

the pioneer

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

The pioneer

KCR started a vile culture. KTR took it forward. Now Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Congress leaders are continuing it. The Telangana people will not tolerate the personal insults of BRS and Congress leaders and their offensive language against families and individuals who have nothing to do with politics. The time has come to boot out these parties. The BJP condemns bringing other people's family affairs and women's personal matters into politics to protect one's self-interest and for criticising adversaries

G Kishan Reddy, Union Minister P4

Govt rolls out internship scheme on pilot basis



FROM HIGH FASHION TO HIGH DRAMA



'Mr Bachchan was the one that actually BACKFIRED'



DON'T MISS...

Anam, Kolu lay stone for ghat road...

Minister for Endowments Anam Ramnarayana Reddy, along with Housing and I&PR Minister K Parthasarathy, laid the foundation stone for the construction of Ghat road to the Sri Sobhanachala Vyagraha Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple at Agiripalli on Thursday. The 2-km ghat road to the hill shrine will be constructed at a cost of Rs 2 crore. The Endowments Minister inaugurated the Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Kalyana Mandapam at Agiripalli. Speaking on the occasion, Ramnarayana Reddy said that action plans were...

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Most rivers in Bihar flowing...

The flood situation remained grim in several districts of Bihar on Thursday, with the water level of rivers still flowing above the danger mark at most places, officials said. Earlier in the day, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar inspected the water level of the Ganga at Patna's Gandhi Ghat, where it has receded from the danger mark, they said. "The water level of most rivers in the state, including Kosi, Gandak, Bagmati, Mahananda and Ganga is still above the danger mark at various places. The Water...

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Job market clocks 6 pc growth, buoyed...

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

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India need top guns firing in...

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

-SPORTS

CM for Delhi on Oct 7

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is scheduled to visit Delhi on October 7 to meet with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah. During his visit, the Chief Minister will discuss crucial topics, including World Bank funding and various projects aimed at enhancing infrastructure in Amaravati. CM Naidu has also requested an appointment with Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav to discuss significant developments related to the Visakhapatnam Railway Zone.

A key agenda item for this discussion will be the 'Bhoomi Pujamuhurtam', marking the auspicious beginning of railway zone activities. The Chief Minister's visit is expected to facilitate vital funding and support for the state's ambitious infrastructure projects. CM Naidu will discuss the first phase of the Polavaram project and the Rs 12,000 crore funds assured by the Centre, seeking the release of Rs 6,000 crore at the earliest. He will also address the relief efforts for damage caused by the recent heavy rains and floods across the state.

The CM's visit to Delhi underscores a strategic push to reinforce Andhra Pradesh's development agenda, notably through securing central support for infrastructure projects and international funding. The outcome of these engagements could significantly influence the state's growth trajectory, aligning with potential backing from the World Bank for Amaravati and the completion of key railway infrastructure.

Naidu sets 15% growth target

Reviews progress of agriculture & allied sectors, industry, and services sectors

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has urged the TDP-led NDA government to achieve economic growth through new policies in various departments. He instructed officials to aim for a growth rate of 15 per cent. A review meeting was held in the Secretariat to discuss the growth in agriculture, allied sectors, industry, and services.

While chairing the meeting, the Chief Minister noted that most sectors have been struggling due to the damaging policies of the previous government, which led to a complete economic collapse.

After officials detailed the conditions of their departments over the past 10 years, Chandrababu emphasized that the State Government is now introducing new policies and that officials must work hard to achieve economic progress through these initiatives.

The Chief Minister highlighted that officials should not only focus on improving people's living conditions and the State's economy but also ensure that there is no extra burden on citizens. He believes that farming expenses can be significantly reduced by implementing comprehensive mechanisation.

He added that the government's primary responsibility is not just to provide welfare measures but also to boost people's income by strength-



● **ECONOMIC COLLAPSE:** CM blames previous gov's policies for the economic downturn and collapse of several sectors.

● **NEW POLICIES:** State gov implementing new policies to boost economic progress in all sectors.

● **COMPARISON WITH TG:** The growth rate difference between AP and TG increases from 0.20% in 2019 to 1.5% by 2024.

● **PER CAPITA INCOME DROP:** Per capita income declined from 13.21% during TDP rule to 9.06% during the YSRCP tenure.

● **P-4 SYSTEM:** The P-4 system, set to be implemented in January, will encourage the wealthy to support the uplift of at least 10% of the population.

● **FARMING MECHANISATION:** CM suggests cut in farming expenses through mechanisation.

● **GROWTH DURING TDP RULE:** AP achieved a 13.7% growth rate between 2014-2019 despite challenges post-bifurcation.

● **IMPACT OF YSRCP POLICIES:** The growth rate fell to 10.59% under the YSRCP gov, and the per capita income also dropped substantially.

ening various sectors. Chandrababu pointed out that the State achieved a growth rate of 13.7 per cent from 2014 to 2019, despite facing challenges after the bifurcation. However, he lamented that the growth rate has since dropped to 10.59 per cent due to the backward decisions made by the YSRCP after taking power.

In 2019, the growth rate difference between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh was only 0.20 per cent, but

it has now increased to 1.5 per cent by 2024. The Chief Minister also mentioned that per capita income was 13.21 per cent during the TDP regime but fell to 9.06 per cent under the previous government, which has negatively affected people's living conditions.

Chandrababu urged officials from all departments to recognise that Andhra Pradesh ranks fifth in the South in per capita income and set clear targets by creating a vision for

improvement. He noted that some sectors are lagging and must become more active.

He informed the officials that the P-4 system will be implemented in January, encouraging financially successful individuals to help uplift at least 10 per cent of the population. He urged the wealthy and organisations to act as mentors, alongside the welfare schemes of the State government, to enhance the living conditions of the poor.



'Clean Energy Policy' soon in AP: Minister

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Energy Gottipati Ravi Kumar has stated that measures are being implemented under the leadership of Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu to position Andhra Pradesh as the leading state in the country in the electricity sector. The Minister convened a review meeting with the heads of private power generation companies related to the power sector at the Secretariat in Velagapudi, Amaravati, on Thursday. The meeting saw participation from a significant number of representatives from prestigious renewable power companies across the country. AP Genco MD Chakradhar Babu, AP Transco JMD Kirti Chakuri, and others were also present.

Minister Ravi Kumar announced that the Andhra Pradesh government will soon unveil the AP Integrated Clean Energy Policy 2024 to encourage entrepreneurs. He highlighted several issues faced by investors, including the cancellation of power purchase agreements and pending lawsuits from the previous government.

Continued on Page 2



Pawan vows to protect 'Sanatana Dharma'

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Jana Sena Party Chief and Deputy Chief Minister K Pawan Kalyan has vowed to protect 'Sanatana Dharma', asserting that it respects all religions.

Addressing the 'Varahi' public meeting here on Thursday, he questioned how one could remain silent when mischief occurs in the sacred Tirumala temple. "I never expected to find myself defending 'Sanatana Dharma' in my life. When injustice was done to me, I chose to remain silent. However, I am raising my voice against the wrongs that have taken place in Tirumala. If we protect Dharma, it will protect us," he stated.

"I never expected to find myself defending 'Sanatana Dharma' in my life. When injustice was done to me, I chose to remain silent. However, I am raising my voice against the wrongs that have taken place in Tirumala. If we protect Dharma, it will protect us."

Expressing regret over the humiliation faced by 'Sanatana Dharma' in the country, Pawan Kalyan made it clear that he was prepared to confront those who aim to undermine it. "I am not speaking here as the Deputy Chief Minister or as the Jana Sena Party chief. I stand before you as a Hindu and as an Indian citizen. Sanatana Dharma embodies the virtue of unity in diversity," he acknowledged. Pawan Kalyan highlighted that he undertook 'Prayachit Deeksha' to express repentance for the use of adulterated ghee in Tirumala Laddu Prasadam during the previous regime.

Continued on Page 2

TTD 'laddu prasadam' case hearing posted for today

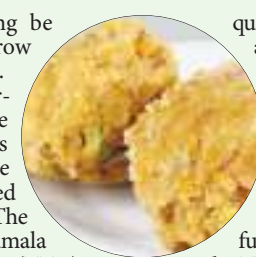
PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Supreme Court of India has adjourned to October 4 the hearing of a batch of petitions seeking a court-monitored investigation into allegations of the use of animal fat in the preparation of laddus served as 'prasadam' at the Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple in Tirumala.

The adjournment came after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta

requested the hearing be postponed to tomorrow (Friday) at 10:30 AM.

This case has garnered considerable attention due to its potential impact on one of India's most revered religious institutions. The reputation of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) is at stake as investigations into the



quality of the prasad offered at the temple continue. The Supreme Court's decision to delay proceedings has led to questions about how this will affect the ongoing probe and whether it could lead to further legal challenges for the TTD.

As the case develops, much atten-

tion will be focused on the Supreme Court's next steps in addressing these serious allegations. The outcome could have far-reaching consequences, not only for the TTD but also for public trust in religious institutions across the country. Given the heightened public interest, tomorrow's hearing is expected to be a critical moment in this controversy.

Continued on Page 2

Ex MP Suresh's remand extended yet again

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The remand of YSRCP former MP from Bapatla Nandigam Suresh was once again extended by 14 days for the second time on Thursday. The Mangalagiri court issued an order extending the remand for another 14 days remand of former MP till October 17. The former MP was arrested on charges of attack on the TDP central office in Mangalagiri in 2021 during the previous YSRCP regime.

The Mangalagiri police on September 5 arrested former Bapatla MP Suresh in Hyderabad in the case related to the attack on the TDP headquarters. The former MP was remanded for 14 days till September 19 and the remand was extended till October 3 however the remand was once again extended till October 17 today.

AP to be a drug-free state: HM

'Narcotics Control Cell' to be set up in every district



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha stated that achieving a drug-free Andhra Pradesh is the government's goal, under which a 'Narcotics Control Cell' will be established in every district. She mentioned that surveillance systems would be strengthened through the 'State Task Force' division. Ministers Nara Lokesh, Kollu Ravindra,

Sandhya Rani, Satyakumar Yadav, and others attended the ministerial sub-committee meeting on the prevention and enforcement of cannabis, held on Thursday at the Secretariat in Velagapudi.

Home Minister Anitha said that surveillance would be enhanced through the 'State Task Force' department, and with the use of the latest technology, the cultivation of ganja and the use of narcotic drugs would be curbed. She made

it clear that drug control activities would be implemented using drones, satellites, GPS tracking, blockchain technology, and AI-based CCTVs. The police system would be strengthened through special training programmes. She added that strategic check posts, hotspots, and special NDPS (Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances) beats would be set up to prevent the smuggling of ganja.

The Home Minister explained that rewards would be provided for those who reveal the location of ganja shipments through a toll-free number. She said the ministerial sub-committee had discussed all aspects of formulating policies aimed at eradicating the ganja menace, which has infiltrated streets and educational institutions.

Continued on Page 2

Min Konda comes down



Withdraws comments

Nagarjuna files defamation suit



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Akkineni Nagarjuna filed a defamation suit against Konda Surekha at the Nampally court in Hyderabad. The Akkineni family is not only disappointed by the Minister's statements but is also hurt.

Despite reports that they may not proceed legally, the family decided on Thursday to file a

defamation complaint against the Minister for her remarks.

In a complaint filed in Hyderabad's Nampally district, Nagarjuna Akkineni accused Congress leader Konda Surekha of deliberately spreading lies, fully aware that they were false, with the sole aim of tarnishing his personal, professional and family reputation.

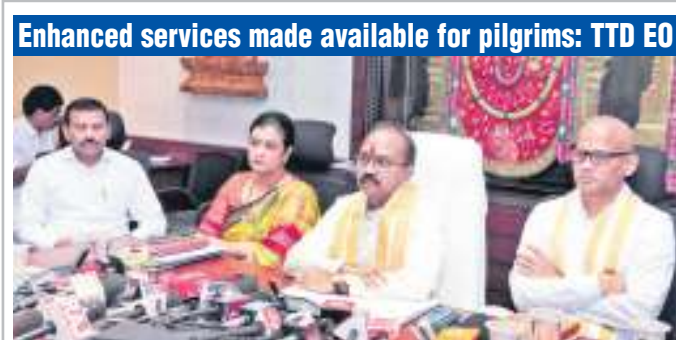
Continued on Page 2

All set for annual Tirumala Brahmotsavams from today

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has made extensive arrangements for the numerous devotees expected to visit Tirumala during the annual Brahmotsavams, scheduled to commence from October 4, said TTD Executive Officer J. Syamala Rao.

Speaking to media personnel at Annamaiah Bhavan in Tirumala on Thursday, the EO, along with TTD Additional EO Ch. Venkaiah Chowdhary, stated that on the first day, October 4, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu will present Pattu Vastrams to the Srivari temple on behalf of the state government and will have darshan of Sri Venkateswara Swamy. After the Vedaseervachanam at Ranganayakula Mandapam, he will release the 2025 TTD Calendars and Diaries, followed by participation in



the Peddasesha Vahana Seva.

On October 5, the CM will inaugurate a newly constructed modern kitchen behind the Panchajanyam Rest House, built at a cost of ₹13.45 crore, equipped with modern kitchen gadgets and facilities to enhance the Annaprasadam activities in Tirumala, keeping the inter-

ests of visiting pilgrims in mind. Elaborating on the departmental arrangements, the EO said that in light of the annual Brahmotsavams from October 4 to 12, TTD has cancelled all arjita sevas, anga pradakshina, and VIP breaks (except for protocol, which will also be cancelled on October 8 due to Garuda Seva).

"We are maintaining a buffer stock of 7 lakh laddus to meet the demand of the pilgrims. Accommodation in Tirumala, including rest houses and PACs, can accommodate nearly 45,000 pilgrims."

Privileged darshans for parents with infants, senior citizens, and physically challenged individuals have also been suspended.

"We are maintaining a buffer stock of 7 lakh laddus to meet the demand of the pilgrims. Accommodation in Tirumala, including rest houses and PACs, can accommodate nearly

45,000 pilgrims," he added. With an estimated 3.5 lakh pilgrims anticipated for Garuda Seva on October 8, all necessary arrangements have been made. The galleries along the four mada streets have been spruced up to accommodate nearly 2 lakh pilgrims.

To facilitate the movement of pilgrims, 3,000 round trips have been planned using over 400 APSRTC buses on Garuda Seva day, with 2,000 trips scheduled for other days.

The portions of Annaprasadam have been increased from 1.75 lakh last year to 2 lakh this year on Garuda Seva day. Similarly, the number of drinking water points has also been increased, with an additional 600 sanitary workers deployed. Last year, 8 supervisory staff members were deployed; this year, the number has been increased to 49 for better sanitation management.

Continued on Page 2

Jagan slams TDP-led NDA govt for delay in Budget

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former chief minister and YSRCP president, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, held a meeting with ZPTCs and party leaders from West Godavari and Eluru districts, where he criticised the TDP coalition government for failing to introduce the annual budget even after four months in power. He claimed the delay was to avoid public backlash over allocations for various schemes.



Jagan criticised the TDP for failing to deliver on their promises and noted that the public was now discussing the difference between the YSRCP and TDP governments. He emphasised that people were increasingly frustrated with Chandrababu Naidu's unfulfilled commitments, particularly in education schemes like 'Vidya Deevana' and 'Vasathi Deevana', as well as the worsening healthcare system in the state.

During the meeting at the party's central office in Tadepalli, YS Jagan accused the TDP government of using a temporary budget to escape public scrutiny, stating that a full budget would have forced them to disclose the allocations for various programmes. He contrasted this with his time in power, when, despite challenges like COVID-19 and a reduced state income, the YSRCP government fulfilled every promise made in its manifesto. He also highlighted the introduction of a welfare calendar before the budget,

which laid out the schedule and implementation of different programmes.

YS Jagan criticised the TDP for failing to deliver on their promises and noted that the public was now discussing the difference between the YSRCP and TDP governments. He emphasised that people were increasingly frustrated with Chandrababu Naidu's unfulfilled commitments, particularly in education schemes like 'Vidya Deevana' and 'Vasathi Deevana', as well as the worsening healthcare system in the

state. He expressed concern over the rise of illegal activities like gambling and the proliferation of liquor shops under the current administration. YS Jagan also mentioned the government's failure to pay 104 and 108 employees on time and the collapse of essential services in healthcare, including pending payments under the 'Aarogyasri' scheme.

Urging the cadre to stand firm with the people, YS Jagan called on them to continue fighting against the injustices

of the TDP government. He reassured them not to fear legal cases, recalling his own time in jail and the unwavering support he received from the public.

Praising the unity and dedication of the ZPTCs in West Godavari, he assured them that the party would continue to support them in facing political challenges.

He encouraged them to keep fighting for the people and expressed confidence that the YSRCP would lead the next government.

700 athletes take part in SGFAP Inter-District wrestling tourney

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The School Games Federation of Andhra Pradesh (SGFAP) Inter-District Wrestling Championship for under-14 and under-19 girls' freestyle, and under-17 and under-19 boys' Greco-Roman categories, commenced on Thursday at the Ashok Function Hall in Nunna, Vijayawada Rural Mandal, NTR District. The event was inaugurated by Vijayawada Rural Mandal ZPTC member K Suvarnaraj and School Games Federation of India (SGFI) NTR District Secretary M Srinivasa Rao.

During the inauguration, ZPTC member Suvarnaraj emphasised the importance of balancing sports and academics, noting that sporting achievements can offer students additional reservations in education and job opportunities. He cited examples of athletes excelling at the national and international levels who have secured prestigious government jobs, including placements in institutions like RGUKT (IIIT). He encouraged athletes to demonstrate sportsmanship throughout the competition.



APADCL meet focuses on enhancing air cargo capabilities

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Airports Development Corporation Limited (APADCL) successfully organised a high-level stakeholders' consultation meeting focused on enhancing air cargo capabilities in the state, particularly in the Vijayawada region. The event, held on Thursday, saw participation from industry leaders, government officials, and representatives from sectors such as logistics, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and airlines like SpiceJet, IndiGo, and Air India.

On the occasion, Praveen Adhithya, Managing Director of APADCL, emphasised Andhra Pradesh's potential to become a global air cargo hub. With India's goal of handling 10 million metric tonnes of cargo by 2030, the state's strong production of perishable goods and strategic airports position it for growth. Investments in cold storage, warehousing, and terminals can drive economic prosperity and establish Andhra Pradesh as a key player in air logistics.

S. Suresh Kumar, Secretary

to the Government of Andhra Pradesh (GoAP), highlighted the importance of establishing infrastructure to support air cargo operations, particularly in industrial corridors and port-led development areas. This was underscored during an interactive session where stakeholders raised their concerns and suggested ways the government could support existing cargo traffic.

Babu A, Secretary to GoAP, stressed the vital importance of exporting perishable goods and highlighted the need to establish dedicated air cargo and fishery hubs in Andhra Pradesh. He advocated for a cluster-based approach to enhance efficiency, boost exports, and drive sustainable growth in the sector.

N. Yuvaraj, Secretary of Industry and Commerce, emphasised the strong need for more flights from Vijayawada to major cities like Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Chennai to enable direct cargo shipments to industrial hubs, improving efficiency and boosting economic growth.

Ajay Kumar, CEO of AAI

Cargo Logistics and Allied Services Company Limited, outlined the existing air cargo facilities currently in place while emphasising the need for new, specialised infrastructure to support key sectors such as pharmaceuticals, fisheries, and aquaculture. He also stressed the importance of enhancing international cargo export capabilities to meet the growing global demand.

Other notable speakers from government and industry included P. Nageswara Rao, Assistant Commissioner, Airport Customs, Vijayawada; M. Lakshmi Kantha Reddy, Airport Director, Vijayawada; Satish Lakkaraju, CEO of GarudaVega and Board Member of the Air Cargo Forum of India; and Jaligama Prasad, Head of Cargo Commercial, GMR Group and India Post.

They participated in the conference as panel members, sharing valuable insights on the benefits of air cargo in Andhra Pradesh, with a special emphasis on Vijayawada's strategic role in this growing sector.

'Clean Energy Policy'...

Continued from Page 1

Ravi Kumar assured that a comprehensive review would be conducted, and favourable decisions would be made for the entrepreneurs. Gopinath Ravi Kumar pledged that all the concerns raised by private power generation companies would be conveyed to CM Naidu, and efforts would be made to address these issues. He noted that the power sector is grappling with various challenges due to misguided decisions made by the previous administration. The Minister remarked, "The Andhra Pradesh government is committed to strengthening the power sector. Our doors are open 24 hours for power generation companies. CM Naidu is advancing with the slogan of 'Ease of Doing Business' and 'Speed of Doing Business', which was previously highlighted at the investors' conference held in Gujarat."

The Minister also discussed various issues raised by investors, including Generation-Based Incentives (GBI), Late Payment Surcharge (LPS), Tax Pass-Through (TPT), Capacity Utilization Factor (CUF), and others.

TTD 'Iaddu'...

Continued from Page 1

In the previous hearing, the Solicitor General was asked to seek instructions on whether the Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed by the Andhra Pradesh Police should be allowed to continue its probe or if the investigation should be handed over to an independent agency. Meanwhile, the Andhra Pradesh Police has temporarily halted the SIT probe into the alleged adulteration of the 'Tirupati Laddu', following the case's escalation to the Supreme Court.

In earlier proceedings, the court observed that there was no evidence to suggest that adulterated ghee had been used in the preparation of the laddus. When complaints were raised about the taste of the laddu, the court inquired, "Was the laddu, which tasted different, sent to the lab to determine if it contained contaminated material?"

TODAY ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Dwitiya: Oct 04 02:58 AM to Oct 05 05:31 AM
Tritiya: Oct 05 05:31 AM to Oct 06 07:49 AM
Nakshatram: Chitra: Oct 03 03:32 PM to Oct 04 06:38 PM
Swati: Oct 04 06:38 PM to Oct 05 09:33 PM
Rahukalam: 10:36 AM to 12:04 PM
Yamagandam: 3:01 PM to 4:30 PM
Varjyam: 12:54 AM to 02:42 AM
Gulika: 7:39 AM to 9:07 AM
Amritakalam: 11:24 AM to 01:12 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:41 AM to 12:28 PM
VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: Partly Cloudy
Temp: 37°C
Humidity: 64%
Sunrise: 5:58 AM
Sunset: 5:54 PM
Updated: October 3, 2024 5:00 PM

AIIMS-Mangalagiri Director announces launch of kidney transplant programme

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dr Madhabananda Kar, Director and CEO of AIIMS Mangalagiri, announced the successful launch of the institute's kidney transplant programme, with three live-related kidney transplant surgeries completed within a month.

Addressing the media at the AIIMS auditorium in Mangalagiri on Thursday, Dr Kar stated that the first live-related kidney transplant was performed on 30th August 2024, on a 29-year-old male recipient, Maddala Sri Ram, a medical representative from Vijayawada. He received a kidney from his 46-year-old mother,



M. Shyamala Devi. The surgery was led by a team of dedicated surgeons, urologists, and nephrologists, with mentorship from expert surgeons Dr V Seenu and Dr A Krishna

of AIIMS New Delhi, and was overseen by Dr Uttara Das, HoD of Nephrology. Sri Ram is recovering well.

In late September, two more transplants were successfully

carried out. Kalyanam Gouri Prasad, a private employee from a village near Razole in Dr BR Ambedkar Konaseema District, received a kidney from his 47-year-old mother, K Durgamma. Another patient, Thrasula Sai Surya Prakash, a 30-year-old software engineer, received a kidney from his 51-year-old mother, T Govardhani. Dr Kar also highlighted that over the past year, AIIMS Mangalagiri has been providing comprehensive palliative care services. A dedicated team has been offering home visits to patients in the Mangalagiri and Nutakki areas, focusing on symptom management and emotional support.

AP to be a...

Continued from Page 1

He revealed that the number of suicides due to drugs and alcohol had doubled under the previous government. According to NCRB-2020 data, Andhra Pradesh ranks fifth in the country for the number of people who commit suicide due to drugs and alcohol. Home Minister Anitha stated that the police system would work to dismantle the drug networks through cyber intelligence. Apart from educating the youth through social media platforms, special conferences would be held to sensitise society so that lives are not ruined by drugs.

He also said that state borders and inter-state areas with high ganja traffic would be identified, and a robust surveillance system would be established in those locations. Tribal people would be alerted through monitoring by drones and satellites to strengthen cannabis prevention measures.

Support YSRCP MLC candidate for a big win: Malladi Vishnu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSR Congress Party Central Constituency Coordinator and former MLA Malladi Vishnu has called upon all public representatives to work hard to ensure a big win for the YSR Congress Party candidate in the upcoming joint Krishna-Guntur district graduate MLC elections. MLC Md Ruhulla and former chairman of APSFL Poonuru Gautam Reddy participated as chief guests in the preparatory meeting organised at Andhraprabha Colony, wishing success for the YSR Congress Party candidate.

On the occasion, Malladi Vishnu stated that it is essential to secure a victory for the YSRCP in this election for the future of the state, to address



public problems, and to fulfil the aspirations of the unemployed. He emphasised the need to teach a lesson to the alliance government that has let down the unemployed youth in the state. He warned that the alliance leaders will understand their fate if the people rise up through this election.

Therefore, party activists and supporters are urged to register their votes for the elections. Camps should be organised throughout the constituency from October 1

to November 6, with a target of identifying and registering at least 300 graduates in each division. He called upon everyone to work diligently and ensure a significant win for the party with a large majority.

33rd Division Corporator Sharvani Murthy, along with leaders Yaragolla Sriramulu, Alampur Vijay, Kukkala Ramesh, Konda Maheshwar Reddy, Oggu Gavaskar, Sanagashetty Haribabu, and other key leaders, were present.

SC bans caste-based discrimination in prisons

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a landmark verdict, the Supreme Court on Thursday banned caste-based discrimination like division of manual labour, segregation of barracks and bias against prisoners of de-notified tribes and habitual offenders by holding as "unconstitutional" the jail manual rules of 10 states for fostering such biases.

Observing that "right to live with dignity extends even to the incarcerated", a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices JB Chandiwala and Manoj Misra said, "Criminal laws of the colonial era continue to impact the postcolonial

Quashes jail manual rules of 10 states

"The right to live with dignity extends even to the incarcerated. Not providing dignity to prisoners is a relic of the colonizers and pre-colonial mechanisms, where oppressive systems were designed to dehumanize and degrade those under the control of the State"

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

It dealt with certain discriminatory provisions of jail manuals of Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Madhya

Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Kerala, Maharashtra Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh and set them aside.

Referring to right against touchability, it said Article 17 enunciates that everyone is born equal.

"There cannot be any stigma attached to the existence, touch or presence of any person. By way of Article 17, our Constitution strengthens the equality of status of every citizen..." it said.

Referring to an instance, it said convicts from communities lower in the caste hierarchy were expected to continue with their customary occupations in jail and the caste hierarchy replicated within the prison.

"Rules that discriminate among individual prisoners on the basis of their caste specifically or indirectly by referring to proxies of caste

identity are violative of Article 14 on account of invalid classification and subversion of substantive equality," it held.

For instance, rules assigning sweeping work which stipulate that 'sweepers shall be chosen from the 'Mehtar or Hari caste', also is part of discrimination, it said.

Penning the 148-page judgment on a PIL of journalist Sukanya Shantha who had written an article on prevalent caste-based discriminations on prisons, the CJ also ordered deletion of the 'caste' column and any references to caste of jailed undertrials or convicted prisoners' registers inside the prisons.

All set for...

Continued from Page 1

In addition to the existing five information counters, five more have been set up at Rambhagicha, Ramastupam, PAC2, opposite RTC Bus Stand, and SV Museum to provide necessary information to the public.

A total of 28 LED screens have been placed at various locations in Tirumala, with 23 situated along the four main streets. While they functioned for only three days last year, this year they will remain operational throughout the entire Brahmotsavams. Security has been strengthened, with 1,250 TTD police personnel and around 3,900 police officers deployed, along with an additional 1,100 police officers on Garuda Seva day.

To offer better services to pilgrims, this year TTD has invited 4,000 Srivari Sevaks, an increase from 3,000 last year. Medical facilities for pilgrims have also been enhanced this year. Parking arrangements have been made for 9,000 vehicles in Tirumala and 6,000 vehicles in Tirupati. On the day of Garuda Seva, the ghat roads will be open 24/7, while the movement of two-wheelers will be restricted from 9 PM on October 7 until 6 AM on October 9.

Last year, artists from 12 states showcased their art forms during the Vahana Sevas, while this year 21 states have been approached, with 19 confirming participation so far. JEOS Goutami, Veerabrahmam, CVSO Sridhar, CE Satyanarayana, Temple DyEO Lokanatham, and others were present at the meeting.

Pawan vows to...

Continued from Page 1

"Some leaders have spoken disgracefully about my visit to the Venkateswara temple in Tirumala. My daughter signed a declaration in Tirumala before we went to the temple," he remarked. The Jana Sena chief vowed to go to any lengths to protect Sanatana Dharma.

Launching a scathing attack against pseudo-secularists, he lamented the silence surrounding the humiliation of Hindu gods. "Those who speak against Hindu gods are on the rise in this country. When the rulers of Bangladesh declared their country an Islamist state, no one objected. Yet, there are those who wish to eradicate Sanatana Dharma in India," Pawan Kalyan asserted. "We are in a situation where we are afraid to speak in favour of Hinduism. The time has come for Hindus in the country to unite," he warned, threatening dire consequences for those who seek to harm Sanatana Dharma.

Expressing anger over the adulteration of Laddu Prasadam, Pawan Kalyan questioned the whereabouts of former TTD EO Dharma Reddy. "We are raising doubts about the decisions made by the TTD board during the YSRCP regime. What actions

has the YSRCP government taken against those who have attacked Hindu temples?" he asked.

Meanwhile, Pawan Kalyan released the Varahi Declaration, which states that secularism must be upheld in a manner that ensures a uniform response to any threat or harm caused to any religion or faith. A strong national Act is required to protect Sanatana Dharma and prevent actions that harm its beliefs. This Act should be enacted immediately and uniformly enforced across the nation. A "Sanatana Dharma Protection Board" should be established at both the national and state levels to oversee the implementation of this Act. Annual funds must be allocated to support this board and its activities. There should be non-cooperation with individuals or organisations that defame or spread hatred against Sanatana Dharma. Furthermore, Sanatana Dharma Certification must be implemented to ensure the purity of materials used in offerings and prasadam at temples. Temples should evolve not only as spiritual centres but also as hubs for promoting art and culture, education, economy, environmental conservation, and welfare through comprehensive planning.

Min Konda comes...

Continued from Page 1

"The statement was made with malicious intent, designed to convey falsehoods to the public at large with the objective of damaging the complainant and his family's reputation for political gain and sensationalism," the complaint said. It further emphasised that "these actions constitute a criminal offence," he said in his complaint.

Drawing flak over her comments blaming BRS leader KT Rama Rao for the divorce of actors Samantha Ruth Prabhu and Naga Chaitanya, Telangana Minister Konda Surekha on Thursday withdrew her comments that had made the Telugu cinema industry to rally behind their colleagues. Samantha and Chaitanya spoke out against the Minister and stressed that her decision to separate was mutual. Speaking to the media, Surekha said she mentioned the names of the actors as she had turned emotional over the comments made by KTR about her.

"I had to criticise him (KTR). I do not have any personal animosity towards anyone. Mentioning the name of a family was accidental. I felt really bad after seeing her post (Samantha's Instagram). Last night itself, I posted a message unconditionally withdrawing my comments," Surekha said.

Meanwhile, Surekha asserted she would not go back on the comments made against her by the BRS on social media and demanded an apology from KTR. On the legal notice sent by the BRS leader, Surekha said she would also proceed legally.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH PANCHAYATI RAJ ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
NIT No.32 to 40/TO/2024-25 Date: 01-10-2024
Online tenders are invited under e-procurement platform for 1 Road work & Bridge works with an Estimated Cost of Rs. 4953.80 Lakhs under PMGSY Grant in Krishna District. Bid upload & download starting date: 07.10.2024 onwards. Further details visit www.tender.eprocurement.gov.in. Ph.6305693265. Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Panchayat Raj, R.O.No: 14939/CLAD/11/2024-D2, Dt: 01.10.2024 Machilipatnam, Krishna Dist

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Dasara festivities begin on a grand note

Five queues for devotees; senior citizens and disabled can visit from 4-5 pm

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The nine-day Dasara Navaratri festival celebrations began on a grand note at Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam, atop Indrakeeladri as the devotees from various places thronged the goddess Kanaka Durga temple on Thursday. On this auspicious day, the goddess Kanaka Durga, the presiding deity, graced her devotees as Sri Bala Tripura Sundari Devi on the first day of the nine day celebration.

Housing and I&PR Minister Kolu Prasad inaugurated the festivities, emphasising the meticulous planning that has gone into managing the influx of devotees. The Minister reassured the public that robust measures have been established, including organised queuing systems, safe drinking water distribution points, and sanitation facilities. To prevent overcrowding, he instructed temple man-



agement to monitor the situation and manage crowds effectively. For darshan, five queue lines have been arranged to cater to the needs of devotees. Two free darshan lines, a line for Rs 100 ticket holders, one for Rs 300 ticket holders, and another for those purchasing Rs 500 tickets. Meanwhile, Annadanam building is decked to provide food to the devotees visiting the temple.

Minister Parthasarathy also introduced audio cassettes of Sri Durga Bhavani's Nama Sankirtana during the event, enhancing the spiritual atmosphere.

NTR District Collector G Srijana noted that all necessary facilities have been put in place for devotees from day one, anticipating a daily footfall of 1,00,000 to 1,50,000 visitors. Special provisions have been made for the elderly and disabled, with entry from 4 pm to 5 pm, while VIP darshan is scheduled from 8 am to 10 am and 2 pm to 4 pm. The

Collector reiterated the commitment to prioritise the common devotees and assured that arrangements will be continually reviewed per the Chief Minister's directives.

On the auspicious day of Moola Nakshatram, the Chief Minister, along with family, is set to visit the temple between 2 pm and 3 pm, where they will offer silk robes to the goddess.

Day 1 Alankaram: Sri Bala Tripura Sundari Devi

On this day, kids in the age group of 2-10 will be given new clothes and also some gifts. Payasam is offered as prasadam. Balatripura is the first goddess in the Tripura Traya and she is the main goddess of all in the Sri Yantra. Without having got the mantra of bala, one is not eligible to perform the Sri Yantra Puja.

In the first amnaya of Srichakra Bala resides, so without worshipping Bala one cannot perform puja to Sridevi.

Kanaka Durga decorated as Sri Balathripura Sundari Devi

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On the first day of the Dasara Sarannavaratri celebrations, Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha visited goddess Kanaka Durga temple atop Indrakeeladri on Thursday. The goddess was decorated as Sri Balathripura Sundari Devi on the first day.

On the occasion, the temple priests welcomed the Home Minister with temple protocol (purnakumbha). A special puja was performed in the antaralaya and Vedic pundits blessed the Home Minister Anita after the dar-

shan of the goddess.

The temple Chairman and the Executive Officer presented the goddess portrait, prasadam and silk robes to HM. Anitha said that she is blessed to visit the temple and have darshan of the goddess decorated as Sri Balathripura Sundari Devi on the first day of Devi Sarannavaratri.

The Home Minister said that she prayed to the goddess that the people of Andhra Pradesh should be happy and prosper under the administration of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu.



Gold-diamond crowns offered to Goddess Durga

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Gold-diamond crowns were offered to Goddess Durga on Thursday by various devotees, marking the first day of the nine-day Dasara Sarannavaratri celebrations at Sri Durgamalleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam, atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada. Temple officials reported that Saurabh Bora of Penance Commercial Pvt Ltd, ROC, Mumbai, donated a gold diamond crown weighing 1,817 grams. Additionally, CM Rajesh of Vishnu Meadows, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad, presented a 210-gram gold diamond sun and a 207-gram

moon for the decoration of Goddess Durga.

Emerald Furniture, along with Haimavathi and Surya Kumari of Kondapur, Hyderabad, through Vijayawada West MLA Y. Sujana Chowdary, contributed Vajra Bottu and Vajra Nattu Vajrapu Bulaki, weighing a total of 33 grams. MLA Sujana Chowdary handed over the ornaments to Endowment Department Principal Secretary S. Satyanarayana and Temple Executive Officer K.S. Rama Rao.

The Dasara festivities commenced with priests performing rituals such as 'Suprabhata Seva' at 3 AM,

'Snapanabhishekam' at 3:30 AM, 'Balabhoga Nivedana' at 6:30 AM, and 'Nitya Archana' at 7:30 AM. The temple was opened for darshan at around 9 AM.

Furthermore, the Andhra Pradesh Government has issued orders to appoint a special Seva Committee consisting of 56 members for the seamless conduct of Dasara Navaratri. The Andhra Pradesh Revenue (Vigilance-VII) department issued the orders for the appointment of the Seva Committee for the upcoming 'Dasara Navaratri Utsavams-2024,' scheduled to be held from October 3 to October 12, 2024.

New unit in Sri Sathya Sai to provide gas green

Exclusive CNG filling station with de-compressor unit launched

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

RJ Rathnakar, managing trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, V. Rathna, Superintendent of Police, Sri Sathya Sai district, and AG&P Pratham team launched the exclusive compressed natural gas (CNG) filling station with a de-compressor unit (DCU) to supply piped natural gas (PNG) to Prasanthi Nilayam, households at Puttapparthi and CNG to transport vehicles in Anantapur-Kadapa region. The connected grid lines in these areas will take natural gas to approximately 1,500 households and allow the local residents to reap its diverse benefits to the fullest.

RJ Rathnakar said, "In our district, we are happy to welcome a new age of clean energy with the opening of AG&P Pratham's exclusive CNG cum DCU station. This facility will not only help reduce carbon footprint but also enhance our transportation network. I urge everyone to embrace the use of Piped Natural Gas (PNG) for the benefit of our community

and to fully appreciate the diverse advantages it offers. As we strive together to build a sustainable future for generations to come, I encourage everyone to consider converting to compressed natural gas (CNG)."

Chirag Patel, Deputy Regional Head - AG&P Pratham said, "In light of the growing global focus on sustainable ecosystems, AG&P Pratham is committed to paving the way for green homes and sustainable mobility in India. Our rapid expansion of advanced City Gas Distribution infrastructure reflects our dedication to this mission. The newly launched CNG and DCU outlet is a significant milestone in our efforts to provide the region with clean, non-pollutant natural gas. With a substantial investment of nearly Rs. 22 crore in this advanced facility, AG&P Pratham is actively spearheading the establishment of a comprehensive pipeline network spanning approximately 24 km, which will be completed in a phased manner over the next eight-nine months."

APCC's plea to name a train service after Goddess Durga

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) vice-president Kolanukonda Sivaji has appealed to South Central Railway (SCR) general manager Arun Kumar Jain to name a train service after Goddess Kanaka Durga, the presiding deity at the Indrakeeladri hill here.

In a letter to the SCR General Manager here on

Thursday, the APCC Vice-president said that there is not a single train service in the name of Bejawada Kanakadurgamma or the sacred Indrakeeladri hill.

"Vijayawada Railway Division is providing the highest revenue to the Railways in the country. However, it is regrettable that none of the train services are named after Goddess Kanaka Durga or Indrakeeladri to reflect the

heritage of the people of this region. The people of the region urged to discuss this matter in a meeting with the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha members under South Central Railway Divisions to be held here on Friday. We are demanding on behalf of the Congress party to take appropriate action in this matter," Kolanukonda Shivaji told the SCR General Manager in the letter.

Chambers seeks direct flight between AP and Vietnam

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry Federation (AP Chambers) has written to the CEO of Vietjet Air requesting them to introduce direct flight connectivity between Andhra Pradesh and Vietnam.

On behalf of AP Chambers, its president Potluri Bhaskara Rao wrote to the CEO of Vietjet Air. "Andhra Pradesh (AP) is an agro-based State and is the leading producer of cereals, pulses, food processing, shrimp farming and primary process-

ing, spices, cotton yarn, auto components, bulk pharma drugs, etc. Vietnam imports most of these products for further value addition in order to export to other countries. Shrimp is primarily processed in AP and exported to Vietnam for further value addition. Similarly, the yarn produced in AP is exported to Vietnam and textiles are made in Vietnam."

AP Chambers said, "Vietnam is a very popular tourist destination for the people of Andhra Pradesh and it is estimated around 30 per cent of four lakh tourists visiting Vietnam from

India are from AP. The students from AP are opting for Vietnam for higher studies like medicine, agri farming, etc., and the trend will further pick up if there is a direct flight from Andhra Pradesh.

"Since Vietnam is an affordable tourist destination (4 to 5 hrs travel time), the tourism from AP will tremendously improve if a direct flight is introduced from Andhra Pradesh, either from Visakhapatnam or Vijayawada. Both the cities have international airports with all facilities. International tourism has tremendously

increased from the State over the years as there is a huge affluent population in the region."

As Vietjet Air operates almost 35 departures per week from India, AP Chambers requested a direct flight with two departures per week some time ago.

The Chambers mentioned that the proposed Free Trade Agreement between India and Vietnam will further boost the travel between the two countries and in view of the huge potential requested Vietjet Air to consider introducing a direct flight.

Construction of new ESIC hospital gains momentum

Stone for the hospital, spread over 8.58 acres, was laid in 2016

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The long-awaited construction of a new Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) hospital near the national highway in Sheelanagar, Visakhapatnam, is finally underway. This much-anticipated project, spread over 8.58 acres and costing Rs. 384.26 crore, promises to significantly enhance healthcare access for employees and workers in the Uttaraandhra region.

Originally sanctioned during the tenure of Union Minister M. Venkaiah Naidu, the foundation stone for the hospital was laid in 2016. However, the project faced significant delays due to land allocation challenges. After sustained efforts by BJP leaders, construction finally commenced in April 2023, marking the end of a seven-year hiatus. The Central Public Works Department (CPWD) is overseeing the construction of the hospital, which is fully funded by the Central government. The facility will feature 350 general beds and a 50-bed super-specialty block, with a targeted completion date of October 2025.

According to project offi-

cials, substantial progress has been made over the past 18 months. Land levelling, foundation digging, and the division of blocks have been completed, while the mortuary block has reached the slab level. Additionally, work on the service tunnel and entry and exit points is progressing swiftly. Once completed, the Sheelanagar hospital will offer a comprehensive range of medical services and patients need not travel to external facilities for tests or surgeries. This is a significant improvement over the existing ESI Hospital in Malkapuram, which currently outsources major operations and MRI scans to corporate hospitals.

PVN Madhav, former MLC and BJP leader, expressed satisfaction with the rapid pace of construction. He highlighted plans to utilise available buildings to provide services without waiting for the entire hospital to be completed. The Sheelanagar ESIC hospital is poised to become a cornerstone of healthcare in the Visakhapatnam region, delivering high-quality medical care and advanced treatments to local employees and workers.

Durga Puja to illuminate Vizag with cultural splendour

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Bengali community is determined to make the celebrations grand

The port city of Visakhapatnam is gearing up for a vibrant celebration of Durga Puja, a festival symbolising the triumph of good over evil. While it may not match the grand scale of Kolkata's legendary festivities, the Bengali community in Visakhapatnam is determined to recreate the magic through stunning pandals and traditional music.

At the forefront of these celebrations is the UTSAB Cultural Association, which will be hosting the festivities at AMCOSA Hall in Maharaniapeta. The event will begin on Panchami morning with a soulful musical programme, Probhati, featuring timeless tunes from Bengal. Women in traditional Bengali sarees, along with others, will

gather for a series of cultural events that proudly showcase their rich heritage.

"Durga Puja is more than just a festival for us; it's a connection to our roots," shared Chanda Mukherjee, probashi Bengali. She fondly recalled Ananda Mela, the traditional food festival on the first day of Durga Puja. "It's a way to bring the flavours of Bengal to our new homes," she said.

"The festivities will officially begin with 'Devir Abahon' on October 8 at 11 am, Panchami day, at AMCOSA Hall," said Dr. Alok Mazumdar, president of the UTSAB Cultural Association. "Facing the divine presence of Durga Maa, family members will sing songs, seeking blessings for everyone," he added,



expressing the spiritual depth of the event.

As the festival progresses, the grand welcome of goddess Durga, along with her chil-

dren—Ganesha, Lakshmi, Saraswati, and Kartikeya—will take place on October 9, Shashti day, amidst the rhythmic beats of the dhak and the sound of conch shells. The rituals of Devir Bodhan (consecration) and Pran Pratishtha will be performed at 6:30 pm to invoke the deity's presence in the idol. "The unveiling of the goddess's face is the most significant ritual," shared a devoted participant. Later in the evening, the goddess will be adorned with her ten powerful weapons in a ceremonial Astra ritual.

One of the most anticipated moments is the celebration of Ashtami, where devotees observe a fast before offering the ceremonial Pushpanjali. This is followed by the much-

loved bhog—a simple yet delicious meal of khichuri, labra (mixed vegetable curry), fried brinjal, tomato chutney, and payesh (sweet rice pudding). "The bhog is not just food; it is a sacred offering that brings the community together," said Anand Kumar, a dedicated follower of Durga Maa.

Kumar also highlighted one of the festival's most captivating events, the Dhunuchi Naach. "Dancers balance dhunuchis—earthen incense burners filled with burning coconut husk—while moving gracefully to the rhythm of traditional dhak drums and conch shells," he explained, describing the mesmerising folk dance performed during the Aarti to honour goddess Durga.

From Shashti to Navami, the evenings will be filled with vibrant cultural performances. "We have lined up themed dances, singing performances, and children's competitions," shared Dr. Mazumdar. "The cultural programmes presented by the women of our community are always well-received and loved by all."

Ashish K Saha, another prominent member of the association, emphasised the festival's ability to unite people and showcase artistic expression. "Durga Puja is a celebration of love, power, and the victory of good over evil. Every year, the festival amazes us with its grandeur," he said, referring to the intricate pandals, grand idols, and elaborate themes that reflect the perfect blend of traditional craftsmanship and modern creativity.

Anam, Kolusu lay stone for ghat road to Sobhanachala temple

PNS ■ ELURU



Speaking on the occasion, Ramanarayana Reddy said that action plans were being formulated to develop temples and protect their properties. He stated that there are 27,000 temples to which committees can not be formed. However there are 1800 temples for which committees can be formed, he said, adding that people who belong to the OCs, BCs, SCs and STs will be accommodated in the committees

In this regard, Nuzvid Constituency has a thousand Swayambhu Kshetras which have thousands of acres of forest land and thousands of acres of tanks with reservoirs, he observed.

The people of the constituency have been yearning for a long time for the construction of a ghat road to the hill shrine Lakshminarasimha Swamy temple and their wish would come true as soon as the stone was laid today for the construction of the ghat road, the Minister acknowledged. Collector K Vetri Selvi, RDO Y Bhavani Shankari and other officials were among those who attended the programme.

government is committed to implementing all the assurances in the coming days, he reiterated.

I&PR Minister Parthasarathy pledged that efforts would be made to develop temples in the Nuzvid constituency and make the

constituency a leading tourist centre in the state. Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu announced that he is thinking of developing the famous shrines in the state more spiritually and developing them as spiritual tourist centres as well.

Women's panel member consoles bereaved family

PNS ■ CHITTOOR

Andhra Pradesh State Women's Commission member Sheik Rukheeya Begum consoled the family whose six-year-old daughter Ashipiya was found dead in the summer storage tank on the outskirts on October 2.

The Women's Commission went to Punganur and consoled the parents of the deceased girl and conveyed her sympathies. She also visited the summer storage tank where the body of the six-year-old Ashipiya was found floating.

Later, talking to the media, Commission Member Sheik Rukhiya Begum said that it is unfortunate that the six-year-old girl Ashipiya was found dead. She said that the Ajmatullah, the father of the deceased girl complained about the disappearance of their daughter on Sunday.

The police formed special teams and conducted a massive search for her. Unfortunately, the body of the six-year-old girl was found floating on the summer storage tank on October 2. Reiterating that the Government is committed to protecting the women in the State, she said that steps were taken to ensure that such incidents would not recur again. Sheik Rukhiya Begum said that she would take the heinous crime incident to the notice of the Chief Minister and do justice to the bereaved parents.

Make State 'Swach AP' by 2029: CM

PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday called on the people of the state to resolve to turn it into Swachh Andhra Pradesh (clean state) by 2029.

The Chief Minister stressed that everyone should make it a goal without compromise.

"Today, we have to make a resolution that by 2029 Andhra Pradesh State has to become Swachh Andhra Pradesh. We should make it our goal. There is no compromise," said Naidu, addressing a public meeting at Machilipatnam in Krishna district, on the sidelines of the Swachta hi Seva programme, commemorating Gandhi Jayanthi.

Further, the CM announced there will be no tax on garbage from today in the state and promised to introduce the matter in the cabinet and pass orders to this effect.

Underscoring the importance of using technology to maintain cleanliness, Naidu said he is contemplating a novel idea of using surveillance cameras and drones to clear garbage. He said the government will use technology to ensure there is no garbage and highlighted the immense utility of drones during the recent floods in Vijayawada.

The CM noted that drones were used to drop food and also



"Today, we have to make a resolution that by 2029 Andhra Pradesh State has to become Swachh Andhra Pradesh. We should make it our goal. There is no compromise," said Naidu, addressing a public meeting at Machilipatnam in Krishna district, on the sidelines of the Swachta hi Seva programme, commemorating Gandhi Jayanthi

identify garbage to dispatch a tractor to clear it.

Earlier, Naidu paid respects to Mahatma Gandhi and swept the roads with sanitation workers, school students and others.

Reminding that Pingali Venkayya, who designed the Indian flag, was born in Krishna district, Naidu said it is a matter of pride for every Indian and

promised to build a medical college in his name.

Likewise, he promised to develop Machilipatnam beach and also Bandar Laddu (sweet) and old gold businesses, among others.

Later, the CM inspected the progress of Machilipatnam port works and promised to complete its construction by 2025.

Attack on advocate protested

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Lawyers staged a protest in front of the court as well as in front of the Director General of Police (DGP) office on Thursday demanding action against the

Madannapet police officers who allegedly assaulted advocate MA Kaleem.

Advocate MA Kaleem has been representing Musi River evacuees in court over disputes regarding double bedroom houses

that were previously allocated to them. According to advocate Kaleem, the police targeted him, raided his house and forcibly took him away in a vehicle, subjecting him to physical abuse and verbal harassment.



VMRDA to thrill tourists with sky cycling, zip lining at Kailasagiri

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Area Development Authority (VMRDA) is all set to offer tourists a thrilling Dussehra gift with the launch of sky cycling and zip lining activities at Kailasagiri. These adventure sports, aimed at boosting tourism, had been planned two years ago, but faced delays until recently.

"The project had stalled for a while, but with Commissioner Viswanathan's intervention, we've been able to revive it and accelerate the works," said Balaramaraju, the executive engineer overseeing the project. Viswanathan reviewed the earlier plans and took swift action to ensure progress.

'Bhoomi puja' for South Coast Rly Zone soon: MP Ramesh

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Anakapalle MP CM Ramesh announced that a Bhoomi Puja for the proposed South Coast Railway Zone (SCoR) will be performed soon. The MP, who recently assumed the chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways Union, shared the update during his maiden visit to Visakhapatnam after assuming the new role.

Speaking to the media, Ramesh said, "The State government has already handed over the land for the construction of the SCoR Zonal headquarters and the date for foundation stone-laying ceremony will be announced shortly". Railway users all across the North Andhra region welcome the news as they have been keeping fingers crossed for more than five years for operationalisation of the railway zone.

The MP stated that the Visakhapatnam Railway Zone was important for bringing growth and development to the region's economy. "This zone will improve connectivity, increase trade, and provide



jobs," said Ramesh. He also admitted that Andhra Pradesh faced a few challenges while upgrading the railway infrastructure as well as passenger services.

The MP made the comments following the Minister of Civil Aviation K. Rammohan Naidu revealing that the South Coast Railway Zone will be announced later this month. This was during the flagging off of the Visakhapatnam-Durg Vande Bharat Express on September 16. During this, Naidu had promised the public that preliminary work for the South Coast Railway Zone will be

undertaken soon. "I will work towards getting railway projects to North Andhra as well as the entire State," further added Ramesh.

Naidu had earlier, in the same event in September, said, "The 'double-engine sarkar' of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Centre and Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu in Andhra Pradesh is committed to the operationalisation of the railway zone. The State government has already handed over the land required for construction, and the bhoomi puja would be performed between Dasara and Diwali".

555 lost, stolen mobile phones recovered; restored to owners in Kadapa

PNS ■ KADAPA

The Kadapa district police has recovered 555 lost or stolen mobile phones and handed them over to the owners.

SP V Harshavardhan Raju said that the district police recovered 555 lost or stolen mobile phones worth Rs 1.8 crore. Some of the phones were handed over to the owners at a programme held here on Thursday.

The SP said that the police team under 'Operation Mobile Shield' used advanced technology to recover the lost or stolen mobile phones. The police received complaints on losing of mobile phones through the Central Equipment Identity register portal. The SP said that so far a total number 4,068 lost or stolen mobile phones, worth Rs 7.4 crore, had been recovered under the Operation Mobile Shield in the district in five phases. The police personnel used the most advanced Digital Forensic, GPS Tracking, IMEI Tracing and CyberVigil tools to trace lost or stolen mobile phones. SP Harshavardhan Raju



asked people not to buy mobile phones without a receipt, not to respond to video calls of unknown persons and to complain to the police if there is any cyber fraud.

In case of mobile phone theft, bank accounts should be blocked immediately, the SIM card number should be disabled without delay, financial apps like Google Pay, and PhonePe

should use 2-factor authentication or biometric security and complaints should be raised through MMTS or CEIR portal, SP Harshavardhan Raju told the people.

Officials directed to check illegal transportation of granite

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam District Collector A Thameem Ansariya has directed the officials concerned to take steps to prevent illegal transportation of granite in the district. She held a meeting with the district-level task force committee here on Thursday. She reviewed the progress of the granite sector in the district and the illegal transportation of Granite slabs from the district.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said there are 85 Black Galaxy Granite Quarries in Budavada, RL Puram, Cheemakurti Villages of Cheemakurt mandal.

The Collector stated that the average revenue of the district from the Granite sector is Rs 250 crore, adding that 80 per cent of the Granite material produced in the district is exported abroad mainly to China, Taiwan and European countries and the remaining 20 per cent granite material is polished here and marked in the country.

Deputy Director of Mines Department Rajasekhar



The Collector stated that the average revenue of the district from the Granite sector is Rs 250 crore, adding that 80 per cent of the Granite material produced in the district is exported abroad mainly to China, Taiwan and European countries and the remaining 20 per cent granite material is polished here and marked in the country

explained that 1225 cases have been registered during the last five years and a penalty of Rs 206.31 crore has been imposed on illegal transportation of Granite slabs in the district.

Collector Thameem Ansariya directed the officials of Revenue, Police, Commercial Tax, Mines and Geology departments to work in coordination to contain the unauthorized transportation of Granite slabs in the district.

The Collector also ordered the mining officials to set up mobile teams, if necessary, and set up two check-posts, as discussed in the committee and set up CCTVs at necessary places to contain illegal transportation of Granite slabs from the district.

She told the officials that complaints are received on illegal transportation of Granite slabs and she instructed the officials to lay special focus to prevent the same. Additional SP Nageswara Rao, DTC Sushila and other officials were among those who attended the meeting.

BJP against bringing personal, family matters into politics: Kishan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Clearance of furniture from ex-CM's camp office urged

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) has officially requested the General Administration Department (GAD) of Andhra Pradesh to facilitate the clearance and return of furniture items from the former Chief Minister's camp office. In a formal letter submitted to the Deputy Secretary of the GAD, YSRCP General Secretary and MLC, Lella Appi Reddy, urged prompt action in this regard. The party has previously sent multiple requests to the GAD, with reminders on 15th June, 19th June, 1st July, and 29th July 2024, but no action has been taken so far. As the former Chief Minister's camp office is being converted into the party's central office, YSRCP has reiterated the need to free up space to accommodate political operations. The YSRCP has provided the GAD with a detailed list of furniture, categorising items they wish to retain and those to be returned. The party has also expressed willingness to cover the costs for retaining certain furniture items, should the department approve such an arrangement.

ACROSS THE STATES



63.88% turnout recorded in J&K Assembly elections

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



Construction of 161-ft-high Ram temple spire begins

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



Odisha: 696 leopards found in 1st govt-sponsored census

The first state-sponsored leopard census conducted in Odisha has revealed the presence of 696 leopards in different forest areas of the state, officials said. The census report of the Odisha Forest Department was released during an event to celebrate the State Wildlife Week here on Thursday. Commenting on the 'All Odisha Leopard Estimation', Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), Wildlife, Susanta Nanda said about 200 leopards were located in the Similipal Tiger Reserve and surrounding areas, which is the highest in the state. The Satkosia landscape turned out to be another promising site for these animals, boasting the second-highest leopard population in the state at 150, Nanda said. During the census, 70 to 80 wild leopards were found in the Hirakud, Redhakhol and Sambalpur areas in Sambalpur district, followed by 40 in the Sunabeda and Khariar forests in Nuapada district, he said. "Forty-five percent of the leopard population in Odisha is located outside the protected area network... The territorial forest divisions have considerable leopard presence," the report said.

Govt rolls out internship scheme on pilot basis

Aims to provide 1 cr internship over 5 years

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

The internship programme will commence on December 2.

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



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

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

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

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

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

and Rs 500 will be paid by the company from its CSR funds. Also, a one time grant of Rs 6,000 for incidentals will be disbursed by the ministry to each intern, upon joining the place of internship.

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

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

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

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

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



Ceasefire with Pakistan along LoC in J-K has sustained

Chinar Corps GoC Lt Gen Rajiv Ghai

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

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

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

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

Lt Gen Ghai, who is relinquishing the command of Chinar Corps, said the ceasefire understanding has sustained. "There are certain tenets to that ceasefire understanding which both the sides follow. Every now and then, if any of the sides has any exception to any activity that may have been prosecuted by the other side, those are brought to notice through various means."

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

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

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

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

Savarkar used to eat meat, was not against cow slaughter

PNS ■ BENGALURU

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

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

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



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

Says Karnataka Minister Dinesh

'Unfortunate, condemnable': BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

Rao's statement is "unfortunate, insulting and highly condemnable", he said.

He was a democratic person."

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

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



I have faith in judiciary: CM Siddaramaiah

Says truth will always triumph

PNS ■ MYSURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, facing probe into the MUDA 'scam' case, on Thursday asserted that he is conducting himself in accordance with his conscience and confident that truth would prevail as he once again rejected opposition calls for his scalp.

Social activist Snehamayi Krishna, one of the complainants on the alleged irregularities in the land allotment case, meanwhile, appeared before the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) in Bengaluru to give evidence and produce records in connection with the investigation initiated by the federal agency, sources said.

Another complainant, Pradeep Kumar S P alleged that the Chief Minister and others were trying to destroy the evidence in the 'scam' and requested the Enforcement Directorate to initiate action against them.

"Satyameva Jayate," Siddaramaiah declared as he spoke at the inaugural ceremony of the ten-day Dasara celebrations on the premises of temple of Goddess Chamundeshwari, the presiding deity of Mysuru and its royals, atop the Chamundi Hills here.

BJP spreads hatred, oust it from Haryana: Rahul

PNS ■ NUH

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

Gandhi was addressing a public meeting in Nuh that had witnessed incidents of violence last year after a Vishva Hindu Parishad procession was attacked by a mob, leading to the death of six people, including two home guards and a cleric.

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

"The most important thing is brotherhood. Wherever the



BJP and RSS people go, they spread hatred. In whichever state they go, somewhere they talk about language, somewhere they talk about religion and somewhere they speak about caste.

"Hatred has to be ended. India is not a country of hatred, it is the country of 'mohabbat'. And you have shown this to the entire country," said Gandhi.

India is the country of 'mohabbat ki dukan', not 'nafrat ka bazaar', he said "We will not let this hatred

win in the country. Love, brotherhood and unity will win in the country," said the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha.

"With hatred, the country gets weakened. Hatred spreads sorrow and fear. It is only love which is an antidote to hatred. Love spreads brotherhood and with love, the country progresses. We talk about love but they (BJP) spread hatred and try to break the country," he added.

Holding a copy of the Constitution, Gandhi said it has protected the rights of the poor, farmers, and labourers but "the BJP and the RSS were hell-bent on attacking the Constitution."

"The fight is about this. If the Constitution does not remain, then you, the poor, would not have anything. Your land, money, and water will vanish. These will go into the hands of select 20-25 people," he said.

Air Marshal SP Dharkar assumes charge as Vice Chief of Air Staff

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Air Marshal SP Dharkar, an accomplished fighter pilot with 3,600 hours of flying experience, on Thursday assumed charge as Vice Chief of the Air Staff.

He succeeds Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh who became the Chief of Air Staff on September 30.

Air Marshal Dharkar has flown various types of fighter jets and trainer aircraft and commanded a MiG-27 squadron.

He is an experienced qualified flying instructor, fighter strike leader and instrument rating instructor.

Commissioned in the fighter stream in 1985, he is an alumnus of Rashtriya Indian Military College (RIMC), National Defence Academy (NDA), Defence Services Staff College and the US Air War College.

He has commanded a frontline fighter unit and served as the first Director General of the Defence Space Agency.



Air Marshal Dharkar was serving as the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Eastern Air Command prior to taking over as Vice Chief of Air Staff.

He has also served as the assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Training) at the air headquarters.

As the Director General of the Defence Space Agency (DSA), he was responsible for handling all aspects related to setting up of the new organisation.

Most rivers in Bihar flowing above danger mark

PNS ■ PATNA

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

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

"The water level of most rivers in the state, including Kosi, Gandak, Bagmati, Mahananda and Ganga is still above the danger mark at

various places. The Water Resources Department (WRD) is on alert and flood protection work is being carried out as required," an official notification said.

According to the state's disaster management department, food packets and other relief materials are being air-dropped by IAF helicopters in 17 flood-affected districts, including East and West Champaran, Araria, Kishanganj, Gopalganj, Sheohar, Sitamarhi, Supaul, Madhepura, Muzaffarpur, Purnea, Madhubani, Darbhanga and Saran.

Altogether, 33 teams of



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

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

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

Researchers link climate shocks with increased domestic violence

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

As global warming intensifies, the researchers, led by those at

the University College London, UK, urged countries to include funds and gender action plans in climate mitigation to address this issue, even as they

said the climate shock-violence link remains complex and challenging to discern in a manner understandable to policymakers.

The team did, however, add that domestic violence was

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

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



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PAPER WITH PASSION

The caste contest

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

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



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

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PICTALK



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

Online gaming industry needs regulation and govt support

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

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



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

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

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



ARJUN SINHA

BJP strives hard to imbibe 'integral humanism'

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



K S TOMAR

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

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

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



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

Ethical Governance vs Corruption: A key tenet of Upadhyaya's philosophy was the need for ethical governance, marked by integrity, honesty, and service to the people. While BJP leaders, including Modi, have presented themselves as champions of clean governance, the party has faced allegations of corruption, crony capitalism, and favouritism toward large corporations. Such accusations, particularly regarding land acquisition policies and privatisation, have cast doubt on the party's commitment to Upadhyaya's ethical standards.

Inclusive Society vs Polarisation: Upadhyaya's vision of an inclusive society focused on addressing the needs of all communities, ensuring harmony across social and religious divides. However, the BJP has often been criticised for promoting divisive politics, particularly along religious lines. Reconciling Hinduva-driven politics with the ideals of inclusion and social harmony remains a central challenge for the BJP as it seeks to bridge the gap between rhetoric and reality.

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



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

reliance. The promotion of local manufacturing, domestic industries, and efforts to reduce dependence on foreign goods align with his philosophy. The "Make in India" initiative, a key aspect of this vision, has made strides in boosting domestic production and job creation. However, the globalised nature of modern economics makes it challenging to fully realize a self-reliant economy.

Striving toward Upadhyaya's Vision: As the ruling party, the BJP's journey in adopting and implementing Deendayal Upadhyaya's ideals has been a mixture of successes and challenges. While considerable progress has been made in promoting nationalism, self-reliance, and Antyodaya, the party faces significant hurdles in achieving true economic decentralisation, upholding ethical governance, and fostering social harmony. The complexities of modern governance, global economic integration, and political strategies often pull the BJP away from Upadhyaya's pure vision. However, the ideals of Integral Humanism remain a guiding light, challenging the party to strike a balance between philosophical ideals and contemporary realities in their pursuit of a better India. (Writer is a political analyst and strategic affairs columnist based in Shimla; views are personal)

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DECLINE OF GANDHIAN IDEALS

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

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

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

FLOODS HITS BIHAR

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

India's triumph in Kanpur



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

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

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

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

Anshu Bharti | Begusarai

KARNATAKA LAND SCANDAL

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

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

CK Subramania | Bengaluru

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

REBALANCING THE GLOBAL ORDER

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



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

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



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

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

How global powers exploit democratic ideals



V K BAHUGUNA

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(The writer is a former civil servant; views are personal)

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

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

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

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



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

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

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

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



instance, if someone from Bihar or Uttar Pradesh travels

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

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

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

IN BRIEF



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

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



BoB to sell Oman operation to Bank Dhofar

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



Goyal meets biz leaders in US to seek investments

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

CROSS-BORDER ELECTRICITY TRADE

India, Nepal Bangladesh sign tripartite agreement

PNS ■ KATHMANDU

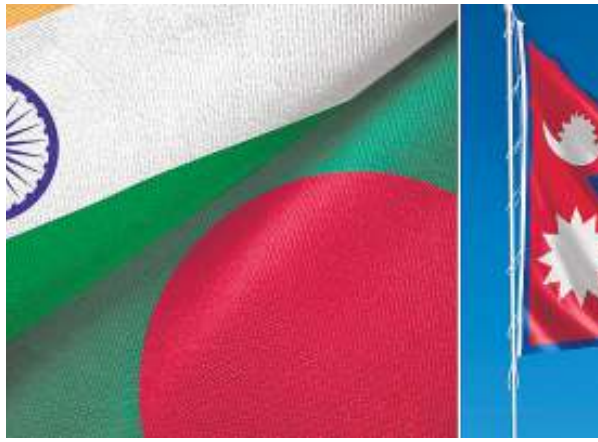
Nepal, India and Bangladesh on Thursday signed a long-awaited tripartite agreement to facilitate cross-border electricity trade, officials here said.

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

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

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

Electricity will be exported to Bangladesh via the Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur 400 KV transmission line, with the metering point in



Muzaffarpur.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Google, CleanMax to add clean energy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

Corporate India likely to offer 9.5 pc salary hike: Survey

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

the current economic landscape.

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

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

Jamaica looks to replicate India's UPI success

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Talking about his visit,

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

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

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

Another agreement signed was for joining the Global Biofuels Alliance.

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

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

Market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies dropped



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

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

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

From the 30 Sensex firms, Larsen & Toubro, Reliance

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

JSW Steel emerged as the only gainer.

"The domestic market took a sharp downturn following Iran's launch of ballistic missiles at Israel, sparking fears of retaliation and escalation in

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

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

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

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

Gold, silver rebound on strong festive demand

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

It had closed at Rs 78,100 per 10 grams on Tuesday.

Silver also jumped by Rs 665 to Rs 93,165 per kg from Rs 92,500 per kg in the previous close.

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

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

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

"A possible increase in jewellery demand amid peak festival season and a weak Indian rupee also aided the commod-

ity in the domestic market," Hareesh V, Head of Commodities at Geojit Financial Services, said.

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

However, silver climbed Rs 225 or 0.25 per cent to trade at Rs 91,600 per kg on the MCX. In the Asian trading hours, Comex gold is trading 0.17 per cent lower at USD 2,665.20 per ounce.

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

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

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



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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

Non-traditional IT hubs



showed significant growth, potentially indicating a geographical diversification trend.

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

per cent, the report said.

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

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

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

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

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



HOUSEFULL 5 TEAM SHOOTS ON LUXURY CRUISE IN LONDON

Sajid Nadiadwala's *Housefull 5* marks a milestone as the first franchise to reach its fifth installment. This highly anticipated film features an ensemble cast shooting on a luxurious cruise starting from London to France to Spain and back to the UK for an impressive 45+ days. It's been a while since Bollywood has showcased a film set against such an exhilarating backdrop!

With a star-studded lineup, *Housefull 5* boasts some of the biggest names in Bollywood, including Akshay Kumar, Riteish Deshmukh, Abhishek Bachchan, Jacqueline Fernandez, Nargis Fakhri, Sanjay Dutt, Jackie Shroff, Sonam Bajwa, Chitrangada Singh, Soundarya Sharma, Dino Morea, Chunky Pandey, Fardeen Khan, Johnny Lever, Akashdeep, Nikitin Dheer, Shreyas Talpade, Ranjeet and more. The film is directed by the talented Tarun Mansukhani.

Housefull 5 is scheduled for release on 6th June 2025!

what's brewing?



LOOKBOOK

Louis Vuitton's latest Paris Fashion Week runway show was a stunning spectacle, drawing A-list celebrities from around the globe. Nora Fatehi stole the spotlight with her daring ensemble, joined by style icons Zendaya, Black Pink's Lisa, Gims and more, who showcased their impeccable fashion sense. With Zendaya and Nora Fatehi at the forefront, the event seamlessly blended fashion, culture and celebrity glamour.



Badhaai Do fame Chum Darang to spice up Bigg Boss 18

As the much-anticipated premiere of *Bigg Boss 18* approaches, excitement is building among fans eager to witness the latest twists in the iconic reality show. This season, titled "Time Ka Tandav," promises to deliver thrilling surprises for the contestants. According to reports, it has been confirmed that the talented actress Chum Darang, known for her roles in *Gangubai Kathiawadi* and *Badhaai Do*, will be joining the *Bigg Boss 18* house. Sources indicate that Chum has been in final discussions with the show's makers and is officially on board to showcase her dynamic personality alongside a lineup of other well-known celebrities. Unlike previous seasons, this year's edition will focus solely on celebrity contestants, moving away from the influencer format. The theme of this season revolves around the concepts of the past, present and future, setting the stage for intriguing challenges and interactions within the house. Chum Darang has made a significant impact in the film industry with her recent performances, particularly her role as Bhumi Pednekar's love interest in *Badhaai Do*, which received widespread acclaim. Additionally, she starred in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Gangubai Kathiawadi* alongside Alia Bhatt.



SUKESH CHANDRASHEKHAR WRITES TO JACQUELINE, ANNOUNCES CONTEST FOR FANS

Sukesh Chandrashekar, currently in custody for an alleged Rs 200 crore extortion scam, has penned a new letter to Bollywood actress Jacqueline Fernandez, with whom he reportedly had a relationship.

He began the letter by expressing, "Baby girl WoW, Just WoW, I watched *Stormrider* have no words baby you are the real warrior Princess my warrior princess, how beautiful you are god. On top of all this your voice in the track proved to the world you're a powerhouse of talent. Baby how much you would make me fall in love, with you over and over again."

Further in the letter, he shares that he had gone crazy watching the trailer of *Kill Em all-2*. "All the beautiful women in Hollywood, watch out, the real queen of beautiful is gonna take over now."

He went on to announce, "For all the lovely people out there, especially Jackie's fan I am offering the lucky 100, supporting *Stormrider*, song, 10 Mahindra Thar Roxx and 100 iPhone 16 Pro. So here is the Contest once again, like last time for *Jimmy Jimmy* all of you showed So Much love and made it a Superhit and 100 lucky winners got iPhone-16 pro.

Now this time We Up the Game, Guys Jackie has Put So much of hard work and efforts for you guys in the track *Storm Rider*, I want all of you to make *Stormrider* a bigger hit than *Jimmy Jimmy*."

He had also shared the process of the contest and further mentioned, "All the above prizes announced are given by me on personal level, and Thar Roxx Winners, all the tax and registration will be borne by me including the cost fully of Thar Roxx. So guys start right now, make *Stormrider* a storm hit giving 100 Million by November 2024. My Baby Jackie, guess what, Baby another tick on my bucket list, baby bought the Boeing Corporate Jet a week ago, with killer Interior, Now Baby you can fly to LA nonstop, feeling Being at home while flying whenever you need, instead of flying Commercial. Baby you Know I would do everything to make you feel special, Baby Remember no one in this world can ever love you like me, at the same time, I also know no one can love me as you."



Border 2 cast gets broader

Ahan Shetty has officially joined the formidable cast of Bhushan Kumar and JP Dutta's highly anticipated *Border 2*, alongside industry heavyweights Sunny Deol, Dillip Dosanjh and Varun Dhawan. Directed by Anurag Singh, this sequel to the iconic war film *Border* promises to be an action-packed spectacle, blending patriotism with gripping storytelling. The addition of Ahan to this stellar ensemble has heightened the excitement, as fans eagerly await to see the dynamic interplay between these powerhouse actors. With its release set for January 23, 2026, *Border 2* is poised to deliver a memorable cinematic experience. Known for his action-filled roles, Sunny Deol will bring his intensity to the screen, while Dillip Dosanjh and Varun Dhawan add their unique flair to the battalion. Ahan Shetty's inclusion rounds out the cast, making this film one of the most anticipated releases in the coming years.



TANUJ VIRWANI'S HILARIOUS MISADVENTURE

Popular actor Tanuj Virwani, who recently welcomed a baby girl, made quite an entertaining appearance on Zee Cafe's latest show, *Just Talk Sneakers*. Tanuj shared a funny story that had everyone in splits. "I was shooting for a show in Tbilisi, Georgia, when I discovered a brand called Golden Goose. I had heard that the king himself, Shah Rukh Khan, wears it but had no idea one could get it in this small town," Tanuj recalled. Excited, he tracked down a store, even though it was quite far from the shoot location. However, midway through the drive, the car ran out of fuel, leaving Tanuj stranded in the middle of nowhere. The driver hurried off to get petrol, while Tanuj stressed firstly about making it to the store and secondly, but most importantly, returning back on the sets. After a tense wait, the driver emerged with fuel and they finally made it to the store, only to find out that it catered only to women. But as luck would have it, the storekeeper pointed out that he did have pairs for men, but only 3 were in stock. While Tanuj's frustration was seeping in, he suddenly decided to just pick the only three pairs available without trying and rush back to his shoot. Further Tanuj recalled, "Only people close to me know about my deep love for sneakers. I purchase them from every corner of the world and showcase them like a prized trophy. However, this quest for looking for SRK's favourite brand led me to buy shoes of a smaller size. The choice was between returning back empty-handed or coming back with a size smaller, so obviously I chose the latter. I had to flaunt the babies, so I wore them the next day. I cut my toenails and squeezed my foot to get into it. My walk was indeed a sight to behold.. haha."

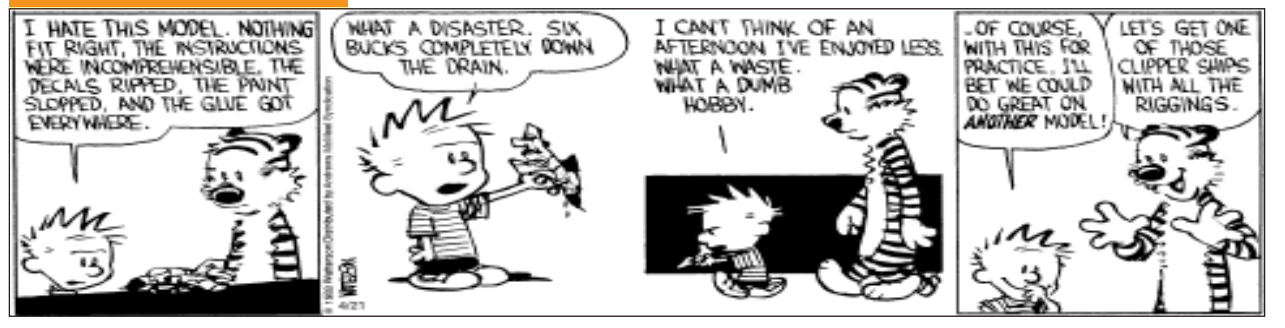


FUN

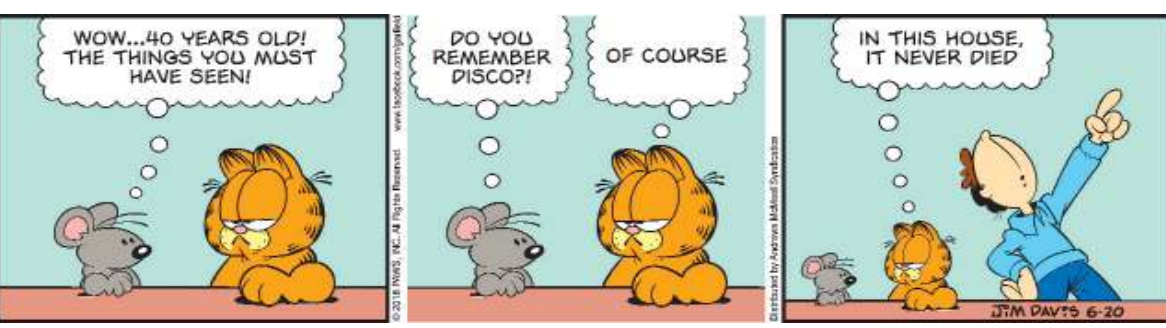
ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



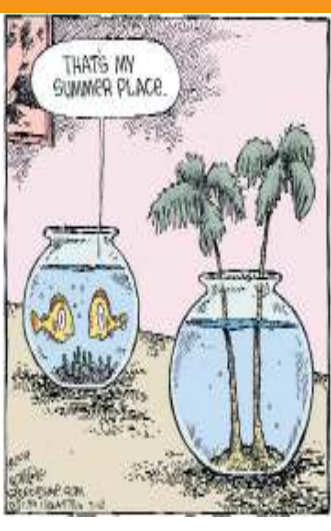
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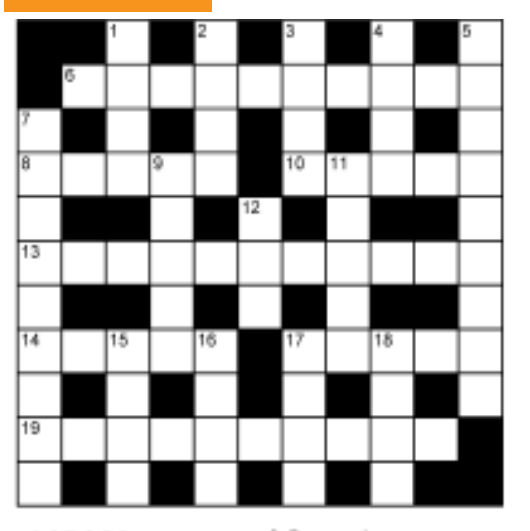
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- 6 Below
- 8 Frequently
- 10 Water vapour
- 13 Snapshots
- 14 Words that name
- 17 An item of furniture
- 19 A surgeon performs these

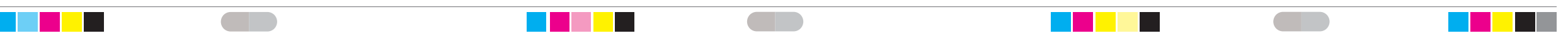
DOWN

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

SOLUTION

M	U	R	D	E	R	S	K	I	N
A	T	T	A	C	A	T	I	O	N
R	I	D	E	G	A	R	T	I	O
F	E	R	N	E	R	E			
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A	J	E	A	L	O	U	S		
S	S	A	B	T	S				
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GINGER MEGGS



Vijayawada

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Friday
October 4, 2024

FROM HIGH FASHION TO HIGH DRAMA

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

TRAVELOGUE



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

When love meets mortality

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

PLOT

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

ANALYSIS

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

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

PERFORMANCES

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

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

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

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

TECHNICAL ASPECT

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

Directed by: Gajendra Ahire

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

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

Cinematography by: Krishna Soren

Streaming on: Zee5

Rating: 4/5

REVIEW



VERDICT

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

Eat less red meat, lower your diabetes risk



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INDIA NEED TOP GUNS FIRING IN UNISON AGAINST NEW ZEALAND

PTI ■ DUBAI

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

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



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

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

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



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

PTI ■ LIMA (PERU)

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Weight management is athlete's responsibility: Mary Kom

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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



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

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

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

AP ■ COLUMBUS (OHIO)

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

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



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

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

'Mr Bachchan was the one that actually backfired'

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Film fraternity rallies together amid Surekha's controversial comments!

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



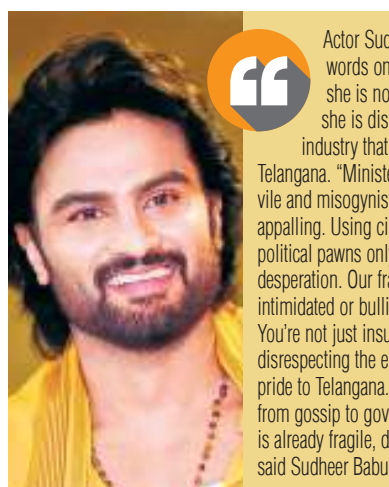
Superstar Mahesh Babu, in a strong-wording message, said he was anguished by the unacceptable remarks and language used by a woman minister on another. He added that these comments are cheap and baseless. He strongly condemns it. "Extremely pained by the comments made by Minister Konda Surekha on fellow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



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



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



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



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

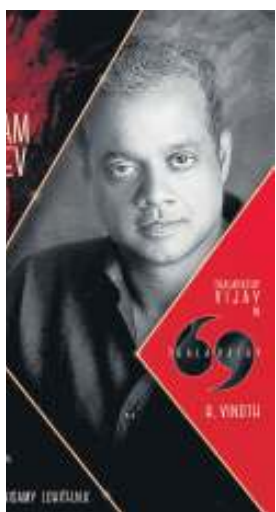
Priyamani, Gautam Menon also roped in for *Thalapathy69*

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

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

work in movies across all these languages.

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



Priyanka Mohan escapes unhurt in terrible accident!

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

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

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

'JANAKA AITHE GANAKA WILL BE AN ENTERTAINING FILM'

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

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

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

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

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

