, Siva Sashu, shared his experience about the film and also tells how he became a director.

"I have liked writing since my childhood and I felt that's my strength. I wanted to be a director from the beginning and was very clear about it. There was a time, when I had started a business, but again I came back to writing and I even worked as a ghostwriter for a few films," said director Siva Sashu.

The director reveals that he had worked with Ashok of *Bhagamathi* fame and also Arun Prasad of *Saptagiri Express* fame. "I wrote this story during the lockdown and later I narrated it to Prince and he liked it," said the director. He added that he wanted to rope in Jagapathi Babu for one of the characters, but the equation with the production house is not set. "Then we narrated the story to Naresh Agastya and he liked it and agreed to do it," he said about the casting.

The director said that while shooting there were no problems. "We are all of equal age. So, I didn't have any problem when I directed this film and I was happy for me," he said. He also added the producer Gautam Varma is also a debutant like him.

Talking about the story, he said that suicide is not the solution. "It's not a direct message in the film, but I touched the subject and I also created a character named *Kali*, for which I got inspiration from mythology and had taken it from our *puranas*," said the director.

For another question where the film has taken longer to complete, the director said it needs a lot of pre-production work and graphics. "VFX has a significant focus on *Kali* and the film needs some high-quality visuals. The residence of *Kali* has been grandly visualised using VFX," said the director. He added that the film



has a supernatural and fantasy backdrop. Prince plays the character Shivaram, a nice person who faces numerous difficulties due to his kindness. The society treats him badly, pushing him to contemplate suicide. At that moment, a stranger, played by Naresh Agastya, arrives at his home. The plot revolves around the events that unfold in Shivaram's life after this encounter. "Apart from the story, the script and dialogues are gripping, making the entire movie interesting," he said. Neha Krishnan is the female lead. Actors Priyadarshi, Mahesh Vitta and Ayyappa Sharma gave voiceovers for this film.

1000 dancers, one unforgettable song: Thandel's Shivaratri spectacle

Naga Chaitanya's *Thandel* is highly anticipated due to its real-life-based storyline and with Sai Pallavi as the female lead. Produced by Bunny Vas and directed by Chandoo Mondeti. The director found inspiration from actual events that took place in a village in D Matchilesam in Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh. Even though these events really happened, the experiences, feelings and scenarios that took place between the couple were extremely engaging and mesmerizing, surpassing the excitement of any made-up story. The makers aimed to capture real life in the movie by including the well-known district in North Andhra, Srikakulam, along with the famous Shiva temple Sri Mukhalingam. The temple is the venue for the spectacular celebration of Maha Shivaratri, observed with great dedication, customs and magnificence. Taking inspiration from this, the creators devised a breathtaking and unprecedented Shivaratri song for the movie. The grandiose production of the song for Shivaratri aimed to evoke awe and appeal to people of all ages with its intricate settings and high production quality.

Devi Sri Prasad composed the music and Sekhar Master handled the choreography. The song starred Naga Chaitanya and Sai Pallavi, as well as a plethora of dancers. This unique and powerful Shivaratri song will soon be one of the most memorable songs in Naga Chaitanya's career. The producers unveiled a few posters from the music video shoot. *Thandel* will be available in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, and Hindi languages.



IIFA WIN: MRUNAL THAKUR 'OVER THE MOON' WITH EXCITEMENT

Mrunal Thakur has nothing but positive things to say about her acting in all of her Telugu movies, starting with *Sita Ramam*. She excelled in her first Telugu movie and carried that success into her next film, *Hi Nanna*, where she starred alongside Nani. She received recognition and prizes for her role in *Hi Nanna* and now she has earned another award—the IIFA award for Best Actress—for her remarkable performance as Yashna in the same film. This is her debut at IIFA and she has been envisioning this moment! She is thrilled to be honouring all languages in the movie theater together. This new award follows closely after her recent win at the prestigious SIIMA Awards, where she was recognised as Best Actress (critics) for her role in the same film. Having received numerous accolades.

"I am deeply grateful for this recognition," Mrunal expressed. "Playing Yashna was a truly fulfilling experience that allowed me to explore the depths of love and emotion. I owe this achievement to my incredible director, talented co-stars, and the entire team whose unwavering support made this possible," said Mrunal after receiving the award. She added that she wanted to continue this journey and share more meaningful stories with the audience.

"This is my first ever IIFA award and it's a special win to be sharing this award alongside such incredible actors like Rani ma'am, who won in Hindi and Aishwarya ma'am, who won in Tamil. This honour is truly made special owing to this," said Mrunal.

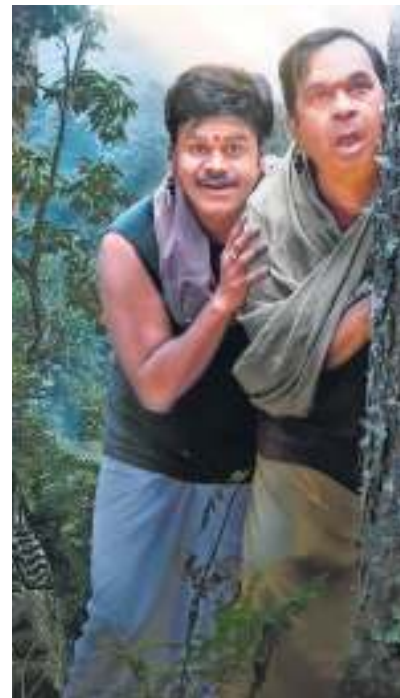


Brahmanandam, Sathagiri bring comedy gold to Kannappa

Manchu Vishnu is set to release a mythological film *Kannappa* in December. The actor not only stars in the titular role, but also produces it on a large scale. The movie will be available in various languages in addition to Telugu. The producers are announcing the actors and their appearances every Monday and this week they introduced the characters of comedians Brahmanandam and Sathagiri from the movie.

Renowned comedian Brahmanandam, known as the Comedy King, plays the character 'Pilaka', with the skilled Sathagiri appearing as 'Gilaka'. Together, they act as the knowledgeable mentors, prepared to share their wisdom and expertise with the animals of the woods. Brahmanandam and Sathagiri are peeping from behind a tree in the poster, watching something with curiosity in the forest. The poster implies that Sathagiri will bring a cheerful expression while Brahmanandam will appear astounded, hinting at the entertaining dynamic their characters will add to the film.

Kannappa is preparing for a December release.



Empowering women, enriching society: Dakshina carries powerful message

Director Osho Tulasiram, known for *Mantra* and *Mangala*, returns with a new film named *Dakshina*. The movie features Sai Dhansika, famous for her role in *Kabali*, as the main character, alongside Rishav Basu from *Mahabharat Murders* in an important role. The film's pre-release event took place in Hyderabad, with actor Sivaji and music composer RP Patnaik attending as chief guests.

During this time, Sivaji remembers his experience collaborating with the director on

Mantra. "Osho Tulasiram created waves with the film *Mantra*, which grossed over 10 crores at that time. It's a blessing to work with such a talented director and he can create cinematic wonders. I'm confident that *Dakshina* will be a huge success and I hope Osho will continue making great films after this," said Sivaji.

Director Tulasiram said that he had wonderful memories during *Mantra* with Sivaji. "Sivaji is not only a great actor but also a wonderful person," he said. He praises the music

director, writer and team for their support and excellent work on this film. About the lead actress, Sai Dhansika, he said she has delivered a perfect performance.

"Every woman in society should be strong and that's the core message of *Dakshina*," said Dhansika, the leading actress of the film. She added that when Tulasiram narrated the story, she was shocked and amazed. "This film is gripping and has all the elements of a great thriller," she said. The film is releasing on October 4.

