

the pioneer

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

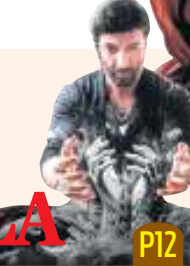
People won't back hateful conspiracies of
Cong: Modi



CARBON TAX
PROPOSED BY EU UNILATERAL,
ARBITRARY: FINANCE MINISTER



Actor Gopichand opens up about
Viswam and return of
SRINU VAITLA



QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer

The Revanth Reddy government has given EC certificates to the lands located in FTL and buffer zones in the last 10 months. The Revanth Reddy government has been doing all this as part of diversion politics. Bhatti Vikramarka spoke targeting middle class people. I will soon reveal the details of 30 companies, along with the bigwigs, that have encroached the lands".



-Katipally Venkataramana Reddy
BJP MLA, Telangana

DON'T MISS...

VPA launches operation to clear...

The Visakhapatnam Port Authority (VPA) has initiated a significant operation to remove sunken vessels from the fishing harbour. Launched on September 11, this ambitious project aims to clear out six trawlers and 11 boats that have been hindering activities at various jetties for years. "We are extremely grateful to the local fishing community for their help in identifying these sunken vessels," a VPA spokesperson stated. "Their support is crucial in ensuring the safety and accessibility of our harbour." The removal process involves intricate...

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Restoration of statehood in...

The restoration of statehood from the status of union territory (UT) in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) by the Centre in future will not affect the status of new legislative assembly, legal experts said on Wednesday. In response to a query over the impact on the newly-elected J&K legislative assembly if the Centre decided to restore statehood, senior lawyer and constitutional law expert Rakesh Dwivedi opined it will not be necessary to dissolve the assembly. Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan echoed similar sentiments...

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Infosys, Microsoft to boost Cloud...

IT giant Infosys on Wednesday announced expansion of its partnership with Microsoft to help drive global customer adoption of generative AI and Microsoft's cloud platform Azure. Additionally, Infosys will also act as a strategic supplier to support cloud and AI workloads for Microsoft's enterprise customers. It will infuse Microsoft's generative AI suite of offerings across its Solution IP portfolio to bring unique capabilities to market, helping clients achieve cost-efficiency, scalability, and...

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Arshdeep Singh enters top 10...

Riding on a string of impressive performances, Indian seamer Arshdeep Singh entered the top 10 among bowlers and was placed eighth in the ICC T20I rankings issued here on Wednesday. The left-arm seamer, who returned 3/14 in the opening T20I against Bangladesh in Gwalior last Sunday, jumped eight spots with 642 rating points to reach the eighth position. He is the only Indian bowler in the top 10. England's Adil Rashid continues as the top-ranked bowler in the shortest format followed by Akeal...

-SPORTS

Biz titan Tata no more

Nation mourns the loss of a visionary

PNS ■ MUMBAI/HYDERABAD

Ratan Tata, chairman emeritus of the Tata Group, has died at the age of 85. Tata was in critical health condition and admitted to the Intensive Care Unit at Mumbai's Breach Candy hospital.

Tata Group Chairman N Chandrasekaran expressed profound grief on the passing of Padma Vibhushan Ratan Naval Tata, a man whose leadership and values left an indelible mark on the Tata Group and the nation. Ratan Tata passed away on 9th October 2024, leaving a legacy of excellence, philanthropy, and innovation.

Ratan Tata, born on 28th December 1937, was the scion of one of India's most influential business families. He took over as chairman of Tata Sons in 1991 and under his leadership, the group expanded significantly, acquiring global brands like Jaguar Land Rover and Tetley Tea. Known for his vision and bold decisions, Tata transformed the conglomerate into a global powerhouse while maintaining a strong emphasis on ethical business practices.

In a heartfelt tribute, N Chandrasekaran described Tata as

more than just a chairperson. "To me, he was a mentor, guide, and friend," Chandrasekaran shared. He spoke about Ratan Tata's unwavering commitment to integrity, innovation, and social causes, which helped the group become a global icon under his leadership. "He led by example, and his values will continue to guide the Tata Group," he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also took to social media to pay his respects to Ratan Tata. In a tweet, he wrote, "Shri Ratan Tata Ji was a visionary business leader, a compassionate soul and an extraordinary human being. He provided stable leadership to one of India's oldest and most prestigious business houses. At the same time, his contribution went far beyond the boardroom. He endeared himself to several people thanks to his humility, kindness and an unwavering commitment to making our society better." Ratan Tata's contributions to philanthropy, particularly in education and healthcare, were noted as having touched the lives of millions. His dedication to social

welfare is reflected in Tata Trusts, which has supported various initiatives, including healthcare, education, rural development, and innovation. His leadership in launching the Tata Nano, an affordable car, demonstrated his commitment to improving

Continued on Page 2



Babu bats for combined polls

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, on Wednesday, stressed the need for the whole nation to welcome 'one nation-one election' (jami elections) system. The CM, after returning from a two-day Delhi visit, told the media persons on Wednesday that if the nation has sustainable governance, the whole country will witness speedy development. "Combined elections should be held for Lok Sabha, Assemblies and the local bodies. Then, focus can be laid on development. We support Prime Minister Narendra Modi's objective of 'one nation-one election'," Chandrababu said.

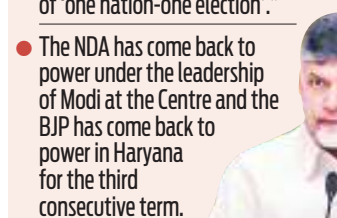
"The NDA has come back to power under the leadership of Modi at the Centre and the BJP has come back to power in Haryana for the third consecutive term," Chandrababu said and added that the BJP leaders worked in close coordination and the high command too worked hard to achieve this victory. In Haryana, BJP won 48 seats out of 90 with 39.94 per cent of votes -- 3.54 per cent more than last time. Expressing the hope of favourable results in the upcoming elections in Jharkhand and Maharashtra, too, Chandrababu said that 'one nation-

"Combined elections should be held for Lok Sabha, Assemblies and the local bodies. Then, focus can be laid on development. We support Prime Minister Narendra Modi's objective of 'one nation-one election'."

The NDA has come back to power under the leadership of Modi at the Centre and the BJP has come back to power in Haryana for the third consecutive term.

He stated that welfare and progress should be taken further simultaneously and that Modi not only won the polls for the third consecutive term, but also undertook several welfare programmes.

"The YSRCP leaders shamelessly tried to cause damage to Prakasam Barrage by pushing boats and now they are talking about matchboxes and food."



one election' is the policy of the NDA. Chandrababu is confident that the nation will achieve a top position in the world under the leadership of Modi, and said that India will be the third largest economy in the globe very soon with Vikasitha Bharat-2047.

Continued on Page 2

SCoR zone set to move forward after years of delay

There were land allocation issues during YSRCP Govt's term

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's invitation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to lay the foundation stone for the new South Coast Railway (SCoR) zone has confirmed that the long-pending project is finally moving forward. The new SCoR zone, a major development for the region, faced delays primarily due to land allocation



issues during the previous YSRCP government's term. "If the land had been allotted during the YSRCP regime, the new railway zone would have been operational by now," said a source. While the YSRCP government had identified a 52-acre plot at Mudasarlova for the project, 30 acres of it were tied up in legal disputes.

Continued on Page 2



India defeats Bangla

Claim T20I series with 86-run

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A dominant India claimed the three-match T20I series against Bangladesh with an 86-run hammering of the visitors in the second game here on Wednesday. Asked to bat first, India scored an imposing 221 for nine and then stopped their opponents at 135 for nine for the home team's biggest win against Bangladesh. Veteran Mahmudullah, who is retiring after the final match of the series, waged a lone battle with a 39-ball 41.

Sanju Samson started the India innings with a couple of boundaries but failed to carry on for long, while Abhishek Sharma and skipper Suryakumar Yadav too did not last long enough as the hosts slipped to 41 for three in the sixth over. Nitish Reddy (76 off 34 balls) and Rinku Singh (53 off 29 balls) led India's recovery with a superb partnership of 108 runs for the fourth wicket. Hardik Pandya then smashed a 19-ball 32 to consolidate India's innings.

Brief scores:

India: 221/9 in 20 overs (Nitish Reddy 76, Rinku Singh 53, Hardik Pandya 32) b Bangladesh 135/9 in 20 overs (Varun Chakravarty 2/19, Nitish Reddy 2/23) by 86 runs.

TCS to set up IT facility in Vizag



It will house upto 10,000 employees

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Setting a new milestone in the IT sector in Andhra Pradesh, the Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has finalised the setting up an IT facility in Visakhapatnam that will house upto 10,000 employees. The discussions were concluded during the visit of Minister for IT, Communications and HRD Nara Lokesh to the Tata Group headquarters in Mumbai on Tuesday. Coming on the heels of the recent investment of HCL to invest in Vizag, this new facility of TCS marks a key milestone in the development of Visakhapatnam as an IT and hi-tech hub in India. Coming in quick succession to the recent big announcements by the Lulu group, Brookfield, Oberoi and Suzlon energy, this investment by the Tata Group also signifies Andhra Pradesh's re-emergence as a preferred investment destination in India.

Expressing happiness over the development, Minister Lokesh said: "I'm happy to announce the development of an IT facility by the Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. that will house 10,000 employees. We are committed to offering a best-in-class investment climate to corporations driven by our motto of 'speed of doing business'.

Ministers deny allegations of corruption in flood relief



Challenge Opposition to join open debate

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Ministers Vangalapati Anita, Anagani Satyaprasad and Poguri Narayana, the members of the Cabinet sub-committee formed to assess the flood damage, have criticised the YSRCP leaders for making baseless allegations regarding the flood relief measures. They said that the government spent Rs 601 crore for the recent flood relief measures and refuted the allegations of fund misuse. Addressing a press meet at the Secretariat at Velagapudi on Wednesday, Home Minister Anita Vangalapati said that an unprecedented disaster came in the form of a flood in Vijayawada. Refuting the corruption allegations levelled by Opposition parties, the HM chal-

lenged them to participate in a public debate on the matter. She stated that they would prove those allegations baseless with proof. Anita said it is shameful to make allegations regarding donations, and clarified that people have given their donations in the form of cheques and DDs. She said that they are ready to inform the public about the facts and that anyone can apply for RTI if necessary.

Revenue Minister A Satyaprasad said that Rs 601 crore has been paid as compensation to around 4.06 lakh flood victims who suffered losses. "Although it has been only 115 days since the formation of the new government led by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, the ministers, MLAs, officials and staff are working tirelessly as a team with the determination to do something good for the people of the State." Continued on Page 2



'Better facilities now for devotees than last year'

CM offers prayers at Durga temple on Moola Nakshatram

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, along with his family members, presented silk robes to goddess Kanaka Durga on behalf of the State government on the auspicious Moola Nakshatram day as part of the Dasara Navaratri celebrations. Chandrababu was accompanied by Nara Bhuvaneshwari, Nara Lokesh, Nara Brahmini and Nara Devansh.

On arriving on the temple premises on Wednesday, the authorities welcomed the CM and his family as per the temple protocol and arranged antaralaya darshan. Endowments

Commissioner Satyanarayana and EO Rama Rao gave the details of the donor cell to the CM.

Later, the CM conveyed Dasara wishes to the people of both the Telugu States and across the country. "I am lucky to visit Kanaka Durga on the Moola Nakshatram day, the birth star of the goddess. Lakhs of devotees come and visit Durga daily with devotion and faith. It is customary to present silk cloths on behalf of the government during Dasara Navaratri celebrations. Vijayadashami festival is celebrated to mark the victory of good over evil," he said. Continued on Page 2

WORK ON PROTEINS, BUILDING BLOCKS OF LIFE

3 scientists get Nobel Prize in chemistry

PNS ■ STOCKHOLM

The Nobel Prize in chemistry was awarded Wednesday to three scientists for their breakthrough work predicting and even designing the structure of proteins, the building blocks of life.

The prize was awarded to David Baker, who works at the University of Washington in Seattle, and to Demis Hassabis and John Jumper, who both work at Google DeepMind, a British-American artificial intelligence research laboratory based in London. Heiner Linke, Chair of the Nobel Committee for Chemistry, said the award honoured research that made connections between amino acid sequence and protein structure.



"That was actually called a grand challenge in chemistry, and in particular in biochemistry, for decades. So, it's that breakthrough that gets awarded today," he said. Baker designed a new protein in 2003 and his research group has since produced one imaginative protein creation after another, including proteins that can be used as pharmaceuticals, vaccines, nanomaterials and tiny sensors, the Nobel committee said.

"The number of designs that they have produced and published, and the variety, is absolutely mind blowing. It seems that you can almost construct any type of protein now with this technology," said Professor Johan Aqvist of the Nobel committee. Hassabis and Jumper created an artificial intelligence model that has been able to predict the structure of virtually all the 200 million proteins that researchers have identified, the committee added. "Proteins are the molecules that enable life. Proteins are building blocks that form bones, skin, hair and tissue," Linke said.

"To understand how life works, we first need to understand the shape of proteins," Linke said. Scientists had therefore long dreamt of predicting the three-dimensional structure of proteins.

IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Wreaking havoc on fishing communities

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The once-thriving fishing communities of Visakhapatnam are facing a dire crisis, driven primarily by the escalating impacts of climate change. Warmer ocean waters, a direct result of global warming, have led to a dramatic decline in fish populations.

Local fishermen like Yellaji from Peda Jalaripeeta have witnessed firsthand the devastating consequences of this environmental shift. "The distance required for me to get a good catch of fish has increased from 10 nautical miles to 60-70 nautical miles," he said. "Rising ocean temperatures near the coasts are causing fish to migrate deeper offshore, intensifying the challenges for us."

Experts attribute the warming seas to a combination of factors.



VVSS Sharma, Chief Scientist at the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), explained that the entire Indian Ocean region is experiencing significant environmental changes. "The increase in the intensity and duration of summer, coupled with erratic rainfall patterns, has created

conditions that are highly unfavorable for marine life."

The Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT) has shed light on the scientific underpinnings of the crisis. They report that warmer surface waters are forcing fish to migrate to deeper, cooler areas where phyto-

plankton, the foundation of marine food chains, thrives. These natural shifts, once gradual, have accelerated due to climate change, making it harder for fishermen to net a good catch.

The future for small-scale fishermen like Yellaji remains uncertain. "We can't go deeper into the seas," he said, echoing the concerns of many in his community. For these coastal dwellers, their very survival is tied to their ability to adapt to an ocean that is becoming increasingly hostile.

This is not just an environmental issue—it is a humanitarian crisis in the making. Climate change is already reshaping the lives of Visakhapatnam's fishing communities, with warmer seas and declining fish stocks threatening to erode their centuries-old way of life.

Cong's hopes of resurgence dashed as BJP continues to dominate

The Bharatiya Janata Party's victory in Haryana's 2024 Assembly elections stunned political observers and pundits alike. All exit polls had predicted a resounding win for the Congress, based on its perceived resurgence and public dissatisfaction with the incumbent BJP government. However, defying these projections, the BJP secured a hat-trick, winning 48 seats in the 90-member Assembly, while the Congress managed to get only 37. The remaining seats were split between the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD), independent candidates, and smaller regional parties.

This victory for the BJP is significant, as it has been achieved despite anti-incumbency factors and a supposedly growing wave of discontent with the party's governance in Haryana. The fact that the BJP not only retained power but also managed to increase

its vote share compared to 2019 sent a clear message: the public's faith in the BJP under Narendra Modi's leadership remains strong.

Several factors contributed to the BJP's unexpected triumph in Haryana. First, the party's focus on hyper-local issues and its strong organizational network helped consolidate its core voter base. The BJP's deep grassroots connections and effective mobilization efforts, particularly in rural and semi-urban constituencies, gave it an edge over the Congress.

Secondly, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal continues to be a major vote magnet. Despite growing national and local criticism, Modi's larger-than-life persona and the perception of him as a strong, decisive leader resonate with a significant section of voters who prefer continuity and stability over change. The "Modi factor" was espe-

This victory for the BJP is significant, as it has been achieved despite anti-incumbency factors and a supposedly growing wave of discontent with the party's governance in Haryana. The fact that the BJP not only retained power but also managed to increase its vote share compared to 2019 sent a clear message: the public's faith in the BJP under Narendra Modi's leadership remains strong.

cially apparent in regions where the party was predicted to underperform.

Meanwhile, the Congress, despite widespread expectations, failed to capitalize on the anti-incumbency sentiment. Although All India Congress Committee leader Rahul Gandhi's aggressive campaign and strategic positioning appeared to boost the party's chances, the party could not translate that momentum into electoral success. The BJP's strategic focus on develop-

ment and governance, combined with its outreach to farmers, traders, and youth, outclassed Congress's campaign efforts.

The defeat of the Congress in Haryana comes as a blow to its claims of resurgence. Rahul Gandhi, who had been vocal and combative in his opposition to the BJP, was expected to lead the Congress to victory, given the BJP's perceived vulnerability. However, the results tell a different story.

In a somewhat weak attempt



RAMESH KANDULA
Chief Editor Swatantra TV and author

to explain the unexpected defeat, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh accused the Election Commission of delaying the reporting of results on its website. This appeared more like a diversionary tactic aimed at deflecting from the party's embarrassing loss. The only solace for the party is that its vote share increased by 11 percentage points—from 28%

in 2019 to 39%—though this failed to translate into seats.

In Jammu and Kashmir, the BJP also put up a strong performance in the 2024 Assembly elections, securing 29 seats, up from 25 in 2014. Although the BJP fell short of the number required for forming the government, its performance was commendable, especially considering the opposition it faced following the Centre's controversial decision to abrogate Article 370 and strip Jammu and Kashmir of its statehood in 2019.

Jammu and Kashmir's political landscape remains complex, but the BJP's ability to increase its seat count despite protests and criticisms surrounding Article 370 indicates its growing foothold in the region. While the BJP lacks the numbers to govern alone, the party has proven that it remains relevant in the Union Territory. The BJP's focus on national security, development,

and an aggressive campaign narrative centered on restoring peace and normalcy seems to have resonated with voters.

In contrast, the Congress continued to struggle in Jammu and Kashmir, securing only six seats, down from 12 in 2014. Despite being part of an alliance government with the National Conference, which made impressive gains with 42 seats, Congress's dismal performance marks a significant decline in its influence in the region.

The National Conference emerged as the dominant player in Jammu and Kashmir, thanks to its strong regional identity and focus on local issues. However, the Congress's inability to build on past performance and connect with the electorate raises questions about its future prospects in the region.

A reality check for political pundits
After the recent Lok Sabha

elections, many pundits predicted that the BJP's influence under Narendra Modi was shrinking, while the Congress was seen as making significant progress nationwide. However, the results of the Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections suggest otherwise. The BJP remains a formidable force, and the Congress's so-called resurgence appears overstated.

These state elections, the first since the recent General Election, indicate that there has been no dramatic shift in public sentiment in favor of Congress or against the BJP. If anything, the results show that voters are not yet tired of the BJP or Narendra Modi. Despite facing opposition on various fronts, the BJP's electoral machinery remains strong. While predictions of its decline and the Congress's resurgence proved inaccurate, the BJP has once again demonstrated its ability to win elections.

Steps taken to support Brahmins, says Savitha

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for BC, EWS, Handloom and Textile, S Savitha, has said that the NDA government led by Chief Minister N Chandrababu has taken measures to support Brahmins financially and is giving top priority to their welfare. The Brahmin's Corporation was started by CM Chandrababu Naidu in 2014 to support the poor Brahmins. She visited the office of Brahmin Corporation at Gollapudi in Vijayawada on Wednesday.

The Minister asked the officials of Brahmin Corporation about the number of people being benefited from their schemes. She enquired about the measures being taken to protect the lands and properties under the corporation across the State. The Minister recalled that many schemes were implemented under the Brahmin Corporation and efforts were made to provide financial security to Brahmins. In 2014-19, Chandrababu



Naidu implemented 10 schemes like Bharti, Bharti Videshi Vidya, Gayatri, Vedavyasa, Vasishtha, Dronacharya, Chanakya, Kalanayama, Kasypa and Garuda. She said that the credit of implementing the scheme like Dhoopa-Deepa-Naivedyam in temples goes to Chandrababu.

She said that however, after YS Jagan Mohan Reddy became CM, all the schemes implemented by Chandrababu were stopped. Like all other communities, Brahmins were also deceived in the name of Navaratna. Once again, Chandrababu became the CM

and good days have started for Brahmins, she said. The plight of Brahmins will be taken to the notice of the CM. The Minister said that plans are being made to implement new schemes along with the old ones. Steps are being taken to grant loans through the corporation for self-employment.

Minister Savitha added that Chandrababu has fulfilled the promise by increasing the honorarium to temple priests from Rs 3,000 to Rs 7,000, and Dhoopa-Deepa-Naivedyam was increased from Rs 2,000 to Rs 3,000 and the government has incurred a burden of 32.40 crore.

AP Cabinet to meet today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet will meet at the secretariat at 11 am on Thursday under the chairmanship of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu. During the meeting, many key proposals will be discussed. The Cabinet is likely to decide on waiver of stamp duty and registration fees in rescheduling of loans in flood affected areas.

The Cabinet will also discuss the proposal to fill 190 new posts in 13 new municipalities. A proposal to amend the law regarding the appointment of temple trust board members for various temples across the State will be discussed. Further, the proposal to increase the trust board members of temples from 15 to 17 members will also be discussed and a decision will be taken.

The Cabinet is likely to take a decision on the appointment of two members from the Brahmin community as the temple trust board members. There is a possibility to give green signal to appoint 17 members in the temple trust board including the chairman. The government plans to make these appointments in more than 1,200 temples with an income of more than Rs 5 lakh.

Jagan calls for unity and resilience among workers



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP chief and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy held a meeting with the party leaders and workers of Mangalagiri constituency at the party central office in Tadepalli on Wednesday, urging them to remain steadfast and united in the face of challenges.

During the meeting, the YSRCP president emphasised that true leadership is forged through opposition. He called for a robust grassroots organisational structure, including the establishment of both committees, and assured that with unity and thorough preparation, the party would be well-prepared for the ensuing elections.



In a strategic move to strengthen the party's leadership in the Mangalagiri constituency, YSRCP has appointed Donthireddy Vema Reddy as in-charge. His appointment symbolises the party's commitment to supporting its loyal workers, ensuring they have a strong leadership presence at the grassroots-level. Jagan expressed concerns over the TDP coalition government's performance, which he described as a complete reversal of progress made during his tenure. He criticised the administration for its inefficiency, bias, and the decline of public systems, particularly in vital areas like healthcare and education. He pointed out that key welfare pro-

grammes, such as Aarogyasri, were being neglected, with over Rs 2,300 crore in pending bills, severely affecting patients' access to treatment.

YS Jagan also addressed the challenges faced by party workers, particularly those in the Mangalagiri, and reaffirmed the party's commitment to their welfare. He announced the creation of a "Good Book" to document the efforts of dedicated workers, promising them future opportunities and promotions. Unlike the previous Red Book practice introduced by the former TDP government, which Jagan referred to as a "malicious tradition", YSRCP's Good Book guarantees that those

who work hard for the party will be rewarded with roles and advancement within the party structure, ensuring that loyalty and dedication are recognised.

Reflecting on his five-year term, Jagan highlighted the transformative changes his government had implemented across various sectors. He noted that his administration had fulfilled every manifesto promise, introducing reforms like English medium education in government schools, digital learning tools for students, and comprehensive agricultural support initiatives. These efforts, he stated, were unprecedented in the State's history and had set a new standard for governance.

Biz titan...

Continued from Page 1

the lives of ordinary people. Chandrasekaran emphasized that Tata's legacy will live on through the people he served, with his humility and sincerity leaving a lasting impression on all who interacted with him. On behalf of the Tata family, N Chandrasekaran extended deep condolences to Ratan Tata's loved ones, affirming that his legacy will continue to inspire the organization. "He championed principles that we shall continue to uphold," he added.

Rata Tata -- part corporate titan, part secular living saint

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

He was one of the world's most influential industrialists yet he never appeared on any list of billionaires. He controlled over 30 companies that operated in over 100 countries across six continents yet lived an unpretentious life.

Ratan Naval Tata, who died at a Mumbai hospital on Wednesday night at the age of 86 years, enjoyed a perhaps unique status -- a corporate titan who was considered a 'secular living saint' with a reputation for decency and integrity. Tata joined the fam-

ily firm after acquiring a B.S. in architecture from Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, in 1962. He initially worked on the shop floor, gaining experience in a number of Tata Group businesses before being named director in charge of one of them, the National Radio and Electronics Co in 1971. He became chairman of Tata Industries a decade later and in 1991, took over as the chairman of the Tata Group from his uncle, JRD, who had been in charge for more than half a century. This was the year when India opened its economy and Tata soon turned the group,

which began as a small textile and trading firm in 1868, into a global powerhouse with operations stretching from salt to steel, cars to software, power plants and airlines.

He was the chairman of Tata Sons, the group's main holding company, for more than two decades during which the conglomerate aggressively sought to expand, acquiring London-based Tetley Tea in 2000 for USD 431.3 million, buying truck-manufacturing operations of South Korea's Daewoo Motors for USD 102 million in 2004, paying USD 11.3 billion to take

over Anglo-Dutch steel manufacturer Corus Group and spending USD 2.3 billion to purchase elite British car brands Jaguar and Land Rover from the Ford Motor Company.

Along with being one of India's most successful business tycoons, he is also known for his philanthropic activities. His personal involvement in philanthropy began early. In the 1970s, he initiated The Aga Khan Hospital and Medical College project, laying the foundation of one of India's premier healthcare institutions.

Pawan Kalyan visits Kanaka Durga Temple

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan visited Kanaka Durga Temple along with his daughter Aadhya on Wednesday. The temple authorities welcomed Pawan as per protocol and made arrangements for darshan. The father-daughter duo had darshan of the goddess, who appeared as 'Saraswati Devi'. The Minister was presented with a Durga portrait and laddu prasadam by the temple authorities.

During Pawan's visit, his supporters chanted 'Jai Jana



Sena' and 'Jai Pawan Kalyan' on the temple premises that

drawn sharp reactions from several devotees who were waiting for darshan. They expressed displeasure over disruption of temple sanctity. Many devotees criticised the shouting of political slogans inside the temple, asserting that religious places should be free from such activities.

The temple administration had made special arrangements to ensure smooth darshan for all devotees, particularly during the festive season when the temple sees a large number of devotees.

Ministers deny...

Continued from Page 1

Vijayawada was hit unexpectedly by the Budameru disaster. Within 10 days, normalcy returned to Vijayawada and flood compensation was also paid in a transparent and impartial manner.

Minister Satyaprasad said Rs 23 lakh has been spent on matches, candles, generators, electricity etc. The total expenditure incurred for the relief of the victims in the flooded areas in NTR district was Rs 139.44 crore. The Minister refuted the allegation that crores were spent for matches and candles.

Meanwhile, Minister Ponguru Narayana said that CM Naidu stayed in the Collectorate for about 10 days, slept in the bus and toured the flooded areas. Accordingly, immediate relief measures were provided. He explained that a total of Rs 139.44 crore was spent to support the flood victims in NTR district alone, out of which Rs 8.42 crore was spent on temporary accommodation, Rs 92.51 crore on food, Rs 11.22 crore on drinking water, Rs 4.55 crore on medical care, and Rs 20.56 crore on sanitation and rehabilitation centres.

'Better facilities...

Continued from Page 1

"I offered prayers to the goddess to bless the State in all fields in the days to come," he added. The CM said that Kanaka Durga Temple in Vijayawada is the second largest temple after Tirumala. It is the belief of the devotees that even if one thinks of goddess Durga and worships her, victory is for sure. Everyone has the responsibility to keep up the sanctity and spiritual spirit in the temples. This year we have appointed Seva Committee members to provide services to the devotees. If every person who comes to temples comes with faith, life will be prosperous, the CM said.

"This time the arrangements were better than last year. People are also satisfied. We have allotted more time to common devotees and take feedback from them every day. Due to the grace of goddess Durga, there has been plenty of rain this year. Also, the works of Amaravati and Polavaram project will be completed soon. Today, on the occasion of Moola Nakshatra, free darshan and one free laddu was provided to the devotees. In the coming days, the decisions of the temple executive body will be in accordance with the sentiments of the devotees, targeting the poor people rather than the VIPs and income for the temples. We will restore the former glory to every temple," said the CM. He heaped praise on the members of the temple executive body for the arrangements made for the devotees. "As many as 5,85,651 devotees have visited the temple since day one of Navaratri celebrations. On Wednesday, 67,936 devotees had darshan of the goddess. A total of 6,96,396 laddus were prepared for the devotees during the week. Anna Prasadam was distributed to 1.07 lakh people, apart from 12.55 lakh water packets, 75,000 milk packets and 1.23 lakh buttermilk packets.

Babu bats for...

Continued from Page 1

Stating that he called on seven Union Ministers, including the Prime Minister, during his two-day visit to New Delhi, the Chief Minister said that the Centre's assistance is needed to bring the State back on track. Coming down heavily on former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, Chandrababu called him "the biggest curse to the State."

He stated that welfare and progress should be taken further simultaneously and that Modi not only won the polls for the third consecutive term, but also undertook several welfare programmes. Chandrababu said that the State could boldly face the recent cyclonic storm and asked whether any leader from YSRCP was seen anywhere during the floods. "The YSRCP leaders shamelessly tried to cause damage to Prakasam Barrage by pushing boats and now they are talking about matchboxes and food," he said. The Chief Minister said that the Brahmothsavams in Tirumala and the Navaratri celebrations of Goddess Kanaka Durga are being celebrated in a grand manner and asked whether these festivities were held in similar manner earlier.

SCoR zone set to...

Continued from Page 1

When the Railways attempted to begin work, objections were raised by local residents due to these unresolved issues.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has repeatedly criticised the YSRCP government for failing to provide the required land. "The proposed site was not suitable for construction, and despite numerous attempts, the land was never properly allotted," Vaishnaw said during a recent visit to the Waltair division. "The Centre is ready to begin work within 24 hours once the land is allotted," he added.

The land dispute led to a blame game between the YSRCP government and the BJP-led Centre, stalling progress on the SCoR project for several years. "The YSRCP government didn't pay attention to identifying an alternative site during its five-year rule, which is why the new railway zone never took shape," said a senior official.

However, the project has regained momentum following the formation of the TDP-Jana Sena-BJP alliance gov-

ernment. Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammoan Naidu has actively pushed the project forward, holding discussions with Waltair Division Railway Manager Saurabh Prasad to address the delays. "We are fully committed to ensuring the swift completion of the new SCoR zone, which will greatly benefit the region," said Naidu.

Given the recent developments, it is expected that all pending railway projects in Andhra Pradesh will soon commence, with the new railway zone at the top of the priority list.

Despite the progress, concerns remain over the exclusion of the Waltair Division from the new SCoR zone.

Public representatives from Andhra Pradesh have appealed to the Centre to reconsider its decision, arguing that the Waltair Division holds significant strategic importance. "Waltair is crucial for the South Coast Railway zone. We hope that necessary adjustments can be made to ensure it remains a part of the new railway zone," said a senior Andhra Pradesh government official.

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Over 1.5 lakh devotees throng Durga temple on Moola Nakshatram

Goddess was presented in the attire of Sri Saraswathi Devi

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As part of the Dasara Sarannavaratri festivities at the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada, on Wednesday, the seventh day of the festival and the most auspicious day of Moola Nakshatram, a large number of devotees had darshan of goddess Durga Devi, who was in the attire of Sri Saraswathi Devi. The temple authorities allowed the devotees to have darshan from 12.50 AM.

On Wednesday, the authorities cancelled all special darshans and provided free darshan for all. As a result, it took four to five hours for the devotees to have darshan. As per the information from the temple officials, over 1.50 lakh devotees visited the temple on Wednesday.

The devotees believe it to be auspicious to visit the Durga temple on the day of Moola Nakshatram. All the queue lines from the Vinayaka Temple to the Uphill of the Durga temple were packed with devotees. Additionally, Bhavani devotees also visited the temple. The devotees chanted 'Jai Bhavani', and 'Jai Durga Jai Jai Durga'. Meanwhile, Minister for Home and Disaster Management Vangalapati Anitha, Minister for



Water Resources Nimmala Ramanaidu, Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath alias Chinni, and others visited the temple. The temple officials including Executive Officer (EO) KS Rama Rao and others arranged darshan for them. The ministers also interacted with the devotees. Meanwhile, the devotees participated in many special pujas

held at the Mallikharjuna Maha Mandapam. Besides, the temple authorities readied the Hamsa Vahanam with the support of the related departments to conduct the Teppotsavam on the final day of the festival.

NTR District Collector Dr G Srijana and Police Commissioner SV Rajasekar Babu supervised the arrangements and facilities

for the devotees. They spoke to the reporters at the media point and said that Revenue, Police, Endowments, Municipal and other departments made elaborate arrangements.

The temple authorities supplied drinking water, milk, and buttermilk to the devotees who were in the queue lines. NSS and Police Seva Dal volunteers



extended their services to differently-abled people and senior citizens who were unable to take darshan by walking, they added. As per the calculation, as many as 7,000 devotees have been taking darshan of goddess Durga Devi per hour up to 11 am, they explained.

Temple earns Rs.3.39 crore

During the Dasara Sarannavaratri festivities, the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam has so far earned Rs.3.39 crore in income. In the previous year, the income was Rs.2.32 crore.

According to EO Rama Rao, Rs.1.42 crore in income was gained from the sale of Rs.500 darshan tickets, Rs.39.08 lakh from the sale of Rs.300 tickets and Rs.29.61 lakh from the sale of Rs.100 tickets, he said. Similarly, Rs.1.13 crore was earned from the sale of laddu Prasadam, he added.

Need to revive Panchayat Raj system in State: Collector

Govt wants to introduce Computer Automatic Penalty-imposing system in villages

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna District Collector DK Balaji has highlighted the importance of reviving the Panchayat Raj system in the State, emphasising that it was established following the Constitution. He made these remarks while participating in a workshop organized for Mandal Parishad Development Officers (MPDOs), Gram Panchayat Secretaries, and Engineering Assistants at the ZP Convention Hall in Machilipatnam on Wednesday.

At the event, he stressed the importance of strengthening local governance and enhancing the role of Panchayat Raj institutions to ensure effective rural development and administration. He instructed the officials to carry out all activities outlined in the Panchayat Development Plan by coordinating with PR



Engineering Officials, as decided during the Gram Sabhas on August 23. After completing the work, he mentioned that the details would be made available to the public.

In this connection, he highlighted the importance of property tax which is the main source of income for all gram panchayats. He urged the Panchayat Secretaries to strengthen income sources and no property will be left over from the assessment. He said if the tax collection would

be conducted effectively, the income would be increased. He directed the officials concerned to ensure 100 per cent tax collection.

The Collector mentioned that the State government is mulling introducing a Computer Automatic Tax Penalty-imposing system in all panchayats on the lines of municipalities to ensure 100 per cent property tax collection. If the panchayat's income increases, it will be helpful to take up many developmental activities in villages, he explained.

Balaji asked the officials to propose visible assets to take new works in their respective villages. Also, he asked the officials to make efforts for the success of Palle Paduga Panchayati to be held from October 14 to 21.

Krishna District Panchayat Officer (DPO) Dr J Aruna, ZP CEO K Kannama Naidu, and others were present.

10th century Brahmi sculpture cries for attention

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

A 10th century rare sculpture of Brahmi has been found in utter neglect near a temple tank in Anguru village of Jalumuru mandal in Srikakulam district, said Dr E Sivanagi Reddy, archaeologist and CEO of Pleach India Foundation.

Based on the information provided by Narayana Rao, District Tourism Officer, Srikakulam, Dr Reddy examined the idol and revealed that it represents Brahmi, consort of Brahma and one of the seven goddesses called



Saptamatrikas. The sculpture, broken at the head and seated in sukhasana, wears all the

ornaments and is engaged in playing veena with her two hands. It is accompanied by Chandri seated next to her on the left side, and represents the Eastern Ganga style, he added.

According to him, the Brahmi sculpture is rare and looks like Saraswathi holding veena and portrayed with her vehicle swan on the pedestal and bears a lot of historical significance. Dr Sivanagi Reddy and Narayanarao appealed to the villagers to preserve it for posterity by shifting it into the Siva temple and erect it in a pedestal with proper labelling in historical details.



Demand to rename YSR district as 'YSR Kadapa'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Janachaitanya Vedika has called upon the Andhra Pradesh government to change the name of YS Rajasekhara Reddy (YSR) district to YSR Kadapa district, arguing that the previous government's decision in 2010 to rename it was historically erroneous.

Vallamreddy Lakshman Reddy, president of the Janachaitanya Vedika Andhra Pradesh committee, said that the complete removal of Kadapa's historical and cultural name during an emotional cabinet meeting after YS Rajasekhara Reddy's death hurt the sentiments of the Telugu people. He stated that just as Nellore district is identified as Sri Potti Sri Ramulu Nellore and Konaseema is referred to as Dr BR Ambedkar Konaseema, Kadapa should also be referred to as YS Rajasekhara Reddy Kadapa district.

The Janachaitanya Vedika emphasised that historical landmarks, monuments, and project names should never be changed. They urged the government not to assign names of living individuals to new constructions or projects but instead, to commemorate the names of distinguished individuals who have served the public and sacrificed their lives in political, social, and cultural fields.

3 temple staffers suspended

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

During the Dasara Sarannavaratri festivities at the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri, Executive Officer (EO) KS Rama Rao suspended three temple staff over allegations of providing darshan to a YSRCP leader by opening the Antharalayam main gate. Senior Assistant Ratna Reddy, Superintendent Hayagreeva Rao, and Junior Assistant Balaram were suspended, and EO Rao issued the necessary orders. On the auspicious day of

Moola Nakshatram, a large number of devotees thronged the temple, and the queue lines were packed with devotees since Tuesday midnight. However, senior assistant Ratna Rao provided darshan to a YSRCP leader by opening the main gate of the temple Antharalayam, violating the rules. The other staff members helped him. This incident was recorded on the CC camera and was observed by the temple's higher officials. As per the instructions from the department, there was no VIP darshan on the Moola Nakshatram and Antharalaya Darshan.

Applications for liquor shops extended by two days

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a significant development, the State government has announced the extension of the deadline for applications for liquor shop licenses by an additional two days. Initially the deadline was Wednesday (October 9).

However, the deadline has been pushed till October 11 evening. This decision was following numerous requests from applicants. As a result of this extension, the lottery draw for license allocation, originally scheduled on October 11, will now be on October 14. The

applicants who are successful will be able to open their shops starting from October 16, coinciding with the implementation of the new liquor policy. Principal Secretary Excise Department, Mukesh Kumar Meena, confirmed the changes in directives issued on Tuesday late night. The notification regarding the issuance of licences for 3,396 liquor shops attracted a staggering 57,325 applications when reports came last on Wednesday evening, resulting in non-refundable fees that amounted to approximately Rs 1,146.50 crore for the government.

Former YSRCP MPs join TDP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former MPs Mopidevi Venkataramana and Beda Mastan Rao, who recently resigned from YSRCP, joined

TDP in the presence of CM Chandrababu at his residence in Undavalli on Wednesday. Chandrababu warmly invited Mopidevi and Mastan Rao by offering TDP scarves.

VPA launches operation to clear sunken vessels from harbour

Aims to clear out six trawlers and 11 boats

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Visakhapatnam Port Authority (VPA) has initiated a significant operation to remove sunken vessels from the fishing harbour. Launched on September 11, this ambitious project aims to clear out six trawlers and 11 boats that have been hindering activities at various jetties for years. "We are extremely grateful to the local fishing community for their help in identifying these sunken vessels," a VPA spokesperson stated. "Their support is crucial in ensuring the safety and accessibility of our harbour."

The removal process involves intricate underwater operations, requiring skilled divers to use specialised cutting tools and heavy machinery. Every effort is being made to minimise environmental impact and ensure the safety of all personnel involved. "This initiative is essential not only for enhancing operational efficiency at the harbour but also for protecting the lives of our fisher-



men," the spokesperson added. The project is expected to be completed by December at an estimated cost of Rs 1.20 crore. The fishing community has

long anticipated this initiative, expressing relief at the prospect of addressing the persistent issue of sunken vessels. "We have faced challenges for years with these boats blocking our access," said one local fisherman. "This action by the VPA is a much-needed step. We can finally look forward to smoother access to the jetties." The VPA's efforts to modernise the fishing harbour go beyond infrastructure improvements, aligning with the authority's commitment to creating a safer, more sustainable environment for those who depend on the sea for their livelihoods.

By clearing the harbour of these obstructions, the VPA aims to facilitate safer fishing operations and enhance the overall navigability of the port. This initiative is a key part of the VPA's broader plan to upgrade and modernise the harbor facilities, showcasing the authority's dedication to improving the welfare of the fishing community.

Misuse of flood relief funds: YSRCP protest today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Vellampalli Srinivas has slammed the TDP coalition leaders for 'misappropriating aid meant for flood victims' and announced that a protest will be held at Dharna Chowk on Thursday, to demand full support for the flood victims and hold the government accountable for its failures.

Speaking to the media at the YSRCP central office in Tadepalli, Vellampalli criticised the TDP government for its inaction during the floods, despite Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's public appearances. He highlighted that nearly a month after the floods, around 30,000 victims were still waiting for compensation at the collectorate. He also questioned the transparency of the distribution of government aid and donations, casting doubt on how the funds were managed.

Pointing out inconsistencies in the official reports, Vellampalli revealed that while one official claimed Rs 23 crore was spent on candles and generators for relief efforts, another stated the amount was only Rs 23 lakh. He also

Vellampalli flays TDP government for inaction during floods

noted that children had contributed their savings, yet there is still no clarity on how the funds were allocated.

Vellampalli explained that while YSRCP initially pledged Rs 1 crore in aid, they eventually provided nearly three times that amount to support the victims. He further criticised the government for denying their request for boats during the flood relief operations, forcing them to use tractors instead. Vellampalli also expressed skepticism over the claim that 412 drones were used to distribute food during the floods.

Regarding the ongoing Sharannavaratri celebrations at the Durga temple, Vellampalli criticised the government's poor management, which resulted in long queues and delays due to VIP arrangements.

He condemned the mistreatment of the Mayor of Vijayawada and criticised the disruptions caused during the Deputy Chief Minister's visit to the temple.

'Protect RTI and Constitution'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dr Madabhushi Sridhar Acharyulu, former Central Information Commissioner, has said that every common man and public authority should be responsive, responsible, and accountable for implementing the Right to Information Act, 2005. He further said that everyone should protect the RTI and the Constitution. Dr Madabhushi Sridhar Acharyulu stated, "On the eve of the 19th RTI formation day, on October 12, I congratulate the President, Prime Minister, Chief Ministers, Information Commissioners, and every public authority, especially the citizens of India. Every common man and public authority should be responsive, responsible, and accountable for implementing the Right to Information Act, 2005.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN US

AU to hold awareness programmes

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Andhra University (AU) is set to organise special awareness programmes focusing on higher education in the United States, leveraging the American Corner at the university. The programmes will cover key topics such as university systems, scholarships, visa procedures, and more.

During a meeting with Public Diplomacy Officer Emilia from the US Embassy and Public Engagement Specialist Senthil Kumar, AU Vice-Chancellor Prof. G Sasibhusana Rao emphasised the university's commitment to making AU a truly global institution. "The American Corner presents an excellent opportunity to inform students about various educa-



tional opportunities in the U.S.," he said, noting that AU already has students from 64 countries pursuing higher education.

Registrar Prof. EN Dhananjaya Rao also highlighted the university's plans to make the American Corner

more accessible to the youth. "We will be organising programmes in collaboration with different departments, making this resource available to as many students as possible," he said. "We are also exploring the possibility of offering dual

degree programmes."

Representing the U.S. Embassy, Public Diplomacy Officer Emilia reiterated the importance of fostering India-US relations through educational and cultural exchanges. "It is essential to address key issues like education and environmental concerns, and we are committed to providing all programmes through the American Corner free of charge," she stated. She also expressed enthusiasm about strengthening the connection between AU and U.S. consulates, with plans to organise special talks featuring American diplomats.

At the conclusion of the meeting, AU honoured Emilia and Senthil Kumar with mementos.

Hindustan Shipyard, Toshiba, LWT join hands

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a major step towards a sustainable maritime future, Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) has partnered with Toshiba and Lotus Wireless Technologies (LWT) to develop advanced battery solutions for eco-friendly vessels. This collaboration aligns with the Indian government's ambitious Green Tug programme.

During a recent visit to HSL, Kazutaka Nishimura,

Director of Toshiba's Battery Division, and the Chairman of LWT discussed innovative strategies to drive the green shipping initiative forward. The focus was on high-performance battery technologies essential for next-generation green vessels.

"We are proud to lead India's green shipping revolution," said Cmde Hemanth Khatri, Chairman of Hindustan Shipyard. "Working with global leaders

like Toshiba and innovative Indian partners like LWT, we are committed to delivering sustainable and high-performance green vessels."

"Toshiba is honoured to contribute to India's efforts towards green energy solutions, particularly in the maritime sector," Kazutaka Nishimura emphasised. "Our cutting-edge battery technology will be instrumental in achieving the goals of the Green Tug programme."

'SWARNADHRA@2047'

'Aim at eradication of poverty, development AP'

PNS ■ RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM

Minister for Tourism and Cinematography Kandula Durgesh has made it clear that the Swarnadhra@2047 has aimed at eradication of poverty and achieve overall development in the State and directed the officials to prepare the 'Swarnadhra@2047' vision document.

The Minister here on Wednesday, reviewed the formulation of Swarnadhra-2047 plans to develop the State with the participation of people. Addressing the programme, the Minister said that the vision document Swarnadhra-2047 should be evolved to be launched on November 1, 2024. The vision document should consist of details of comprehensive development to be carried out in the district.

The Minister advised the officials to lay down long term, short term and annual plans for the development of East Godavari district and prepare a good action plan accordingly. He asked the officials to make an in-depth study of the areas that have more potential for development and prepare an action plan.

"The officials should focus mainly on tourism, agriculture



The Minister advised the officials to lay down long term, short term and annual plans for the development of East Godavari district and prepare a good action plan accordingly. He asked the officials to make an in-depth study of the areas that have more potential for development and prepare an action plan

and other sectors. The officials, in this background, should prepare district, mandal and village wise development plans. People's opinions and suggestions should be elicited on the vision plans," Durgesh told the officials.

The Tourism Minister directed the officials to implement the works approved in the Gram Sabhas, held in 13,326 panchayats across the State on August 23 under the directions of Deputy

Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan. "The government aimed to go forward to achieve Swarnadhra-2047 and Viksit Bharat 2047 to achieve overall development in all sectors. Development under the concept of Swarnadhra-2047 should be carried out on the lines of Vision 2020. The Swarnadhra 2047 programme's objective is to eradicate poverty and put the State on a development path," the

Minister observed. Taking a dig at the previous YSRCP regime, Minister Durgesh slammed that all sectors were crippled during the erstwhile YSRCP rule and the present government has taken corrective measures. MLAs Gorandla Butchiah Chowdary, Adireddy Srinivasulu, Battula Balaramakrishnu and Collector P Prasanthi were among those who were present.

'Corruption took place in wine shop allocations'



PNS ■ NELLORE

Former Minister Kakani Govardhan Reddy has criticized that the TDP coalition government has broken its promise to implement a fair and transparent liquor policy and that leaders in the TDP coalition are acting in ways that reduce government revenue and misuse public funds.

Speaking to the media in Nellore, the former minister alleged that syndicates have taken control of liquor shop applications, deciding who should apply for shops in different areas. He lashed out that commissions were already collected for liquor shop allocations. Kakani charged that some leaders were blackmailing excise officials. He pointed out that Minister Narayana from Nellore and Anita from Visakhapatnam districts were involved in these dealings, ensuring their followers receive commissions and shares in liquor shops. He released an audio clip related to Minister Narayana that went viral on social media recently.

Onus of protecting environment lies on industries: Pawan Kalyan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj K Pawan Kalyan emphasized that the industries should take the responsibility of protecting the environment by reducing pollution.

Addressing a workshop 'Consultative Workshop on Mitigation of Environment Pollution' here on Wednesday, Pawan Kalyan said that the industries that are part of the development, should also recognize their responsibility to provide a good environment for the future generations.

Stating that there is a need to encourage industries, he said that but at the same time, plans should be prepared to encourage pollution-free industries as much as possible.

"In the present situation, protecting the environment and moving forward in the path of development are both crucial. Appropriate means need to be explored for this. Experts should focus on this. There is a need to come up with a permanent solution to the problem of pollution," the deputy Chief Minister observed.

He voiced concern at increasing pollution in industries, and at the same time,



taking place of accidents in industries in recent times. He highlighted that AP has 974 KMs long coastal corridor and it should be developed and industries should be established without damaging the environment, he opined. He underlined that all should be part of regulating water and air pollution and called upon experts to give valuable advice on preventing pollution. He appreciated the

NGO who are striving to check pollution. "We are working on how much we can prevent pollution during the next five years. All should work in a coordinated manner to curb pollution," he observed. Pollution Control Board chairman P Krishnaiah and APIIC Director Cherukuri Sridhar were among those who participated in the workshop.



Minister for Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu welcomes GIFAS Equipment Manufacturers Committee Chairman Didier Kayat in Hyderabad on Wednesday

French Aerospace strengthens TG's global aerospace ties

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana's position as India's leading hub for aerospace, defence and space manufacturing received a significant boost on Wednesday with the visit of a 90-member delegation from the French Aerospace Industries Association (GIFAS). Representing 60 prominent French companies, this marks the largest such delegation to visit Telangana, showcasing the growing partnership between France and Telangana in the aerospace and space sectors.

Organised by GIFAS in collaboration with Business France, the delegation includ-

ed CEOs and industry leaders from renowned firms such as Safran, Dassault, MBDA, Thales, Ariane Group, CNES, Daher and more. The reception for the delegation was held at the Taj Krishna in Hyderabad and was attended by leading industrialists and key stakeholders in the State's aviation, aerospace and space ecosystem.

Addressing the delegation, Telangana Minister for Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu highlighted the State's emergence as a premier manufacturing destination for global Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) like Safran, Airbus, Boeing, Lockheed Martin and others.

'Cong govt issued EC certificates to houses located in FTL and buffer zones'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP MLA from Kamareddy constituency Katipally Venkataramana Reddy alleged that the Congress government issued encumbrance certificates (EC) to the houses located in FTL and Buffer Zone areas in many places.

While reacting to Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka's comments on HYDRABAD, Venkataramana Reddy slammed Bhatti Vikramarka saying that the comments of the latter are totally false. He alleged that several lands worth lakhs of crores of rupees were subjected to encroachments in GHMC limits. He said that the Congress government also gave permission to the foreign companies to set up their companies in those lands.

Venkataramana Reddy said, "Revanth Reddy government gave EC certificates to the lands located in FTL and buffer zones in the last 10 months after the Revanth Reddy government has been doing all this as part of diversion politics. Bhatti Vikramarka spoke targeting middle class people. I will soon



reveal the details of 30 companies along with the bigwigs who have encroached the lands." While reminding that several banks gave loans to thousands of the people to construct houses in GHMC limits, Venkataramana Reddy threw a challenge to the CM Revanth Reddy's government that he will die committing suicide if proved that his allegations are wrong.

Venkataramana Reddy suggested to CM Revanth Reddy that all 119 MLAs, 19 MPs and MLCs in the State should give their salaries to the HYDRABAD victims. He said that he is ready to give his 10 months salary Rs 20 lakh to the HYDRABAD victims. Whether others are ready to do the same?, he asked CM Revanth Reddy.

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Minister for Civil Supplies Nadendla Manohar Nadendla Manohar has said that 2.30 lakh Metric Tonnes of paddy produce would be purchased from the farmers in East Godavari district in the kharif season.

Minister Nadendla Manohar inaugurated a paddy purchase centre at Kapavaram on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, he made it clear that the government had taken steps to launch a single window system to resolve the issues of farmers and protect their interests.

"We have set up purchase centers in 220 Rythu Seva Kendras in East Godavari district. We are taking up the purchase of 2,30,000 metric tons of paddy produce in the district, and if necessary, we will purchase 3 lakh MT of paddy. We disburse money to the farmers within 48 hours of purchasing their paddy produce," Manohar asserted.

The Civil Supplies Minister said: "As many as 5.50 lakh farmers raised crops in the kharif season and the government has taken steps to protect their interests. The government is setting up 3,400 RSK to purchase paddy produce from the farmers. The government has set a target of purchasing 32.50 lakh metric tonnes of paddy through purchase centres in the kharif season."

Minister Nadendla Manohar highlighted that Rs 1,674 worth payments were made to the farmers for their paddy produce which was purchased by the govern-

'Will purchase 2.30 L MT of paddy from EG farmers'



ment. Nadendla Manohar lamented that over 2,800 tenant farmers had committed suicide during the last five years.

The erstwhile YSRCP government had borrowed Rs 45,500 crore giving the income of Civil Supplies department as surety, he lashed out. The rice millers were instructed to purchase paddy from the farmers by paying MSP without the interference of mediators.

The Millers have come forward to purchase paddy produce which contains 17 to 22 percent moisture; he said and appreciated the millers. Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh, MLAs Adireddy Srinivasa, Collector P Prashanthi and Civil Supplies MD Sudhir and members of rice millers association were among those who were present.

Inspects rice mill, finds PDS rice

PNS ■ ELURU

Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar conducted a surprise inspection to Venkata Satya Rice mill located at Nallajerla and found a huge quantity of rice meant to be distributed under the Public Distribution System.

The Minister, while going back to Vijayawada after inaugurating a paddy purchase centre at Kapavaram village in Kovvuru mandal on Wednesday, went to the rice mill and found the shutters of the rice mill were closed.

The officials got the shutters opened and the

Minister along with the officials inspected the rice mill and its godown. He found a huge quantity of ration rice hoarded in the godown. The rice, which was distributed under a Public Distribution System to the ration card holders, was procured illegally and hoarded.

The Minister also saw rice bags on which the names of foreign companies were printed. Interestingly, the Minister inspected the rice mill godown and found the PDS rice under the light of a mobile phone torchlight. The Minister ordered the officials to take action against the rice mill.



Free sand policy being implemented transparently in Prakasam dist: DC

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam district Collector A Thameem Ansariya has made it clear that the free sand policy is being implemented in the district efficiently and transparently.

Addressing a press conference, flanked by SP AR Damodar, here on Wednesday, the Collector said that the free sand policy came into effect on July 8. Since July 8, 62,291 metric tonnes of sand has been supplied to the consumers under free sand policy in the district.

The Collector said that till date there are no sand stock points in Prakasam district and the sand required for the district is being supplied from sand stock points in Nellore, Kadapa and Kurnool districts. A total of 285 streams and rivulets were identified for local needs in Prakasam district, she stated.

The Collector said that the people of the nearby villages



can use the identified streams and rivulets to extract sand for their housing construction needs and explained that sand extraction could be done in patta lands after obtaining permission from the district level sand committee.

Thameem Ansariya said: "Sand can be transported from the sand reaches of the patta lands that have been given permission in the coming days, adding that those who have booked sand at the AP Sand

portal can take the sand by their own vehicle or they can also choose transport facility at the portal itself."

The Collector said that it has been estimated that 4.36 lakh metric tonnes of sand is required in the district from this month of October to March 2025, adding that 2,26,108 metric tonnes of sand from the two desiltation points of Karedu and Dappalampadu in Nellore district, which is close to Prakasam district, will

be made available to the district from October 15.

She revealed that against the backdrop of 10 sand open reaches starting from October 15 in Kadapa district, 6,93,750 metric tonnes of sand from Kadapa district will be available for the needs of the people of the district.

The Collector explained that so far 519 orders have been booked for 10,287 metric tonnes of sand. She warned of actions against illegal sand transport and black marketer. She said that till now 32 cases have been booked and a penalty of Rs 8.78 lakh has been imposed. People who want sand can book online through <https://sand.ap.gov.in> website.

SP Damodar warned of stringent action against those who transport and sell illegally. A strict vigil has been laid on the illegal transportation of sand in the district, the SP made it clear. He also warned of invoking the PD Act against the repeated offenders.

Police arrest man, women in minor girl rape case

PNS ■ PITHAPURAM

The police achieved a major breakthrough in the sensational rape of a minor girl which took place on October 7 at the dump yard on the outskirts by arresting a man and a woman.

Police said that two accused including Durgada Lakshmaiah alias John and a woman, Kongupudi Subbalakshmi were arrested. The accused was an auto rickshaw driver.

The accused kidnapped the minor girl, forcibly took her to Mahadevapura dump yard on the outskirts. The duo forced the girl to drink liquor and later



he sexually assaulted her. The accused was arrested on Wednesday and Gorse near a rice mill on the outskirts.

The Pithapuram police registered a case under crime

number 211/2024 u/S (1),65,137.R/w BNS & Section 4,17 of POCSA 2012, Juvenile Act 2015 Section 77. The police also seized the auto rickshaw, liquor bottles and clothes.

38 bikes recovered, one bike lifter arrested



PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM

The police recovered 38 motorcycles and arrested a notorious bike lifter at Kankipadu.

DSP Srinivasa Rao told the media that the police arrested a notorious bike thief Appikata Rajiv and recovered 38 motorcycles worth Rs 20 lakh.

He had stolen motorcycles in many mandals in Krishna districts including in Kankipadu, Vyyur, Thotavalluru, Pamarru, Gudivada and Gannavaram. The police recovered 38 motorcycles worth Rs 20 lakhs.

Krishna district SP appreciated SI Sandip for arresting a notorious bike lifter.



Man his two sons drowned in canal; bodies fished out

PNS ■ ELURU

In a tragic incident, a man and his two teenage sons were drowned in the Polavaram right canal at Kalavagunta village in Pedavegi mandal on Wednesday.

Pedavegi CI K Venkateswara Rao told the media that the deceased Shettipalli Venkateswara Rao (50), his two sons Shettipalli Manikantha (16) and Shettipalli Sai Kumar (13) went to the Polavaram Right canal to impart training to a rooster in swimming. Venkateswara Rao was rearing roosters and giving them training to take part in cockfights. When the trio were giving training to the rooster in swimming, Manikantha slipped and started drowning and his brother Sai Kumar went to his rescue and he also drowned. Their father Venkateswara Rao went to their rescue and he was also drowned. The bodies were fished out of the canal and shifted to the GGH for postmortem in Eluru. A pall of gloom descended on Kalavagunta village with the death of a man and his two sons.

IN BRIEF



Toddler among 3 injured in acid attack in Delhi

A Syrian refugee and his toddler son, as well as a Sudanese national, suffered burns when they were attacked with acid allegedly by a resident in Vikaspuri, police said on Wednesday. The incident took place on September 30 near the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees office in the west Delhi area, police said. The men were discharged the same day but child was kept under treatment as he had received 10 per cent burns in his chest, neck and eyes, they said. He was discharged today. Rakesh Kumar, a local, has been arrested in the matter, according to a police statement. The FIR, a copy of which is accessed by PTI, revealed the identity of the victims as 11-month-old Ibrahim, his father Raft Abmohimid, and Nabil Omar Akbar, both aged 28. "The boy was treated on OPD basis. He was admitted with ten per cent chemical burns around a week or so. He was treated and was shifted from the ICU on October 5 to the ward.



Delhi's tallest Ravan effigy took 40 workers, 4 months

It took 40 artisans over four months to build the city's tallest Ravan effigy which now towers over the southwest Delhi's Dwarka at 211-foot. The Rs 30-lakh effigy, constructed by artisans from Barara village of Haryana, will go up in flames on Dussehra on October 12 in an emblematic victory of good over evil. The effigy was installed on the first day of Navratri, during the 'Kalasha Sthapana', on the DDA Ground in Sector 10, according to Ramilla Committee Chairman Rajesh Gehlot. This is the tallest Ravana ever built, standing at 211 feet, decorated with velvet cloth and constructed with iron. It was built over four months by a team of 40 artisans," Gehlot told PTI. The committee has sent an invitation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the grand event, as it does every year. "As of now, we have not received a response, but we are hopeful," said the chairman of the committee, which has been hosting the Ravan-burning for 14 years.



Bellatrix to deploy orbital transfer vehicles for NSIL

Bengaluru-based space start-up Bellatrix Aerospace on Wednesday said it will supply its home-built orbital transfer vehicle - Pushpak - for integration with future launch missions of ISRO's commercial arm NewSpace India Limited. The Pushpak OTV is a versatile multi-mission spacecraft designed by Bellatrix for in-orbit manoeuvres, with the flexibility to deploy satellites into various orbits with greater precision and efficiency, a company release said. Bellatrix's partnership with the NSIL will enable more complex space missions involving multi-orbit deployment sequences, inclination change, GEO transfer missions and future deep space missions, it said.

People won't back hateful conspiracies of Cong : Modi

PNS ■ NAGPUR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the BJP's victory in the Haryana elections shows the mood in the country and the people have shown they will not fall prey to the hateful conspiracies of the Congress and "urban Naxals".

The Congress is an irresponsible party and a factory to "spread hatred" which wants to divide Hindus and pit one community against another, Modi said after virtually launching various development projects of more than Rs 7,600 crore in the Maharashtra.

The opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) wants to weaken Maharashtra to gain power, but the ruling Mahayuti (comprising BJP, Shiv Sena and NCP) is determined to strengthen the state, he said.

Elections to the 288-member Maharashtra assembly are likely to be held next month.

The prime minister said, "Never in the history of Maharashtra has development



The Congress is an irresponsible party and a factory to "spread hatred" which wants to divide Hindus and pit one community against another, Modi said after virtually launching various development projects of more than Rs 7,600 crore in the Maharashtra

taken place at such a fast pace, on such a large scale, in different sectors. During the Congress rule, such speed and scale was seen in different sectors in corruption." Further targeting the Congress, Modi cautioned against those who play divisive politics and mislead voters for personal gains.

Haryana CM Saini meets PM

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other senior BJP leaders here on Wednesday ahead of his likely swearing-in as the head of the new government in the state following the party's remarkable win in the assembly polls. The BJP had

indicated during the elections that Saini, who replaced Manohar Lal Khattar in March and hails from the Other Backward Classes, will be its choice for the top post if it wins. Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Saini credited Modi's policies for the party's success.

The Congress wanted to induce fear among Muslims in the country and convert them into vote bank, he said and also accused the opposition party of indulging in caste politics to divide Hindus for political gains.

The PM expressed confidence that the people of Maharashtra would reject efforts to break the society.

The BJP has won the Haryana assembly elections, he said, adding that "in Maharashtra we have to get a bigger victory."

Modi said that the Marathis and the people of Maharashtra are congratulating him for the Centre granting classical language status to Marathi.

Congress analysing 'unexpected' results in Haryana: Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday said the party was analysing the "unexpected" results in Haryana and will apprise the Election Commission about complaints received from various constituencies of the state.

In his first reaction after the shock defeat in Haryana, the former Congress president also thanked the people of Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir for their support. "My heartfelt thanks to the people of Jammu and Kashmir - INDIA's victory in the state is a victory of the



"My heartfelt thanks to the people of Jammu and Kashmir - INDIA's victory in the state is a victory of the Constitution, a victory of democratic self-respect," he said

Constitution, a victory of democratic self-respect," he said. The BJP on Tuesday clinched a stunning hat-trick win in Haryana overcoming anti-incumbency and dashing Congress' hopes of a comeback while the National Conference-

'LEARN TO ACCEPT DECISION OF PEOPLE'

Hitting out at the Congress for questioning the Election Commission for its Haryana poll debacle, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju said the opposition party should learn to respect and accept the decision of the people. "Now, don't blame EVM and Election Commission again," Rijiju said on X while responding to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's remarks that the opposition party will apprise the EC of the complaints from assembly constituencies. "Learn to respect and accept the decision of the people," said the parliamentary affairs minister. Congress leaders Jairam Ramesh and Pawan Kherra had termed the results of the Haryana elections as "unacceptable" as the party faced shock defeat in the state at the hands of the BJP.



Congress combine pulled off a spectacular victory in maiden elections in Jammu and Kashmir after abrogation of Article 370 in 2019. Gandhi said the Congress was looking into the results of the Haryana Assembly polls. "We are analysing the unexpected results of Haryana. We will inform the Election Commission about the complaints coming from many assembly constituencies," he said. "Heartfelt thanks to all the people of Haryana for their support and to our 'Babbar Sher' workers for their tireless hard work," he said in a post in Hindi on X.

"We will continue this fight for rights, for social and economic justice, for truth, and will keep raising your voice," the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha said.

A delegation of the Congress comprising K C Venugopal, Ashok Gehlot, Ajay Maken, Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Pratap Singh Bajwa, Abhishek Singhvi, Uday Bhan, Jairam Ramesh, and Pawan Kherra will meet the Election Commission at 6 pm on Wednesday at Nirvachan Sadan, the party said.

Warner Bros. Discovery aims 3k hrs of fresh content

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Global entertainment firm Warner Bros. Discovery on Wednesday said it plans to deliver over 3,000 hours of fresh content by the end of this year in India across its linear channels and video streaming platform 'discovery+'.

The company plans to significantly enhance programming across discovery+ and its linear channels, including Discovery Channel, Animal Planet and TLC, with a focus on a diverse and distinctive mix of local originals and global titles in India, Warner Bros. Discovery said in a statement. By the end of this year, the factual and



lifestyle cluster would have delivered over 3,000 hours of fresh content across linear channels and discovery+, the company said.

"As the category leaders in the non-fiction content genre, our focus on enhancing viewer engagement and expanding our content offering is paramount. The newly announced India originals and our strategic programming across both linear and streaming plat-

forms are a testament to our commitment to creating cross-platform experiences," Warner Bros. Discovery, South Asia, Head of Factual & Lifestyle Cluster Sai Abhishek said.

Moreover, the revamped DTamil channel will showcase top global entertainment content, including Hollywood blockbuster movies and series, in Tamil language, it added.

This diverse content library not only boosts overall viewership and engagement but also underscores the brand's commitment to bringing global content to India and creating original stories that highlight historic, cultural and grassroots narratives, the company said.

Served country with 'utmost dedication': CJI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, who is set to demit office next month, turned philosophical, saying he had served the country with "utmost dedication" amid "fears and anxieties" as to how history will judge his tenure.

The 50th Chief Justice of India (CJI), his two-year tenure will end on November 10. "I find myself pondering over questions -- did I achieve everything I set out to do? How will history judge my tenure? Could I have done things differently? What legacy will I leave for future generations of judges and legal professionals?" he said.

The CJI shared his thoughts while addressing the third convocation ceremony of Jigme Singye Wangchuk School of Law in Bhutan.

"The answers to most of these questions lie beyond my control, and perhaps, I will never find answers to some of these questions. However, I do know that, over the last two years, I have woken up every morning with a commitment to give the job my fullest and gone to bed with the satisfaction that I served my country with utmost dedication," added CJI Chandrachud. During the event, the CJI sought "pardon" for being "vulnerable" at a time when he was about to demit office and said he was "heavily preoccupied" with fears and anxieties for the future and past.

"As you navigate the complexities of your own journeys, do not be afraid to take a step back, reassess, and ask yourself: 'Am I running towards a destination, or am I running towards myself? The difference is subtle, yet profound. After all, the world needs leaders who are driven by purpose and not just ambition,'" he said. According to the CJI, once



The CJI shared his thoughts while addressing the third convocation ceremony of Jigme Singye Wangchuk School of Law in Bhutan

someone has a sense of faith in his/her intentions and abilities, it is easier not to obsess over outcomes but to value the process and the journey towards those outcomes.

"The CJI further reflected on an unrelenting passion to make a difference in the world, saying he often pushed himself to the extremes and worked long hours carrying a heavy load, as if the world's problems rested solely on his shoulders.

"However, over the years, I have come to realise that our ability to contribute to our community is deeply rooted in our self-perception and capacity for self-care," he said.

"The journey towards the goal should be enjoyed rather than getting caught up in the fear of reaching the destination, the CJI said.

"As someone who is a few decades older than you, I can tell you that these fears are not easy to wish away. However, the personal growth lies in being able to address them and tackling them head-on," he told a crowd also comprising law graduates in the neighbouring country.



INDIA bloc parties flex muscles after Congress defeat in Haryana

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After the Congress' shock defeat in Haryana, the opposition INDIA bloc parties flexed their muscles on Wednesday, accusing the grand old party of ignoring them. They said this attitude should not be repeated in the future polls. The Shiv Sena (UBT) turned out to be the biggest critic of the Congress, accusing it of ignoring other parties that resulted in the poll debacle. Leaders of the TMC, AAP, CPI(M), CPI and some other parties also blamed the Congress for working alone and not jointly, which led to the defeat in Haryana.

The Congress will be contesting the Maharashtra polls as part of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance and the Jharkhand elections in tie-up with the JMM, which is also a part of the INDIA bloc.

Several opposition leaders accused the Congress of banking on regional parties where it is weak but not forging alliances when they perceive they are

strong in a state. Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut said the Congress' "over confidence" was responsible for its defeat in Haryana, alleging that it relies on allies only in regions where they are weak but ignores them in its stronghold areas.

"Wherever the Congress is weak, it takes help from the regional parties. But where it thinks it is strong, the Congress attaches no importance to the regional parties," Raut said. "We could win in Jammu and Kashmir because the INDIA bloc was fighting there under the leadership of Omar Abdullah and Farooq Abdullah. In Haryana, the INDIA bloc did not fight together because the Congress thought they could win on their own. Hooda ji is our friend, he thought he could win on his own," he said.

He said parties like the Samajwadi Party, Aam Aadmi Party or even his own party Shiv Sena (UBT) could have fought a few seats in Haryana and that would have made a difference.

'Earth's 25 vital signs hit extremes'

Experts sound alarm on 'irreversible climate disaster'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Researchers have sounded an alarm on a possibly "irreversible climate disaster" as 25 of the 35 planetary vital signs that help track climate change every year hit record levels.

Extreme weather events becoming more frequent, and intense and emissions from fossil fuels are at an all-time high -- these are a couple of the 25 vital signs, the international team, including researchers from the Potsdam Institute of Climate Impact Research, Germany, said in a report.

Other vital signs they described included Earth's average surface temperature, ocean heat, global sea levels



and human population -- all touching record highs. The human population has been increasing at roughly two lakh a day, they said.

Climate change made the experience of devastating heatwaves of 2024 across Asia, including the longest one ever in India, much more frequent and extreme, the authors said

in the analysis, titled "The 2024 State of the Climate Report: Perilous Times on Planet Earth" and published in the journal Bioscience. Greenland and Antarctic ice hit record lows in terms of both mass and thickness, they added. Emissions of methane and nitrous oxide - potent greenhouse gases - have reached unprecedented levels, they added. Nitrous oxide levels were found to have increased by roughly 40 per cent between 1980 and 2020. Consumption of coal, oil and gas together rose by 1.5 per cent in 2023, compared to that in 2022, while use of fossil fuels remains roughly 15 times that of solar and wind energy, the researchers said.

Restoration of statehood in J&K won't change status of assembly: Legal experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The restoration of statehood from the status of union territory (UT) in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) by the Centre in future will not affect the status of new legislative assembly, legal experts said on Wednesday.

In response to a query over the impact on the newly-elected J&K legislative assembly if the Centre decided to restore statehood, senior lawyer and constitutional law expert Rakesh Dwivedi opined it will not be necessary to dissolve the assembly. Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan echoed similar sentiments and said restoration of statehood will not



Their views have come amid a growing clamour for restoration of the J&K's statehood, which was one of the major poll planks of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, which secured majority seats in the 90-member assembly on October 9.

make any difference as the Legislative Assembly had already been constituted.

Their views have come amid a growing clamour for restoration of the J&K's statehood, which was

one of the major poll planks of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, which secured majority seats in the 90-member assembly on October 9. The National Conference-Congress

combine pulled off a comprehensive victory in the maiden elections in J&K following the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019.

"It will not be necessary to dissolve the Legislative Assembly.

It will continue to function as state Assembly. A parliamentary law amending the existing one made after abrogation of Article 370 would suffice. Even if two states of Jammu and Kashmir are created, the procedure would be a State Reorganisation Act under Articles 3 and 4 of the Constitution," added Dwivedi.

On December 11, 2023, the Supreme Court unanimously upheld the 2019 revocation of Article 370 of the Constitution that gave special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir even as it ordered assembly elections there by September 2024 and the restoration of statehood "at the earliest".



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Mixed bag

The BJP retains Haryana while the regional parties gain in J and K signalling paradigm shift in the valley

The verdict is out and it is not what was predicted by the exit polls. The BJP retains Haryana and National conference resurges in Jammu and Kashmir. The results once again prove that the people of Jammu and Kashmir want development and peace while the people of Haryana, though have resentment with the farm laws still have faith in the BJP. The election results in Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir have significant implications for national politics. For the BJP, these results serve as a reminder that national leadership may get it votes but its local leaders must also perform. For Congress and other opposition parties, these results offer a glimmer of hope for future contests. At the same time, the resurgence of regional parties, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir, signals the enduring importance of local issues and identity politics in India's diverse political landscape. The outcomes not only redefined local political dynamics but also carried significant implications for national politics, especially for major players like the BJP, Congress, and regional parties. Moreover, the election results starkly contrasted with exit polls, which had predicted very different scenarios in both states.



The first post-Article 370 election in Jammu and Kashmir was keenly watched, given its symbolic importance in the region. While the BJP aimed to make significant inroads, particularly in the Jammu region, it faced stiff competition from regional parties like the National Conference (NC). The results saw a resurgence of regional parties, with the National Conference, led by Farooq Abdullah,

securing a majority of seats in the Kashmir Valley. The BJP made gains in Jammu but fell short of its ambitious targets of expanding into the Kashmir Valley. The electorate, it seemed, was more aligned with regional issues such as autonomy, identity, and economic distress rather than the BJP's nationalistic agenda. The outcome underscores the challenges the BJP faces in making a deep impact in the region, especially in the aftermath of the abrogation of Article 370. It also highlights the resilience of local political players who continue to dominate the political narrative in the Valley. While Congress failed to reach the majority mark in Haryana, the Haryana elections put it back in the game. Its vote share was almost at par with the BJP at 39.04 per cent. The BJP vote share was 39.94 per cent. Despite the overall success of the BJP, eight out of ten ministers from the Haryana Assembly lost their seats. Of late the BJP though victorious is losing its sheen and needs to put it act together to regain the voters who are drifting away from its fold. It is a good start for the BJP for the upcoming state elections. The party must maintain the momentum into upcoming critical polls in Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Delhi to remain ahead of its opponents.

PICTALK



A pandal themed on 'Three dimension of the Universe' during Durga Puja festival, in Kolkata

Revival of democracy amidst calls for statehood

Following the 2019 revocation of Article 370, these elections were a landmark moment, reflecting the people's desire for normalcy and statehood



KALYANI SHANKAR

The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir conducted its first Assembly elections in a decade. It showcased the peaceful embrace of democracy by its people last week after decades of militancy. These polls were held after the bifurcation of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh on August 5, 2019, following the revocation of Article 370. The BJP claimed that the move was necessary to tackle separatism, enhance economic development and fully integrate the region into the country. Since 1989, the state has faced militancy, violence and a boycott of polls by separatist elements allegedly sponsored by Pakistan. Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said, "The peaceful and participative elections are historic, wherein democracy is taking root more profoundly than ever before, driven by the will of the people of J and K." Intense campaigning, peaceful polling and high voter turnout marked the polls. Those afraid to go to the polling booth were allowed to vote peacefully. These were significant not only for political reasons but also because of developments such as the first Legislative Assembly elections in ten years, the abrogation of Article 370, and the restoration of democracy. This time, the Hindu-dominated Jammu and Muslim-dominated Kashmir were united in the demand to restore statehood, which the Centre had promised earlier. The higher voter turnout showed people's desire for democracy.

They were tired of gun fights and wanted to live a normal life. Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar praised the people of the Union Territory, which recorded 58.46 per cent voter turnout, the highest in 35 years. The security forces ensured a violence-free election. They also stifled the free movement of separatists. These elections differed from the previous polls as the politics of this region is no longer limited to the four traditional political parties NC, PDP, and the national political parties INC and the BJP. The new addition was the participation of separatist elements in these polls, which must be addressed, as they had



chosen the ballot route rather than the bullet route. Despite many poll issues like lack of development and unemployment, the people wanted a revival of statehood and a united Jammu and Kashmir. The other key issues were Article 370, law and order, terrorism, and socio-economic stability.

The delimitation panel gave Jammu six additional seats and Kashmir one. The Opposition held that the balance was tilting in favour of Hindu-majority Jammu. Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes got nine seats reserved. Kashmir has been under the international scanner. Diplomats from many countries were taken to the state to observe the polls. They got first-hand information from visiting the state. There are several reasons for the peaceful polls this time.

The first was the minimal involvement of Pakistan, as it had its internal problems to sort out. India blames Pakistan for training, funding and pushing Islamist militants, targeting the Hindu-dominated Jammu area more than the Muslim-dominated Kashmir Valley. Pakistan denies the

charges. Secondly, Kashmiris were tired of living in violent and disturbed situations. Two generations of Children had lost their normal childhood. Thirdly, militants did not call for the boycott of elections this time. On the contrary, separatists themselves entered the poll fray. Many areas once known as terror hotbeds saw brisk polling. The militants probably realised they needed funds and patrons, which they lacked. So, they decided to go through the election route. BJP chief JP Nadda said people had rejected the ballots and chose the ballot route. The election in Jammu and Kashmir witnessed a multi-cornered contest for the 90 seats. The National Conference and Congress went for a coalition. At the same time, the BJP and PDP were the other two significant players. The BJP had high stakes but a weak political base in the Valley, while it's strong in Jammu. The party contested only 19 of the 47 seats in the Valley. BJP knew the realistic position in the Valley where it could not hope to get votes. So, the BJP is fighting through proxies. A BJP candidate admitted that the

party would get support from Engineer Rashid, Sajad Lone, Altaf Bukhari, and Ghulam Nabi Azad - all minor players. Kashmiri pundits are still afraid of returning home. The people in both Jammu and the Valley lament the downgrading of the state to two union territories. There is still unemployment and the drug and narcotic trade menace in the state. The election results are out and the National Conference-Congress coalition has got a clear edge. The BJP, which has no presence in the Valley, propped up some independents and hopes to do well in Jammu. The Centre should take credit for completing the election process, and so should the Election Commission. But the people of Jammu and Kashmir deserve kudos for fearlessly going to the polling booth to vote. They showed the trend in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections too. There is no doubt Jammu and Kashmir want a popular government. But the only worry is that they must vote for a stable government rather than a split verdict. (The writer is a popular columnist; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

STRENGTHENING BILATERAL RELATIONS

Madam — Apropos to the 'Strategic Balancing Act', October 8. With Maldivian President Muizzu making his first state visit to India, New Delhi-Male ties are clearly on the mend. Contrast this with the situation in the beginning of the year when Muizzu declined to make India his first port of call after assuming the presidency, undertook a state visit to China, inked a defence cooperation pact with Beijing, and demanded that New Delhi pull out its small contingent of troops in the archipelago nation.

The reality is that both countries need each other irrespective of differences of opinion on certain issues. No country can escape geography and this certainly holds true for both India and the Maldives. India will always remain the Maldives's closest, largest Indian Ocean neighbour and first responder in all crises. China simply can't be a replacement here given its physical distance from the region. Therefore, New Delhi, which also needs Male for better strategic depth in the Indian Ocean Region, and Male have no option but to enhance their cooperative relationship. Muizzu had campaigned on an 'India Out' plank during his election. But fighting elections outside the government and running a country are two different things. Plus, India has always stood by the Maldives. Also, Muizzu has asked Indian tourists to return to the Maldives, something that is vital for that country's economy. Thus, New Delhi-Male relations have once again found equilibrium. That will be a relief for India after the Bangladesh shock.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Washington

ONE YEAR OF WEST ASIA CRISIS

Madam — It has been a year since Hamas attacked Israel. The way Hamas fighters were successful in attacking Israel by breaking through its entire security system on October 7 last year, it seems that if we leave aside the attacks by rockets, drones and missiles, Israel can be defeated in a ground war. Because Iran, Hamas and

Vegetable prices rise in festival season



The prices of vegetables are going through the roof in the market. During Dussehra and Diwali festivals, the prices of essentials and vegetables are skyrocketing. Almost all the vegetables are approaching the century mark. The common man is getting upset with the increased prices. Recently, the increased prices of essential goods have come into force in the context of the central government increasing the import duty

on foreign goods imports. Due to this effect, cooking oil prices have gone up. The prices of palm oil and sunflower oil have gone up. Till yesterday, the price of tomato was less than 50 rupees, now it has doubled. Recently, due to weather conditions, crops have been badly damaged in the states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The situation has changed as the tomato coming from these regions has suddenly decreased. In the absence of tomatoes, hotels and fast food centres are reducing the use of tomatoes. Due to this, the people and the hotel managers are facing severe difficulties. Onion prices also seem to be at that level. Onion price is increasing due to insufficient supply from Maharashtra. In addition to this, some groups are hoarding essential commodities informally and creating artificial scarcity and selling the commodities at high prices, doubling the hardships of the common man.

Appanna Gonapa | Visakhapatnam

UPHOLDING TRUE SECULARISM

Madam — This is in response to the news report titled "India is essentially a Hindu nation: RSS chief" (October 7). Far from being a "Hindu nation," India is historically a nation of all ("None can tell, at whose beckoning, vast waves of humanity/in currents unstoppable, from the unknown here arrived/To merge into the Great Sea" - Rabindranath Tagore), and this is the very reason why "Secularism" is embedded right within the Constitution itself. If Hindus indeed "care for everyone" as their own and "embrace all" so as to live in "harmony," then what compels the RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat to advise his own religious group to unite by transcending all narrow barriers of race, language, state and caste! This directly proves that Hindus are a highly divided lot in demographic terms and this gets proved through caste-based atrocities upon Dalits and torture upon linguistic/racial minorities in different states!

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

The strategic role of generative AI in transforming Industries

Generative AI is transforming industries by enhancing customer experiences, boosting productivity and automating processes across sectors

Generative AI has evolved from a novelty in boardroom discussions to a transformative tool across industries. Extending the capabilities of traditional AI in automation and predictive modeling, it's reshaping business processes, customer experiences, and employee productivity. Sectors such as pharmaceuticals, airlines, healthcare, manufacturing, and banking are seeing tangible benefits, as generative AI unlocks new avenues for value creation. **Enhancing Customer Experience:** Improving customer experience is a key priority for businesses today. Companies with both physical and online touchpoints are turning to generative AI, leveraging large language models (LLMs) to provide personalised recommendations that enhance buyer satisfaction and drive revenue growth. In the airline industry, Alaska Airlines has harnessed AI to offer customised flight and travel suggestions based on customer preferences such as budget and timing, significantly elevating the booking experience. By personalising



interactions, AI is allowing businesses to delight customers in ways that were previously time-intensive and difficult to scale. **Revolutionising Creativity:** Generative AI is also making waves in content creation, democratising creativity, and improving productivity. It allows companies to generate high-quality content quickly, reducing manual input and turnaround times. For example, Belk Ecommerce utilises generative AI to craft engaging product descriptions, ensuring consistency across marketing channels. This automation not only boosts operational efficiency but also delivers a cohesive shopping experience. Customer service is another area seeing improvements through generative AI. Firms like Klarna, a fintech company, use AI-powered virtual assistants to

handle millions of customer service requests, providing quick resolutions and reducing repetitive inquiries. This AI application results in faster, more accurate service and improved customer satisfaction. **Boosting Productivity:** Generative AI's ability to enhance employee productivity is becoming increasingly evident, especially in automating routine tasks. By freeing employees from monotonous work, AI enables them to focus on higher-value tasks that require strategic input. This shift is particularly significant for industries where frontline workers are pressed for time. Home Depot's US stores provide a prime example of AI-driven employee enablement. They employ AI-powered apps to assist in decision-making, inventory management, and task prioritisation, resulting in improved store operations and employee satisfaction. Generative AI also enhances documentation processes in sectors requiring high volumes of detailed reports. For instance, Bristol-Myers Squibb has integrated AI into their documentation workflows,

enabling rapid processing of clinical trial data and transforming complex, time-consuming tasks into streamlined operations. Such innovations are revolutionising sectors where speed and accuracy are paramount. **Leveraging Data:** With the increasing digitalisation of the world, businesses are relying more on data-driven insights. Generative AI can sift through vast datasets, extracting valuable insights to support better decision-making in areas such as research and data analysis. This capability is exemplified by Spotify, which uses AI to create personalised podcast previews, improving content discovery and user engagement. As generative AI transforms industries, businesses are preparing for widespread changes in operations. AI can augment every function. However, with these advancements comes the challenge of upskilling the workforce. Organizations need to ensure their employees are adaptable and equipped to leverage AI (The writer is co-founder & chief operating officer, Simplilearn; views are personal)



KASHYAP DALAL



FIRST COLUMN

ACHIEVING WORK LIFE BALANCE

A healthy work-life dynamic not only benefits individuals but also strengthens communities



SAKSHI SETHI

In recent years, the world has faced unprecedented challenges, from the COVID-19 pandemic to ongoing socio-economic disruptions. These crises have not only claimed lives but have also altered the very fabric of our daily routines and working environments. Amidst these tumultuous times, the concept of work-life balance has emerged as a crucial necessity, emphasising the importance of maintaining mental and physical well-being while fulfilling professional responsibilities. The rising death tolls and widespread fear associated with global crises have taken a toll on mental health. Today, grief, anxiety and uncertainty have become commonplace as people grapple with loss and disruption. There is no denying the fact that fast-paced technological advancements require constant adaptation and learning, which can be overwhelming and contribute to stress. In many Indian companies, there is a culture of overwork, where taking time off is frowned upon. Many executives even end up working extended hours, sacrificing their time and health, which contributes to physical as well as mental exhaustion. Moreover, this can even lead to a toxic environment where employees not only feel they have to prove their worth constantly, but the stigma associated with failure may even drive them to push themselves to unhealthy limits to succeed. Poor diet, lack of exercise and high-stress levels have led to lifestyle-related health issues such as heart disease, diabetes and hypertension, which are prevalent among high-level executives.



Economic downturns and market volatility add pressure on executives to perform, leading to increased stress and associated health risks. In such a climate, achieving a balance between work and personal life has become essential for fostering resilience and promoting overall well-being. A healthy work-life balance allows an individual to dedicate time towards self-care, family and community, which are vital for emotional recovery and stability. The shift to remote work and flexible schedules, prompted by the pandemic, has underscored the need for a re-evaluation of traditional work structures. If remote work offers flexibility, at the same time it has also blurred the lines between personal as well as professional life, leading to longer hours and increased stress.

It's the need of the hour for organisations to recognise this and promote policies that encourage employees to set boundaries, take breaks and prioritise personal time. Addressing the high death toll among executives in Indian companies for instance the Pune CA death followed by a reputed Indian working for NBFC and committing suicide on a similar ground- i.e. work pressure and mental distress from the seniors necessitates a multi-faceted approach. Organisations must prioritise mental health support, promote a healthier work-life balance, and create a culture that values employee well-being. By taking these steps, companies can not only help mitigate the risks associated with high-stress environments but also foster a healthier and more sustainable workplace. By fostering an environment that values work-life balance, employees can enhance productivity and employee satisfaction, thereby leading to lower turnover rates and a more engaged workforce.

Achieving work-life balance is not solely a personal endeavour but it also has broader implications for society. When individuals can manage their work and personal lives effectively, they are more likely to engage in their communities, volunteer and support local initiatives. This communal engagement will foster social connections and strengthen the fabric of society, thereby making it more resilient in the face of adversity. By prioritising work-life balance, we as citizens of the nation will contribute not only to our well-being but also to the health of our communities.

(The writer is a motivator; views are personal)

The key to a sustainable and low-carbon future



ASHOK KUMAR

By adopting energy-efficient practices, the country not only cuts emissions but also saves millions of tonnes of oil equivalent, leading to a more sustainable future

Energy efficiency refers to the practice of using less energy to achieve the same level of output or perform the same task. It is one of the most impactful strategies for reducing energy consumption, cutting costs, and mitigating environmental harm. As global energy demand continues to rise, enhancing energy efficiency has become critical in the fight against climate change, resource conservation, and ensuring a sustainable future. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), the global rate of energy efficiency improvement has averaged around 2 per cent per year, with some variations during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2023, global energy consumption reached approximately 15,000 million tons of oil equivalent (MTOE), as reported in the Enerdata Yearbook 2024. A 2 per cent improvement in efficiency would save about 300 MTOE—an amount greater than India's entire industrial energy consumption, which stands at around 270 MTOE in 2022-23. In 2022-23, sectors such as industry, buildings, and transport consumed 552 MTOE out of India's total primary energy consumption of 850 MTOE. The industrial sector accounted for 49 per cent of this total, while transport and buildings (residential and commercial) contributed 12 per cent and 13 per cent, respectively. India is one of the few nations with a comprehensive legal and institutional framework for energy conservation.

The Energy Conservation Act of 2001 and the Bureau of Energy Efficiency under the Ministry of Power are pivotal in driving energy efficiency programmes across various sectors. India's flagship programmes include the Perform, Achieve, and Trade (PAT) Scheme for energy-intensive industries, initiatives for energy-efficient buildings, vehicle fuel efficiency standards, and the star rating and labelling scheme for household appliances and industrial equipment. In 2022-23, these programmes collectively saved around 51 MTOE, equivalent to reducing carbon emissions by approximately 306 million tons of CO₂. This energy efficiency contribution accounts for about 10 per cent of India's annual emissions, which stands at around 3 billion tons of CO₂. Energy efficiency is projected to play a crucial role in global climate action.

It is estimated that nearly 40 per cent of the emissions reductions needed to reach net zero by 2050 must come from energy efficiency measures, many of which offer short payback periods ranging from 3-5 years. Often dubbed the "first fuel," energy efficiency is seen as a vital tool in maintaining a sustainable, low-carbon future. Given the constrained carbon budget outlined in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment, energy efficiency is more important than ever in controlling global temperature rise.

The Importance of Energy Efficiency: It is a cornerstone of sustainable development, offering multiple advantages such as cost savings, environmental protection, energy security and resource conservation.

Energy-efficient technologies reduce consumption, which, in turn, cuts utility bills for individuals, businesses, and governments. Reduced energy use decreases greenhouse gas emissions and helps combat global warming. It also diminishes pollutants that harm air and water quality. Additionally, energy efficiency decreases overall demand, reducing dependence on fossil fuels and



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strengthening energy security, especially for countries heavily reliant on imports. It also reduces the need for new power plants and industrial facilities, conserving natural resources and limiting environmental impact.

Key Sectors and Strategies industry: The industrial sector is the largest global energy consumer, driven by processes such as manufacturing, mining and machinery use. Enhancing energy efficiency in this sector involves optimising processes, recovering waste energy, and implementing energy management systems. Upgrading equipment, improving production methods, and utilising efficient motors and pumps can significantly reduce energy consumption. The National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE), launched in 2011, targets energy-intensive industries.

Under its PAT Scheme, industries are assigned specific energy-saving targets (energy use per unit of product), and the market-based approach allows trading of excess energy savings. This initiative has resulted in substantial energy savings, leading to a reduction of approximately 110 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions. As of August 2024, the PAT scheme covers 1,333 energy-intensive industries and establishments across 13 sectors, including steel, cement, aluminium, fertilizer, petroleum refineries, thermal power plants, and others. As India develops its carbon market mechanism, many of these sectors will participate as "obligated entities" with specific greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets.

The carbon market will facilitate this transition by implementing a market-based approach to pricing GHG emissions. This mechanism encourages both public and private entities to engage in decarbonisation efforts across various sectors. Entities that reduce emissions below their targets can earn Carbon Credit Certificates, while those that do not must purchase credits to comply.

Additionally, the mechanism will have a voluntary component, allowing non-obligated entities to register projects focused on reducing, removing, or avoiding GHG emissions to obtain carbon credits.

The Standards & Labeling (S&L) Programme: launched in 2006, rates appliances based on their energy efficiency, from 1 to 5 stars. This program covers 38 appliances, with 16 falling under mandatory regulations. As of August 2024, the programme has saved 82 billion units of energy, equivalent to cutting 58 million tons of CO₂ emissions.

The UJALA Scheme and the Street Light National Program (SLNP) have also been successful in replacing inefficient lighting with LED solutions, leading to significant energy savings and emission reductions. As of September 2024, approximately 370 million LED bulbs and 7.2 million LED tube lights have been distributed through the UJALA scheme. This has resulted in an annual reduction of 39 million tons of CO₂ emissions. **Buildings:** Buildings are another major energy consumer, particularly through heating, cooling, and lighting. Energy-efficient building design, proper insulation, and smart energy management systems can dramatically reduce energy use.

The Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC), introduced in 2007, mandates minimum energy performance standards for commercial and residential buildings. Recent updates, such as the Energy Conservation and Sustainable Building Code (ECSBC) and the Eco Niwas Samhita (ENS) for residential buildings, aim to further reduce energy consumption in large buildings by up to 18 per cent.

Transportation: It is a major contributor to global energy use, primarily from fossil fuels. Improving fuel efficiency in vehicles and promoting electric and hybrid vehicles are key strategies. The Indian government has implemented fuel efficiency standards for

passenger cars and heavy-duty vehicles and aims to expand the electric vehicle ecosystem including charging infrastructure. As of 2024, India's charging stations are expected to increase to 100,000 by 2030, supporting the growing number of electric vehicles. To create awareness of the benefits of Electric Vehicles (EVs), the "Go Electric" Campaign was launched in Feb 2021. This involves radio jingles, poster/leaflets distribution, awareness through social media platforms, street plays, etc.

Electricity Generation and Transmission: Upgrading power plants and incorporating renewable energy sources such as solar and wind are vital for reducing emissions in electricity generation. Under the PAT Scheme, India's thermal power plants have improved their efficiency, contributing to a reduction of 30 million tons of CO₂. As of August 2024, 46 per cent of India's installed power capacity comes from non-fossil fuel sources, surpassing the commitment made at the Paris COP 21 summit.

Challenges: Despite its benefits, the adoption of energy efficiency measures faces challenges like high upfront costs, limited awareness, and policy gaps. These barriers can be addressed through financial support mechanisms, capacity-building initiatives, and the development of comprehensive, flexible policies. Conclusion Energy efficiency is an essential driver of sustainable development, offering significant economic, environmental, and social benefits.

As technology improves and policies strengthen, energy efficiency will remain crucial in reducing energy demand and mitigating climate change. By adopting energy-efficient practices in our homes, industries, and transportation systems, we can contribute to a cleaner, more sustainable future.

(The writer is DDG, Bureau of Energy Efficiency; views are personal)

Surya Ghar Yojana: A sustainable alternative to free electricity politics

Unlike conventional freebies, this scheme boosts long-term savings, infrastructure investment and promotes sustainable energy production

In response to the growing trend of political parties offering free electricity to secure votes, the Narendra Modi government has introduced the Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Yojana. This initiative aims to promote solar energy adoption by providing homeowners with a subsidy ranging from Rs 30,000 to Rs 78,000 for installing one to three kW solar panels. The scheme is designed to reduce dependence on government subsidies while offering households the benefit of free electricity for up to 25 years.

Solar Power for Households Under this scheme, a consumer will spend around Rs 40,000 to Rs 70,000 to install a two to three kW solar panel. This investment allows households to generate up to 300



ASHWANI MAHAJAN

units of electricity per month, covering a significant portion of their energy needs. At the current rate of Rs 8 per unit, this translates to a monthly saving of Rs 2,400. Over 25 years, the total savings per household would amount to approximately Rs 7.20 lakh, ensuring that the initial cost of installation is recovered within one to two years. The government has also made provisions for consumers to finance

the remaining amount at a concessional interest rate of 7 per cent.

Addressing the Politics of Free Electricity

In recent years, several political parties have leveraged the promise of free electricity as a means to gain political support. States like Delhi, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh have implemented such schemes, offering free or subsidised electricity to a significant portion of their populations.

In Delhi, for instance, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government provides up to 200 units of electricity for free and a 50 per cent subsidy for those consuming between 201 and 400 units. However, the cost of these schemes has placed a significant burden on state budgets. In Delhi, Rs

3,250 crore was allocated for electricity subsidies in the 2023-24 budget, out of a total budget of Rs 78,800 crore. Under AAP's rule, the capital expenditure growth rate has declined from 19.6 per cent during the previous Congress government's tenure to 9.2 per cent. Consequently, infrastructure development in Delhi has slowed, with fewer new projects being launched. The situation is similar in other states where free electricity has been promised. Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Himachal Pradesh are all grappling with mounting debts, making it increasingly difficult to sustain free electricity schemes. In some cases, states have had to scale back or abandon these initiatives due to financial constraints.

**A Viable Alternative**

The Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Yojana offers a more sustainable solution. By encouraging households to generate their own electricity through rooftop solar panels, the scheme reduces the long-term burden on government finances. The total investment required by households under the scheme is Rs 1.5 lakh,

including the government subsidy. With one crore households expected to participate, this would result in an additional capacity of 30 GW of solar power, significantly boosting India's renewable energy output.

Unlike traditional free electricity schemes, which are funded by annual government subsidies, the Surya Ghar Yojana provides long-term benefits without placing a strain on the budget. By generating their own electricity, households will no longer be dependent on yearly subsidies and will contribute to reducing the country's carbon footprint. This aligns with India's broader goals of increasing renewable energy production and achieving net-zero emissions.

Economic and Environmental Impact

The Surya Ghar Yojana has far-reaching economic and environmental benefits. First, it provides households with a reliable source of free electricity for 25 years, ensuring significant savings on energy bills. This also reduces the government's reliance on costly subsidies, freeing up funds for essential infrastructure development.

Second, the scheme is expected to generate large-scale employment, with over one lakh people required to be trained to install and maintain solar panels. This will not only create new jobs but also develop a skilled workforce in the renewable energy sector. Third, by increasing solar energy production, the scheme will help India reduce its

dependence on fossil fuels, contributing to the country's efforts to combat climate change. Rooftop solar panels are an environmentally friendly alternative to coal-based power plants, and their widespread adoption will significantly reduce carbon emissions. By encouraging households to invest in solar energy, the scheme not only reduces the burden on state budgets but also contributes to India's renewable energy goals. The widespread adoption of rooftop solar panels has the potential to transform the energy landscape, providing households while helping India move closer to achieving its environmental objectives.

(The writer is Professor, PGDAV College, University of Delhi; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



Gold prices fall to Rs 77,700; silver tumbles Rs 2,800

Gold prices depreciated for the second straight day by Rs 600 to Rs 77,700 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday amid muted domestic demand. On Tuesday, the precious metal closed at Rs 78,300 per 10 grams. Silver also tumbled Rs 2,800 to Rs 91,200 per kg against Rs 94,000 per kg in the previous close, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity plunged Rs 600 to Rs 77,300 per 10 grams. Traders said muted demand in the domestic market led to the fall in prices of the yellow metal. In futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for December delivery rose Rs 29 or 0.04 per cent to Rs 75,190 per 10 grams. Silver contracts for December delivery also soared Rs 754 or 0.85 per cent to Rs 89,483 per kg on the exchange.



Bizman loses Rs 1.25 crore to stock market fraud

A city-based businessman has lost Rs 1.25 crore to an online stock market investment fraud, police said on Wednesday. A case of cheating was registered but the fraudsters were yet to be identified, said an official of the North Region Cyber police station. The complainant, a Kandivali resident who runs an event management company, came across an advertisement on Instagram promising high returns in the share market in July, and joined a WhatsApp group run by one 'Raman Verma', he told cyber police. A few days later 'Verma' encouraged the businessman to invest through his firm and sent him a link to a website, the complainant said. After the businessman provided his personal details and uploaded some documents, he was induced to invest Rs 1.25 crore in various IPOs.



HDFC Life Insurance to raise Rs 1,000 cr via NCDs

HDFC Life Insurance on Wednesday said the insurer plans to raise Rs 1,000 crore through non convertible debentures to fund business growth. The decision to this effect was taken by the Capital Raising Committee (CRC) of the HDFC Life Insurance Board, the insurer said in a regulatory filing. The fund would be raised through unsecured, rated, listed, subordinated, redeemable, fully paid up, non cumulative, non convertible debentures (NCDs) for an aggregate nominal value of Rs 1,000 crore on a private placement basis, it said. The debenture of tenure 10 years would carry a coupon rate of 8.05 per cent per annum, it said. "The debentures proposed to be issued shall neither be secured nor covered by a guarantee of the company or other arrangements that legally or economically enhance the seniority of the claims as against the claims of the company's policyholders and all other creditors," it said.

Carbon tax proposed by EU unilateral, arbitrary: FM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday said the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism or CBAM is unilateral and arbitrary and will hurt India's exports after its implementation by the European Union. CBAM are tariffs that will apply on energy-intensive goods imported into the European Union (EU). The EU has decided to impose carbon tax CBAM from January 1, 2026, on seven carbon-intensive sectors, including steel, cement, and fertiliser. Engineering goods will come under the purview of this import duty.

It is a border tax introduced by the EU, and such moves are going to create a trade barrier, she said while speaking at the Energy Transition Summit organised by Financial Times. Against this, she said, India has voiced its concern several times to the EU, and the government is also looking at ways to reduce the cost of transactions. The decision by the EU



It is a border tax introduced by the EU, and such moves are going to create a trade barrier, she said while speaking at the Energy Transition Summit organised by Financial Times

may affect the profitability of Indian exporters, as Europe is among the top export destinations for the country. India's total trade with the EU was \$137.41 billion in 2023-24, with imports at \$61.48 billion and exports at \$75.93 billion.

She, however, said it was unlikely that India's opposition to the CBAM would be a barrier to finalising the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the EU. "I am sure it won't be escalated to the level of hurting

the (FTA) talks," she said. She exuded the confidence that India would achieve net Zero by 2070.

"Yes, we are on track to achieve 2030 carbon emission reduction goals," she said, adding that the Budget has allocated made huge allocation for battery storage.

To another query on India's green initiatives, Sitharaman said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has led from the front in setting the agenda for the country, and the commitments given in the UN cli-

mate change conference COP 21 were fulfilled by India well ahead of time, with its own resources.

On the decarbonisation of India's economy, she said the government has brought in the PLI (production-linked incentive) scheme for 13 sunrise sectors, which included green energy.

"We also have PLI for automobiles and electric vehicles. So, budget has never been a constraint in promoting the green sectors," Sitharaman said.

RBI changes stance to open window for a rate cut

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept its key interest rate unchanged on Wednesday for the tenth straight time, but took the first step towards a rate cut as it eased its relatively hawkish policy stance to 'neutral'.

The monetary policy committee, which included three RBI officials and an equal number of new external members, voted five-to-one to keep the benchmark repurchase or repo rate - which governs the interest rate of home, auto, corporate and other loans - at 6.5 per cent.

The panel, however, unanimously decided to change the policy stance to 'neutral' - from 'withdrawal of accommodation' amid signs of a slowing economy.

Interest rates were last changed in February 2023 when they were hiked to 6.5 per cent

from 6.25 per cent.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said the committee changed the stance but will remain unambiguously focused on the durable alignment of inflation to target while supporting growth.

Food inflation, he said, may ease in coming months, while the core inflation, which excludes the volatile food and energy costs, appears to have bottomed out.

India's economic growth outlook remained intact, with private consumption and investment growing in tandem.

The change of stance signals a possible move to cut interest rates in forthcoming MPC meetings, the next being due in early December.

RBI will join other central banks in a policy pivot that was led by the US Federal Reserve easing rates last month.

EMPOWERING STARTUPS THROUGH E-COMM

Amazon India ties up with Startup India, DPIIT

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amazon India has partnered with Startup India, under the aegis of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), to help startups scale growth through e-commerce.

Through a dedicated page on the Startup India portal, the e-commerce firm and Startup India will work together to allow eligible startups to make use of e-commerce opportunities by registering on Amazon India's marketplace.

The startups will gain access to the domestic market, mentorship from Amazon leaders, go-to-market support and logistics guidance, according to a company statement.

"By combining Amazon's e-commerce expertise with

Startup India's role as the Government of India's flagship initiative for the development of the startup ecosystem, we will provide a robust platform for Indian startups and businesses to scale domestically," Sanjiv, Joint Secretary, DPIIT, said.

Furthermore, Amazon will work to empower select women entrepreneurs through its Saheli programme.

Amazon's suite of services, including Amazon Pay, Amazon Incentives, Amazon Business, Amazon Transport, AWS, Amazon Advertising, and Mini TV will be available to women-led startups.

Further, the partnership aims to create awareness about the Bharat Startup Knowledge Access Registry (BHASKAR) initiative.



IRB Infra to raise up to \$200 mn in debt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IRB Infrastructure Developers on Wednesday said its board has approved a proposal to raise up to \$200 million by issuing foreign currency-denominated notes, including US dollar-denominated bonds or other debt securities.

The company, in a regulatory filing, said it intends to avail term loans from various sources, including financial institutions, to meet its financial requirements to create security, as deemed necessary by the board, to secure the debt securities and enter into hedging contracts when required, as permitted by the Reserve Bank of India.

The company's board of directors approved the proposal at a meeting held on Wednesday.

Over 82% of rural youth can use internet, says govt survey

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Over 82 per cent of youth in rural areas between 15 and 25 years of age can use the internet while the figure is nearly 92 per cent in urban cities, showed a government survey. It also found that 95.7 per cent of persons aged 15-24 years in rural areas can use mobile phones, slightly lower than 97 per cent in urban areas.

On Wednesday, the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation released key findings of a Comprehensive Annual Modular Survey (CAMS) conducted from July 2022 to June 2023. This is part of the 79th round of the National Sample Survey (NSS).

"82.1 per cent of rural youth aged 15-24 years can use the internet, compared to 91.8 per cent in urban areas," an official



statement said.

The survey findings suggest that 78.4 per cent of youth aged 15-24 years can send messages with attached files, while 71.2 per cent can use copy-and-paste tools. Moreover, 26.8 per cent can perform more advanced tasks like searching for information, sending emails, and conducting online banking.

As per the survey, the percentage of households possessing a telephone/ mobile phone stood at 95.1 per cent (94.2 per

cent in rural and 97.1 per cent for urban).

The percentage of households possessing a computer (desktop PC, laptop etc) is 9.9 per cent (4.2 per cent in rural and 21.6 per cent in urban areas).

Among other key findings, the survey revealed that 96.9 per cent of persons aged 15-24 years are able to read and write simple statements with understanding and also able to perform simple arithmetic calculations.

Sensex reverses gains on fag-end selling

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex reversed its gains and closed lower by 167 points on Wednesday due to profit-taking in select blue-chips in the last hour even as the RBI took the first step towards a rate cut in its monetary policy review.

Erasing its early gains, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 167.71 points or 0.21 per cent to close at 81,467.1. The index opened higher and later surged 684.4 points to hit an intraday high of 82,319.21 as RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das left the interest rate unchanged but changed the stance to neutral. However, sharp gains in blue-chips attracted profit taking by cautious investors ahead of the start of earnings season on Thursday.

The NSE Nifty dropped 31.20 points or 0.12 per cent



to end at 24,981.95. In the intraday trade, it jumped 220.9 points or 0.88 per cent to hit a high of 25,234.05.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept its key interest rate unchanged on Wednesday but took the first step towards a rate cut as it eased its relatively hawkish policy stance to 'neutral'.

The monetary policy committee, which included three

and HDFC Bank were among the major laggards.

On the contrary, Tata Motors, Tech Mahindra, State Bank of India, Maruti Suzuki India, Bajaj Finance, Axis Bank, Bajaj Finserv and Bharti Airtel were among the gainers.

"An upward revision in Q3FY25 inflation reiterates that the sticky inflation continues to remain a concern for the RBI and led investors to book profit towards the close. The volatility in input prices and the impact on margin dragged the FMCG stocks," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said.

The change in RBI's stance to neutral was favourable and expected, but the commentary is not pointing to a rate cut in the near term, Nair added.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge jumped 1.06 per cent and smallcap index climbed 1.21 per cent.

Over 34.84 lakh IT audit reports filed on e-filing portal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The finance ministry on Wednesday said more than 34.84 lakh audit reports, including about 34.09 lakh Tax Audit Reports (TARs), have been filed for assessment year 2024-25 on the e-filing portal till October 7.

The income tax department had extended the date for filing the audit report from September 30 to October 7.

There is an increase in the filing of TARs for the AY 2024-25 by around 4.8 per cent compared to the filings of TARs on the due date for AY 2023-24.

"To assist taxpayers, the department conducted extensive outreach programmes through emails, SMS, webinars, social media campaigns and messages on the Income Tax portal to create and raise awareness among the taxpayers about filing TARs and other audit forms by the due date. Various user awareness videos were uploaded on the

Income Tax portal to provide guidance," the ministry said in a release.

It further said that these concerted efforts have been helpful to taxpayers and tax professionals in timely compliance in filing TARs.

According to the finance ministry, the e-filing Helpdesk team handled around 1.23 lakh queries from taxpayers during September and October 2024, proactively supporting them throughout the filing period.

The team assisted taxpayers and tax professionals in resolving complexities and facilitated the smooth submission of audit forms.

Helpdesk support was provided through inbound calls, outbound calls, live chats, WebEx, and co-browsing sessions. The team also supported the resolution of queries received on the department's X handle through Online Response Management (ORM) and assisted them on various issues on a near real-time basis.



Infosys, Microsoft to boost Cloud, GenAI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IT giant Infosys on Wednesday announced expansion of its partnership with Microsoft to help drive global customer adoption of generative AI and Microsoft's cloud platform Azure.

Additionally, Infosys will also act as a strategic supplier to support cloud and AI workloads for Microsoft's enterprise customers.

It will infuse Microsoft's generative AI suite of offerings across its Solution IP portfolio to bring unique capabilities to market, helping clients achieve cost-efficiency, scalability, and agility, according to a regulatory filing.

"Our expanded collaboration with Infosys will trans-



form industries, enhance business operations, elevate employee experiences, and deliver new value for customers. Together, we will harness the power of generative AI to deliver innovative solutions, drive AI adoption and enable unprecedented innovation for customers," Nicole Dezen, Chief Partner Officer at Microsoft, said.

The collaboration aims to provide innovative solutions that enhance customer experiences and drive enterprise AI adoption. This includes integrating Microsoft's generative AI offerings with Infosys' existing solutions like Infosys Topaz, Cobalt, and Aster.

The alliance will also work on sharing best practices for Responsible AI.

Anand Swaminathan, EVP and Global Industry Leader--Communications, Media and Technology, Infosys, said the collaboration addresses various business problems through a customer-centric approach, providing scalability, agility, and cost-efficiency across key sectors like finance, healthcare, supply chain, and telecommunications.

The partnership dates back to when Infosys adopted GitHub Copilot, leading to significant improvements in code modernisation and completion.

Currently, Infosys is recognized as a leading user of GitHub Copilot, with over 18,000 developers generating more than 7 million lines of code through this tool.

Pralhad Joshi, German VC discuss opportunities, cooperation in RE sector

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy Pralhad Joshi and Germany's Vice-Chancellor Robert Habeck have discussed opportunities and areas of cooperation in renewable energy, an official statement said on Wednesday.

The minister met Habeck, who is also the Federal

Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, on the sidelines of the Hamburg Sustainability Conference (HSC) in Berlin, Germany, on Tuesday, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy said.

"Held a bilateral meeting with Dr Robert Habeck on the sidelines of HSC2024. Had a fruitful discussion on strengthening cooperation in renewable energy. Deliberation on opportunities in green hydrogen, offshore wind, biogas, and recycling of solar waste was also held during the meeting. We were happy to note that India and Germany's cooperation on energy transition is progressing well," Joshi said.



Christopher Nolan aims for summer 2026 featuring Matt Damon

Exciting developments are on the horizon for fans of acclaimed director Christopher Nolan, as reports indicate he is eyeing a summer 2026 release for his next untitled film, with the illustrious Matt Damon likely set to star. This partnership marks yet another chapter in the collaborative history of Nolan and Damon, who previously worked together on the monumental success of *Oppenheimer*, which captivated audiences and critics alike.

While details about the upcoming project remain largely confidential, sources suggest that Damon will take center stage in this new venture, which is expected to boast a star-studded ensemble cast. This film is anticipated to follow Nolan's tradition of assembling a talented cast and early whispers hint at a rich narrative that is bound to spark intrigue.

Nolan has tentatively set a release date of July 17, 2026, for the film, with plans to kick off production as early as next year. This timeline aligns with his meticulous approach to filmmaking, ensuring every element of the project meets his exacting standards.

Nolan's last film, *Oppenheimer*, achieved



remarkable commercial success, grossing an impressive \$975.6 million worldwide. The film also garnered critical acclaim, earning multiple nominations for prestigious awards, including the Academy Awards. Its exploration of the life of J Robert Oppenheimer, the father of the atomic bomb, resonated deeply with audiences, solidifying Nolan's reputation as a master storyteller.

Damon, who has a storied career in Hollywood, was last seen in the 2024 release *The Instigators* and is currently gearing up for *Accountant 2*. This sequel will see him reunite with fellow actors JK Simmons and Jon Bernthal, promising yet another dynamic performance from the seasoned star.

As anticipation builds for Nolan's latest venture, both fans and industry insiders are eager to see what innovative storytelling and compelling performances he will bring to the big screen once again.



BACKLASH BUILDS FOR DEEPIKA'S PORTRAYAL!

Deepika Padukone's entry into the cop universe as SP Shakti Shetty in the upcoming film *Singham Again* has stirred quite the conversation online, especially following the recent release of the trailer. While fans were thrilled to see her joining the ranks of the franchise alongside Ajay Devgn and Ranveer Singh, the initial responses to her performance have been far from favourable. Many netizens have labelled her portrayal as "cringe," questioning her fit for the role and expressing concerns about her accent. This backlash has led to speculation about whether director Rohit Shetty should rethink

plans for Padukone's solo film as a female cop. A Reddit thread sparked considerable discussion on this topic, with users sharing their thoughts on her potential as a leading lady in the action genre. One commenter stated, "After watching the trailer, it seems Deepika doesn't have the necessary swag and dialogue delivery after 18 years in the industry. I doubt anyone wants to sit through a 2.5-hour movie featuring that."

Another user shared their skepticism about her role in *Singham Again*, saying, "I can't even imagine seeing her in a side role in *Singham 3*, let alone as a lead in a full movie." Additionally, some pointed out that while Tiger Shroff is also joining the cop universe, they would be more willing to see him in action than endure Padukone's accent for an extended runtime.

Despite the criticism, there's still hope among fans that Deepika will prove her detractors wrong when *Singham Again* hits theaters this Diwali. As the anticipation builds, it remains to be seen whether she can win over the audience and secure her place in the franchise.

DISCOVER MYSTERIES OF MOTUNUI IN MOANA 2



Walt Disney Animation Studios is all set to transport audiences back to the vibrant island of Motunui with the much-anticipated sequel, *Moana 2*. The recently unveiled trailer teases a thrilling new chapter in the journey of Moana and Maui, offering a deeper glimpse into their latest adventure. The story picks up after Moana returns from her initial voyage, only to uncover a mysterious object that holds the key to an ancient island ruled by "angry gods." This discovery sets her on a dangerous quest to break an age-old curse and reconnect her people with their forgotten past.

Teaming up once again with the demigod Maui, voiced by Dwayne Johnson, Moana faces a new and formidable adversary, Matangi (voiced by Awhimai Fraser). The fate of Motunui is at stake as Moana ventures through perilous waters to confront this looming threat. As she grows into her role as a leader, the film explores her evolving relationships, particularly with her younger sister Simea, adding emotional depth to the tale. Moana's bond with her parents, Chief Tui and Chiefess Sina, also takes on new significance as the family stands together in the face of danger.

Moana 2 promises an exciting blend of action, humour and heart, with stunning animation and a memorable soundtrack. Directed by David Derrick Jr., Jason Hand and Dana Ledoux Miller, the film is set to be another visual and musical treat, featuring songs by Grammy winners Abigail Barlow and Emily Bear, along with Opetia Foa'i and Mark Mancina. Fans can expect to see Moana, Maui and a band of unexpected allies embark on an epic new journey when the movie releases in Indian theaters on November 29, 2024.



Alaya F expected to join star-studded cast of *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* sequel!

Alaya F has been making waves in the film industry with her impressive body of work and captivating performances. She first caught the audience's attention with her Hindi film debut in *Jawaani Jaaneman*, where her charm and acting prowess stood out. Since then, she has continued to build her reputation with remarkable performances in films such as *Freddy*, *Bade Miyan Chote Miyan*, and *Srikanth*, each role allowing her to explore different facets of her talent. As excitement builds around Alaya's upcoming projects, speculation is rife regarding her potential involvement in the much-anticipated sequel to *Kho*

Gaye Hum Kahan. An industry insider recently shared, "Alaya F is reportedly set to join the sequel, where she will share the screen with a talented trio that includes Siddhant Chaturvedi, Ananya Panday and Adarsh Gourav. While details about her character remain largely undisclosed, her addition to the cast has certainly sparked interest among fans."

As fans eagerly await official announcements regarding her next projects, the prospect of Alaya F joining the cast of *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* has generated considerable buzz! With her growing list of accolades and increasing popularity, many are excited to see how she will contribute to this new narrative, especially alongside a dynamic cast.

FUN

ARCHIE



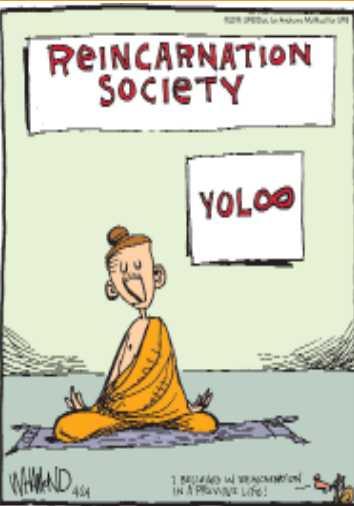
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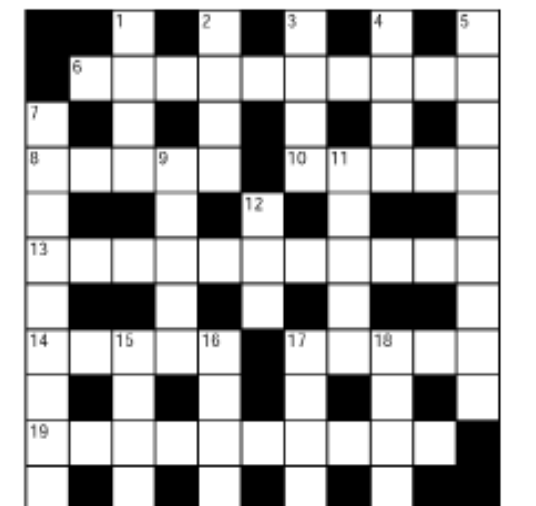
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



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

ACROSS

- 6 The total number of people in a city or country
- 8 The starboard side
- 10 The head of a city council
- 13 People who don't eat meat
- 14 Baggy
- 17 Depart
- 19 A sudden shaking of the ground

DOWN

- 1 Lengthy
- 2 Resign from a job
- 3 Peaceful
- 4 Very small
- 5 Took one's clothes off
- 7 Went on a journey
- 9 The back part of the feet
- 11 Living
- 12 Candle substance
- 15 Belonging to us
- 16 Sound rebound
- 17 Very noisy
- 18 Enquires



GINGER MEGGS





UDUPA FOUNDATION MAKING SURE THAT MUSICAL HERITAGE OF INDIA IS CONTINUED...

AARTI SREENATH
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In 2015, Giridhar Udupa established the Udupa Foundation at Bengaluru, a registered charitable trust, with a mission to promote music, performing arts and culture. Born out of a deep passion for India's artistic heritage, the foundation seeks to ensure that the country's rich musical traditions continue to inspire and shape future generations. As a venture driven by internationally acclaimed artists, the foundation aims to weave together a movement called *Kala Payana*, a journey that brings art, artists and art connoisseurs into a shared space of creativity and appreciation.

At the heart of the foundation's mission are its passionate trustees: Giridhar Udupa, Sandhya Udupa and Bharghava Halambi. Together, they have woven a vision that extends the reach of classical music and performing arts to communities. Their collective efforts ensure that the foundation's outreach strikes a harmonious chord, bringing the joy of music to those who need it most.

Inspired by Vidwan Ullur Nagendra Udupa, a renowned Mrudanga artiste and Ghatam Giridhar Udupa's father, the foundation emphasises inclusivity and accessibility. Vidwan Udupa, who began his artistic journey as a Yakshagana performer in Karavali region, went on to become a key figure in the world of Carnatic classical percussion. His life was marked by perseverance and an unwavering commitment to music, even when starting with limited resources. His dedication to nurturing young talent led him to establish an institution for training students in 1975, sharing his knowledge generously with anyone eager to learn, regardless of their background.

Now, Ghatam Giridhar Udupa continues this legacy. He envisions an artistic platform that not only preserves India's musical traditions but also fosters creative collaborations across diverse musical cultures. Through teaching, supporting and promoting the arts, the foundation aims to bridge the gap between rural and urban youth, connecting them to the essence of India's cultural wealth.

The journey began with a simple yet profound realisation: many people, especially those in old age homes or with physical challenges, rarely had the chance to experience the beauty of live music. It was a realisation that stirred him deeply, reminding him of how essential music is—not just as entertainment but as a source of joy and solace.

His motivation to bring the rhythms of life to those who couldn't easily access them became the foundation's core mission. Reflecting on this, he says, "When we perform in an old age home, there are moments when I see tears in their eyes. It's not just about the music; it's about touching a part of their heart that hasn't been reached in a long time." This sentiment, shared by both Giridhar and the musicians who join him, has been the heartbeat of the foundation.

From its inception, the foundation has been supported by a constellation of classical music legends. His vision drew in artists like Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, Bombay Jayashree, and Shiv Kumar Sharma, who became part of the foundation's fabric, performing for its cause. Yet, the foundation's work extends beyond star-studded concerts. With nearly two concerts a month, often held in rural schools, orphanages and remote villages, the foundation is dedicated to making classical music accessible to those who might otherwise never encounter it. The performances are not just about showcasing talent; they are about creating connections, educating and spreading the joy of India's rich classical heritage.

One of the foundation's main efforts focuses on music education! He emphasises the need to demystify the art form, stating, "It's not about making everyone a musician; it's about letting them



We go on an adventure that goes beyond the bounds of music and community in an exclusive conversation with Ghatam Giridhar Udupa, the visionary founder of the Udupa Foundation. The foundation was founded in 2015 and is committed to ensuring that the rich legacy of classical music and performing arts in India continues to inspire upcoming generations. It is motivated by a profound love for India's cultural past

know what our instruments represent and what our art stands for." This philosophy is woven into every interaction—whether it's explaining the history of the ghatam to curious school children or engaging entire villages in the rhyth-

mic dance of classical music. For Giridhar, these are more than just lessons in music; they are lessons in cultural pride and self-expression.

The foundation's reach has grown through a blend of passion and grassroots involvement. Volunteers, many of whom are his students, play a crucial role. They scout locations, coordinate logistics and bring concerts to life in places where musical performances are rare treasures. He is quick to acknowledge their importance, saying, "Without our volunteers, this wouldn't be possible. They are the backbone of what we do."

As the foundation nears its tenth anniversary, the focus is on expanding its scope. His dreams of a future where even busy pro-

GAMING AND HEARING LOSS: An overlooked risk for players

In an era where video gaming has become a popular pastime globally, health risks related to excessive gaming have been forgotten. The focus usually is on strained eye muscles and inactive lifestyles, but more attention should be paid to the effects of high-intensity music exposure on players' auditory systems.

Perils of sound

The gaming experience is enhanced through high-quality sound that makes virtual worlds come alive. Nonetheless, these may cost one's hearing capability dearly. Continuous exposure to loud sounds like those coming from gaming speakers, headphones, or earphones can lead to irreversible damage to tiny hair cells found within the cochlea responsible for hearing. Once destroyed, these hair cells cannot be regenerated, leading to permanent hearing loss.

Gamers who play for extended periods are at particularly high risk. For example, sudden blasts of noise in games, such as gunshots, can reach up to 119 decibels, well beyond safe levels. OSHA standards indicate that noise levels above 85 decibels can be hazardous if exposure exceeds eight hours a day. For every 5-decibel increase in noise level, the safe exposure time is cut in half. This means

that even brief, intense sounds from gaming can pose a serious risk to hearing health.

Growing gaming boom

In recent years, India's gaming business has witnessed tremendous growth in the population of millions of young gamers who spend their days playing their favourite video games. However, this development is not without its risks. Many Indian gamers use headphones or earphones to become completely engrossed in the game they are playing, which sometimes they play at full blast.

In reality, the 60/60 rule, which says that you should listen to music with a sound below 60% and for only 60 minutes, is rarely followed by gamers. This is because most players don't know how to listen safely. As a result, many gamers hurt their ears while loving the feeling of being immersed in the virtual world.

Vulnerability of children and adolescents

A significant number of kids and teenagers are part of a gaming community and thus have an even higher risk of hearing loss. Research says that children are more vulnerable to hearing impairment from lower noise levels over short durations compared to adults. For example, while adults can safely listen to sounds near 83 decibels for up to twenty hours per week, children should limit their exposure to approximately six and a half hours at this level.

Public awareness and prevention measures necessary

Even though gaming and hearing loss risks have been well established, little is known about this. Noise pollution has received more attention from public health programs in India, leaving hearing health almost unattended to. However, as the gaming industry continues to grow, there is a need for a shift in perspective.

Educational campaigns that target gamers, especially the young ones, are very crucial. Gamers should be advised to avoid high volume levels and take frequent breaks to rest their ears. Regular hearing tests are also recommended for those who play video games frequently. An annual auditory test is an effective method of early discovery of the signs of hearing impairment so that

treatment can be administered at the right time. Gaming headphones with built-in volume limits or noise-cancelling features can also reduce the risk of hearing damage. In India's fast-rising gaming community, noise-induced hearing loss becomes increasingly important each passing day. As such, through increasing awareness of safe listening habits among gamers, e.g., taking regular breaks, following the 60/60 rule, or investing in noise cancelling headphones, they will continue enjoying their favourite hobby without losing their sense of listening.

(The author, Raja S., is an audiologist and founder of Hearzap.)

SOURCING LOCAL, SERVING GLOBAL

The Pioneer shares with you an international chef Nitten's inspirational culinary journey, dedication to sustainability and creative take on traditional cuisine—from classic meals to fusion inventions!

SHIKHA DUGGAL
 shikhaduggalwork@gmail.com

Being from the highly culturally diverse cities, Chef Nitten offers a plethora of varied experiences for his culinary exploration. Interestingly, what he discovered is that he quickly absorbed the virtues of discipline, which are evident in his culinary career, having been raised in a family that embodies a strong work ethic and dedication. His travels around the world have given him a unique viewpoint, which is reflected in his philosophy based on what he overheard during our phone conversation with him, which places a strong emphasis on taste and aesthetic appeal! "My experience working under German executive chefs and Austrian chefs has had a significant and enduring influence. Their fuss-free culinary approach aims to create dishes that are pleasing. Oh, I have to share this with you: fresh ingredients, preferably from nearby farms, was back then my cooking style," he tells us.

Beginning in 1992 with the Royal clan's Classic Lakhnavi chefs, who focused on making the best use of *khova*, cream, and rich cashew paste, he saw the culinary profession evolving to include English cooks on board where international cuisine took center stage! "Initially, the lack of elements and copying made adaptation difficult to assimilate, as was discovered. *Polenta cake* made comparisons between itself and the *Upma-based Gnocchi a'la Romana*, demonstrating how the tricks eventually

ingrained themselves into the DNA and could be learned through the deconstruction of classics." This is how he explained to us the evolution he personally witnessed.

Chef Nitten has over 29 years of experience, signature dishes like *Galinha Caffreal Quiche* and *Jalebi Chaat*, which combine tradition and creativity, are examples of his culinary prowess! In actuality, his story is not over yet—"Goan cuisine's classic *Roasted Dry Prawns Powder Coated Sea-Bass Fillet* is adapted in *Kismur to Rissoles to Choriz Empanadas*. This is my workplace at the moment. Caravela Beach Resort and the "forgotten recipes," have been preserved in large part because of the efforts of numerous local women and volunteer groups! A weekly event where women from various culinary establishments have taken part in the effort to preserve the recipes for future generations and create a special experience." That was a really fascinating discovery!

Later in the conversation, we discover that he now has several projects in the works. His "Local Is Focal" devotion is more than a motto; it's a dynamic connection with the community. By actively fostering local talent and giving

cooks opportunities, he preserves traditional culinary techniques. He works closely with farmers to source local ingredients, emphasising sustainability and freshness. He provides some insight into the Goan cuisine too, saying, "Known for its vibrant flavours and distinctive spice blend, it has evolved quite a bit in modern times while still honouring its rich heritage. It incorporates traditional Indian ingredients with European techniques and materials, with a history inspired by Portuguese colonisation. The times have changed and diners now know the best parts of the country and the distinctive flavours of the food. All things considered, contemporary cuisine is a dynamic and changing culinary scene since it embraces new ideas and trends while simultaneously holding fast to its traditional origins."

He is known for giving out recipe cards so that people can try local flavours at home while promoting regional recipes! Sharing his interest with the community, he preserves and teaches traditional cooking techniques through local dish demonstrations. His creative style also extends to specialties like *Chicken Caffreal Omelette Poi Sandwich* and *Balchao Parantha*, which offer a novel take on age-old favourites. What this exceptional cook tells us further is, "A



great example of culinary fusion is the blending of Goan cuisine with flavours from around the world, wherein traditional dishes are improved by using ingredients and preparation methods from other countries. This combination gives rise to creative dishes that pay homage to the fundamentals of this cuisine while adding fresh perspectives. Making use of scientific tools and methods, such as liquid nitrogen, sous vide machines and spherification kits, which enable cooks to break down and reassemble flavours and textures to create inventive dishes that astonish and are pleasing, by evaluating vast databases of flavour profiles and component combinations, AI-driven recipe generators and flavour pairing algorithms assist in the production of new recipes that result in inventive culinary creations. Chefs can create complex food designs and customise textures and shapes with 3D food printers and smart kitchen gadgets, pushing the frontiers of presentation and experience! These days, interactive culinary classes and virtual tastings are available through VR and AR apps, enabling you to explore international cuisines and skills from the comfort of your own homes"

A different dine-in pool experience that is popular right now is something else we mentioned. About that, he says, "A swimming pool that is intended to let people enjoy meals while submerged in or near water is called a dine-in pool. Moreover, I can honestly say that my background in working with master chefs, in the UK on land and in the world's best luxury hotels has given me the necessary knowledge to combine modern culinary techniques with the flavours of the

Goan community also. Over time, diners have switched from a chocolate-filled doughnut to a sugar-free alternative. From a significant amount to a minor amount. They've switched from a six-ingredient dish to a more flavourful salad with less dressing. They now make the dish air-fried, which is preferred and fat-free. Hence a lot of weight on the baker to shove his lean, mean vanilla muffin. Almond and cashews have been replaced by sunflower and pumpkin seeds as the guests' preferred snacks. They are now different from fats derived from seeds. Exotic delicacies have taken the place of the sugar-laden *halwas* and *gulab jamuns*, thanks to their vast travels and acquired understanding of them."

He has also discovered throughout the years that a traditional taste needs to be presented creatively. He prepares the *bebince* and displays it in the shaven coconut shells, unlike other chefs competing in the competition who would cut the *bebince* that was purchased off the shelf. *Meen Polichattu* is also made using a local banana leaf to preserve the flavours! They use all available resources to support locally sourced foods, like sea-caught shrimp, green ginger, turmeric, kokum and leaves from Colocasia trees used in sherbet. This year, one of their successful tasks has been reducing carbon footprints!

His trajectory has been marked by multiple accolades. His food creations are a great balance of talent and creativity. His hobbies outside of the kitchen include riding bikes, taking long drives and going on gastronomic adventures, which makes him a well-rounded individual in the culinary field.

CURRENT TRENDS

Fusion and innovation: Modern chefs are experimenting with fusion cuisine, blending local ingredients and cooking methods with foreign ones in classic recipes. For instance, quinoa or avocado might be added to Goan curries to give them a contemporary touch.

Health consciousness: A movement toward more nutritious takes on classic recipes is becoming more and more popular. This entails using less oil, grilling as opposed to frying and adding more veggies.

Artisanal and organic ingredients: Using organic, locally sourced ingredients is prioritised. Chefs are emphasising artisanal goods like freshly ground spices and vinegar prepared at home.

ROOT SURPASSES COOK AS LEADING ENGLAND RUN-SCORER IN TEST CRICKET

AP ■ MULTAN (PAKISTAN)

With an exquisite straight drive for four, Joe Root took another of Alastair Cook's records by becoming England's highest run-scorer in test cricket.

Root surpassed the retired Cook's total of 12,472 runs by reaching 71 during England's first innings on Day 3 of the first test against Pakistan on Wednesday.

The 33-year-old Root moved to fifth place on the all-time list of test run-scorers, behind India's Sachin Tendulkar (15,921), Australia's Ricky Ponting (13,378), South Africa's Jacques Kallis (13,289) and India's Rahul Dravid (13,288). All four above Root are retired and within reach of a batter who said ahead of the tour to Pakistan that he had plenty left in the tank.

"The only reason it (Cook's record) is on my mind is because people keep asking me about it, to be honest," Root said. "I see myself playing test cricket for a lot longer. It's not

like I'm going to get to a certain mark or a number and say, Right, I'm done now! I just want to keep enjoying the game, keep playing."

Root, who is technically excellent and owns pretty much all the shots, overtook Cook's record of 33 test centuries by an England batter last month when he made hundreds in both innings against Sri Lanka at Lord's.

Ben Stokes, the England test captain who is sitting out the first match of the series because of injury, praised Root's character and achievement in a video released by the England and Wales Cricket Board.

"The selflessness that he has is an incredible attribute for him," Stokes said. "He always puts the team first, and the fact that he's got so many runs is just a bonus for us. He's an incredible player. It's going to take a long, long time for someone to come in and break that record. Just a great bloke. And an unbelievable feat to score that many runs. "But the non-selfishness that

HIS NEXT BIG TARGET IS TENDULKAR



he possesses is one thing I think sets him above or sets him apart from anybody else who is going to play for England for a long time."

Root waved to his teammates soon after reaching the milestone before he raised his bat in acknowledgement. He shook hands with Stokes and bowling mentor James Anderson as he walked off the field at the lunch break, with a 35th test century - and a first in Pakistan - in his sights.

Root is playing in his 147th test and came into the Pakistan series averaging more than 50, whereas Cook made 161 test appearances and batted in 291 innings, averaging 45.35.

They are England's third and fourth most-capped players, behind now-retired fast bowlers Anderson and Stuart Broad.

Root has more runs against India than any other opposition - 2,846 in 30 tests. Next is Australia, against whom he has 2,428 in 34 tests, while his best average is against Sri Lanka at 62.54. Root was England captain

from 2017-22. He averaged 52.80 before the captaincy, 46.45 during it, and he is back to his prior level since standing down.

The most prolific year of his test career was in 2021, when he scored 1,708 runs. He has passed 1,000 runs in a year five times.

He has settled at No. 4 in England's batting order and demonstrated during the recent summer tests against the West Indies and Sri Lanka that he has slightly reined in the bold and occasionally reckless approach he and his England teammates adopted early in the so-called "Bazball" era under coach Brendon McCullum and captain Ben Stokes. Those risky ramp shots are mostly gone — though he still got himself out attempting one against the Sri Lankans at Lord's — and he is harder to dismiss for it.

Root's next big target is displacing Tendulkar — the "Little Master" — atop the all-time list and, injury permitting, he has a good chance of doing so.



NZ batter Williamson to miss initial part of Test series against India

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

Senior batter Kane Williamson is set to miss the initial part of the upcoming three-Test series in India starting on October 16 due to a groin strain, with New Zealand naming Mark Chapman as his cover in the 17-man squad here on Wednesday.

Williamson, who is dealing with a groin strain, will delay his departure to India where New Zealand will play three Tests at Bengaluru, Pune and Mumbai.

While senior batting all-rounder Michael Bracewell has been roped in only for the first Test in Bengaluru, spinner Ish Sodhi will be available only for the second and third Tests. Tom Latham will be leading the Kiwis after Tim Southee stepped aside from the leadership role a few days ago.

"Williamson experienced groin discomfort during the second Test against Sri Lanka in Galle and will require a period of rehabilitation before joining the Blackcaps Test squad in India," New Zealand

Cricket said on their website. New Zealand selector Sam Wells said the decision to delay Williamson's departure to India was to give the former skipper more time to rest.

"The advice we've received is that the best course of action is for Kane to rest and rehabilitate now rather than risk aggravating the injury," said Wells.

"We're hopeful that if the rehabilitation goes to plan Kane will be available for the latter part of the tour. While it's obviously disappointing to not have Kane available from the start of the tour, it provides an opportunity for someone else to play a role in an important series," he added.

Chapman averages above 42 in first-class cricket in 44 matches but is yet to make his Test debut.

"We believe Mark (Chapman) is one of our best players of spin and has a proven track-record in the sub-continent," said Wells.

"Mark has displayed an ability to play spin proactively in the international arena, and

combined with his excellent first-class record, we see him as someone who can succeed in the type of conditions we expect to encounter in India," he added.

Bracewell will return home after the first Test for the birth of his second child and will be replaced by Sodhi.

While the opening Test will be played at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium from October 16-20, the second will be held at the Maharashtra Cricket Association (MCA) Stadium in Gahunje, Pune from October 24-28.

The third and final Test will be held at the iconic Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai from November 1-5.

New Zealand squad for Test series in India: Tom Latham (c), Tom Blundell (wk), Michael Bracewell (1st Test only), Mark Chapman, Devon Conway, Matt Henry, Daryl Mitchell, Will O'Rourke, Ajaz Patel, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Mitchell Santner, Ben Sears, Ish Sodhi (2nd & 3rd Test only), Tim Southee, Kane Williamson, Will Young.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Two-time Olympic gold-winning American discus thrower Valerie Allman was on Wednesday named the international event ambassador of the Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon to be held here on October 20.

Allman threw 69.50 meters in the Paris Games this year to set a new American record and win the gold medal. In the previous Tokyo Games, she had finished at the top of the podium with a throw of 68.98 meters.

Her feat ended USA's wait for a gold in discus throw which they had last won in 2008.

Allman, whose personal best is of 71.46 meters, is also a two-

Valarie Allman named Delhi Half Marathon's international event ambassador

time World Championship medallist, clinching the silver in 2023 and a bronze in 2022.

"The start line is not just a race; it's a celebration of camaraderie, determination, and resilience, and a showcase of our ability to push limits and achieve new personal milestones," she said in a release issued by the organisers. Paris Olympic 10,000m champion Uganda's Joshua Cheptegei and Kenya's former world record holder Peres Jepchirchir will headline



a strong elite field in the men's and women's events of the Delhi Half Marathon, which is into its 19th year.

Cheptegei is the reigning world record holder in 5000m and 10,000m events. He also holds the world's best time over the 15km distance.

A three-time world champion in 10,000m, he made his international debut in India at the TCS World 10K Bengaluru 2014, finishing second. The event carries a prize purse of USD 260,000.

Tennis star France's Tiafoe aims tirade of expletives at umpire after loss at Shanghai Masters

AP ■ SHANGHAI

US Open semifinalist Frances Tiafoe aimed a torrent of expletives at the chair umpire after losing a match at the Shanghai Masters. Tiafoe targeted umpire Jimmy Pinoargote with about 10 expletives in a minute-long tirade after his 5-7 7-5 7-6(5) loss against 61st-ranked Roman Safiullin in a third-round match.

The ATP rule book calls for fines of \$60,000 at Masters 1000 tournaments. A tour spokesman said no decision has yet been made on the matter.

The 17th-ranked Tiafoe was angered by being docked his first serve for a time violation at 5-5 in the decisive tiebreaker.

Pinoargote judged that Tiafoe was not making a genuine attempt to serve when he tossed the ball in the air at the baseline. Tiafoe at first protested before continuing to play.

Two points later, the match was over and he congratulated Safiullin at the net before turning toward the umpire's chair and shouting the first expletives.

Tiafoe passed to the other side of the net toward his chair and shouted that the umpire had messed up the match.

The 26-year-old American said he had been battling on court for three hours for his livelihood, peppering his words with more expletives.

Before leaving the court, Tiafoe added: "Never again."

Tiafoe could face fines for verbal abuse of an official and for using obscenities. The tournament can take away some of his prize



money, and the case could also be sent to the ATP Member Fines Committee for further investigation.

Safiullin advanced to face Novak Djokovic in the round of 16.

Tiafoe had a stellar run of form in the summer reaching the final of the Cincinnati Open, where he lost to Jannick Sinner, then reaching the semifinals at the US Open where he lost in five sets to fellow American Taylor Fritz.

Arshdeep Singh enters top 10 among bowlers in ICC T20I rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

Riding on a string of impressive performances, Indian seamer Arshdeep Singh entered the top 10 among bowlers and was placed eighth in the ICC T20I rankings issued here on Wednesday.

The left-arm seamer, who returned 3/14 in the opening T20I against Bangladesh in Gwalior last Sunday, jumped eight spots with 642 rating points to reach the eighth position. He is the only Indian bowler in the top 10. England's Adil Rashid continues as the top-ranked bowler in the shortest format followed by Akeel Hossain of the West Indies and Afghanistan's Rashid Khan at the second and third spots respectively.

"Arshdeep is also a big winner in the latest rankings update, with the left-arm pacer rising eight places to equal eighth on the updated list for T20I bowlers and reaching a new career-high rating following his three-wicket haul against Bangladesh," the ICC said on its website.

Hardik Pandya, who blasted a 16-ball 39 with five fours and two sixes, moved up seven



places to reach the 60th spot among batters.

The ace Indian all-rounder also returned 4-0-26-1 and moved to the third spot as he rose four positions in the list of top all-rounders, which is headed by England's Liam Livingstone with Nepal's Dipendra Singh Airee at the second position.

Yashvi Jaiswal, who is not a part of the India squad for the three T20Is against Bangladesh, dropped one position to fifth and was leapfrogged by Pakistan's Babar Azam. Washington Sundar also improved his ranking as he got to 35th among T20I bowlers, moving up four positions.

Ishan Kishan returns as Jharkhand captain after controversial pullout last season

PTI ■ RANCHI

India batter Ishan Kishan on Wednesday returned to the Jharkhand Ranji team as its captain, following his controversial pullout last season that led to his exclusion from the BCCI central contract.

The explosive left-hander, who became a regular in India's white-ball squad after Rishabh Pant's road accident in December 2022, took a break during India's tour of South Africa last year.

Post break, he did not participate in any official BCCI matches, which raised a few eyebrows as the board stressed on players prioritising domestic cricket when not on national duty.

The 26-year-old resurfaced this February, playing in the privately organised DY Patil T20 Cup ahead of the IPL and sparking a debate over balance between franchise cricket and state commitments.



His absence from domestic cricket during this period contributed to his omission from the BCCI's 2023-24 central contracts.

However, Kishan has since worked his way back into the BCCI's good books with strong performances in domestic

cricket, including a century for India C on his return in the Duleep Trophy last month.

He also represented the Rest of India in the Irani Cup, scoring 38 in his only innings. Now, as captain of Jharkhand's 16-member squad, Kishan is set to lead a young squad with

last season's designated skipper Virat Singh as his deputy and Kumar Kushagra as the wicketkeeper.

Jharkhand begin their Ranji Trophy campaign against Assam in Guwahati in Elite Group D. Last season, Jharkhand

finished third from the bottom in Group A, winning two, losing two, and drawing three of their seven matches.

"Ishan is an experienced player and he has international experience," chairman of Jharkhand's selection committee Subroto Das was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo.

"We have picked a very young team. Saurabh Tiwary, Shahbaz Nadeem and Varun Aaron had all retired after last season so we had to rethink our strategy. Ishan is capable of leading this young side and we're confident of doing well this Ranji season."

SQUAD: Ishan Kishan (c), Virat Singh (vc), Kumar Kushagra (wk), Nazim Siddique, Aryaman Sen, Sharandeep Singh, Kumar Suraj, Anukul Roy, Utkarsh Singh, Supriyo Chakraborty, Saurabh Shekhar, Vikas Kumar, Vivekanand Tiwary, Manishi, Ravi Kumar Yadav and Raunak Kumar.



Anmoljeet takes 9 on 'debut' as India U19 complete clean sweep vs Australia

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Debutant off-spinner Anmoljeet Singh and leg-spinner Mohamed Eanaan picked 16 out of 20 Australian wickets as India U-19 comfortably won by an innings and 120 runs in the second Youth Test to complete a 2-0 series sweep here on Wednesday.

Australia colts lost as many as 17 wickets on the third day after commencing on their overnight score of 142 for 3 in reply to India's massive first-innings total of 492. The visitors were all out for 277

in their first essay with skipper Oliver Peake (117 off 143 balls) and keeper Alex Lee Young (66) adding 166 for the fourth wicket. After Lee Young was dismissed, the last six wickets fell for 59 runs.

Kerala boy Eanaan (4/60 in 22.2 overs), who had once attended Saqlain Mushtaq's clinic in Dubai and Ludhiana's Anmoljeet (4/72 in 24 overs), who hero worships Harbhajan Singh, were the wreckers-in-chief.

In four-day cricket, the follow-on can be enforced if the team batting second is trailing by

more than 150 runs. India U-19 had a lead of 115 runs.

After being enforced to follow-on, Anmoljeet, who had taken an astounding 65 wickets in the Vijay Merchant (U-16) Trophy in the 2023 season, came back to get 5 for 32 in 13.3 overs as Australia were skittled out for 95 in 31.3 overs. Eight Aussie players failed to reach double digits and four of them didn't bother to trouble the scorers.

While Anmoljeet had match figures of 9/104, Eanaan wasn't left far behind with 7/97 to show for his efforts.

ACTOR GOPICHAND OPENS UP ABOUT VISWAM AND RETURN OF SRINU VAITLA

Actor Gopichand discusses his upcoming film *Viswam*, sharing insights about the director, his judgment and his unique approach to communicating a story to a director

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Actor Gopichand has been in need of a good break for a long time and now he is set to make his mark with the film *Viswam*, directed by Srinu Vaitla. This film holds significant importance for both Gopichand and Srinu Vaitla, as they are confident it will signal their comeback. "When Srinu Vaitla first came up with an idea, I expressed my doubt that the story suits a younger actor and he too agreed about it. Then he took his time and came up with this *Viswam* script, which I liked," Gopichand shared regarding the film.

He expressed a long-standing desire to collaborate with Srinu Vaitla and now that the opportunity has arisen, he is excited. Discussing Srinu Vaitla's earlier films that didn't perform well at the box office, Gopichand mentioned that the director had experimented with a few projects. "This is definitely a comeback film for Srinu Vaitla because his trademark comedy is present in this film," Gopichand stated.

The actor noted that the director possesses a unique timing in dialogue delivery. "In the first few days, I couldn't catch his kind of time-

line. Then I wanted to copy him, so I asked him to show it, and I completely followed him," he explained.

There is a train episode in the film that has prompted comparisons to Srinu Vaitla's earlier work, *Venky*. "Both films are different genres, but they can still be compared. In this film, the comedy track is different and while I was shooting those scenes, I laughed on set. We had to take another shot, but later I said 'sorry' to the artists and completed those scenes. What I want to convey is that the film is hilarious, and I am confident that Srinu Vaitla is back with his trademark entertainment in this film," Gopichand emphasized.

The actor acknowledged that ups and downs are common in life and career. "We have to go through both of them equally," he said. When asked about his experience working with Srinu Vaitla, he shared that he didn't feel much pressure. "He is a senior director, and I follow him while shooting. If it's a new director, then I feel a bit of tension," Gopichand revealed.

Shooting in Manali posed a significant challenge for the actor. "There isn't much that was challenging while shooting this film, except for Manali. The temperature was in the minus degrees at that time, which made it a big chal-

lenge for us to act in that cold. The location is beautiful, so we shot there, but it was tough for us," he noted.

Reflecting on his past films, Gopichand remarked that some scripts appear promising on paper. "When they told me the story, it looked good, but when I went for the shooting, I knew the execution was going wrong. We can't do anything at that time to complete the film, but I know the film may not do well. That's the reason I said that I can predict the results of some of my films before they are released," he commented.

He explained that a film's judgment is determined by its fate. "It's very simple: if the film is successful, the judgment is correct; if the film fails, then it is wrong. But I am also part of the successes and failures. The outcome of a film doesn't depend on one person; many people are working on it and I am also part of it, so I can't deny it," Gopichand added.

When it comes to expressing his feelings about a script he doesn't favor, Gopichand has a distinctive style. "After the narration, I simply tell the person that I will meet him the next day. That means I wasn't impressed with the story," he shared, adding that this approach is well known in the industry.

Samyuktha attributes her success to manager!



Samyuktha is currently busy with five films in Telugu and has signed yet another project. This time, she will play the protagonist in a film that was launched on Wednesday. Yokesh KMC is the director and Ramesh Danda is the producer. The actress describes signing this film as a miracle.

"For the last couple of months, I have been occupied with shootings and I wanted to listen to this story on a relaxing day.

So, on October 6, director Yogesh narrated the story to me and it was spectacular. I immediately decided to take on the role," she said about her new project. She added that she could recall every detail of the script as the narration unfolded. "I don't want to label it as a female-centric film because most female-centric films showcase blood and gore, empowerment, or focus on female politics. I always thought, Why can't we have

a normal story? Why can't we present a conventional commercial film with a female lead? This story could also work with a male protagonist," she stated.

Samyuktha has experienced continuous success in Telugu cinema and credits her manager, Karthik, for it. "I have a team, especially my manager and friend Karthik, and I give him all the credit. I am currently shooting five films and signed this new project without hesitation because of Karthik," she shared.

She is also producing the film because she is passionate about the story.

"When I heard this script, I knew I had to say yes. I couldn't resist. It felt like destiny to find such a project with a producer who believes in it. As I listened to the story, vivid scenes played out in my mind. I can't wait to start this project. We have about two to three months before filming begins, and I'm eager for the preparations and production work ahead," Samyuktha expressed.

The actress emphasized the importance of the script for any actor. "I feel overwhelmed to play this character on screen. The script contains a lot of social and female politics. When you want to combat negativity, you don't always have to rely on physical strength. A woman has her own way of addressing the situation. The story explores how she does it," Samyuktha explained.

The producer and director stated that they will reveal more details about the film in the

coming days and the remaining cast and technical crew will be announced soon.

Samyuktha, one of the most sought-after actresses in Tollywood, is on a roll with a string of blockbusters under her belt, each film further cementing her rising stardom. Now, she is stepping into a lead role in a gritty, new-age action thriller, directed by Yogesh. This time, she takes on the challenging portrayal of a cop in a story grounded in realism, showcasing her versatility as an actress.

In addition to starring, Samyuktha is presenting the film, which is being produced by Rajesh Danda under the Hasya Movies banner. The project had a grand launch event in Hyderabad, drawing an impressive lineup of Tollywood's finest. Producers Dil Raju and Suresh Babu, hero Rana Daggubati, directors Vashishta, Venky Kudumula and Ram Abbaraju, along with writer Kona Venkat, were among the notable attendees at the pooja ceremony, adding to the buzz surrounding the project.

This film is expected to mark a new high in Samyuktha's already flourishing career, as she takes center stage in a genre she has yet to fully explore.



SAMANTHA STANDS TALL WITH ALIA BHATT: A BLOCKBUSTER JOURNEY BEGINS WITH JIGRA!

Alia Bhatt's much-anticipated action-drama *Jigra* is gearing up to hit theaters on October 11, and the excitement in Tollywood is palpable. With Telugu fans having embraced Alia ever since *RRR* and *Brahmastra*, the stakes are high for this intense thriller directed by Vasana Bala. The pre-release event, graced by Alia Bhatt, Tollywood heavyweights like Trivikram, Rana Daggubati, and Samantha, celebrated the film's upcoming release with electrifying energy in Hyderabad. *Jigra* promises to be an action-packed rollercoaster, featuring Alia and Vedang Rana in leading roles and its Telugu version is generating plenty of buzz, especially after the trailer launch by SS Rajamouli and Ram Charan. Rana Daggubati is distributing the film in Telugu through Asian Suresh Entertainment. The Telugu trailer, launched by renowned director SS Rajamouli and global star Ram Charan, has garnered significant attention.

A grand pre-release event took place recently, featuring special guests Trivikram, Rana Daggubati and Samantha. During the event, Trivikram and Samantha unveiled the Big Ticket! Alia expressed her gratitude, stating, "Thanks to Trivikram for responding so quickly to my message. Every word you spoke touched my heart. Samantha is a true hero both on and off screen and her talent has distinguished her in the industry. I believe Trivikram will craft a story that suits both Samantha and me. This film comes after my experience with *RRR*, which created a bond with the Telugu audience. My daughter Raha loves the *Naatu Naatu* song. The Telugu audience has always been ahead in appreciating and supporting good cinema, which is why we released *Gangubai* and *Brahmastra* in Telugu. Working with Vasana Bala on *Jigra* was a pleasure and I hope he creates many more great films. I have a strong feeling Vedang will emerge as a star through this film; he has become like a brother and friend to me in real life. Rahul Ravindran has a significant role in the film and is passionate about cinema. Both Rahul and Vasana would often discuss the film on set. Thanks to Rana for bringing our movie to the Telugu audience," Trivikram added, "My two favourite actresses, Alia and Samantha, are here. Rajinikanth has fans in every language, but after him, it feels like Samantha has that kind of fanbase in every language. *Jigra* showcases the hard work Alia put into this film and you can sense it's going to be a super hit just from the trailer. My elder son is a big fan of Vasana Bala's work; he has the courage to make films without worrying about the outcome. I recently worked with Rahul on *Guntur Kaaram* and I believe that success should happen naturally. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose, but the journey should flow like a river. Samantha is a dynamo on set and Alia looked equally impressive at this event."

Samantha expressed, "I really admire Alia's acting. As actresses, we have a responsibility to tell stories that empower girls, reminding them that they are the heroes of their own lives. Alia is not only acting but also producing films. I have a 15-year relationship with Rahul and have worked on three films with Trivikram. I've received great opportunities from Suresh Productions; they are my idols. I want this film to be a big hit. Vasana Bala has done a brilliant job. Vedang deserves success as well. I am present in every step of Rahul's journey. Rana recently produced a female-oriented film and now he's giving us *Jigra*. Every girl should have a brother like Rana! Through *Jigra*, Alia will see just how much the Telugu audience loves her. I am at this level today because of Telugu audience support."

With powerhouse performances, heart-stopping action, and emotional depth, *Jigra* has all the makings of a hit. As Alia Bhatt and Samantha emphasize the importance of telling empowering stories for women, Telugu audiences are ready to embrace *Jigra* with open arms. The film is poised to leave an indelible mark and as Rana Daggubati urged, it's time for everyone to watch *Jigra* take flight on October 11. Don't miss out on this cinematic storm!



Chandoo Mondeti soars to National glory

Acclaimed director Chandoo Mondeti has added another feather to his cap by winning the prestigious National Award for Best Telugu Film at the 70th National Film Awards for his hit movie *Karthikeya 2*. The award was presented to Chandoo Mondeti and producer Abhishek Agarwal by President Draupadi Murmu during a ceremony held in Delhi, marking a proud moment for the Telugu film industry. Many in the industry have extended their heartfelt congratulations to the team on this significant achievement.

Karthikeya 2, an adventure thriller starring Nikhil Siddhartha in the lead, celebrates the legacy of Lord Krishna. The film's immense success has further solidified Chandoo Mondeti's reputation as a blockbuster filmmaker. With the announcement of a sequel, *Karthikeya 3*, there is growing anticipation for what he has in store next.

In addition to this, Chandoo Mondeti is currently directing *Thandel*, featuring Naga Chaitanya and Sai Pallavi. With several pan-India projects in the pipeline, his future in the industry looks incredibly promising.

"Janhvi is a daughter of the South," praises *Devara* director Koratala Siva

Koratala Siva, the director of *Devara*, shares his admiration for Janhvi Kapoor, stating, "People see Janhvi as their own daughter."

Janhvi Kapoor is emerging as one of the most talented actresses, impressing audiences with her remarkable performances. Continuously exploring diverse roles, she showcases her versatility. While she has made a mark in Bollywood with outstanding performances, her Telugu debut in *Devara: Part 1* allowed her to explore new facets of her tal-

ent. Despite her popularity in Hindi cinema, she has garnered a loyal fan base in the South, as highlighted by director Koratala Siva.

Having collaborated with Janhvi on *Devara: Part 1*, Siva expressed his admiration for her acting skills and noted her rising stardom in the South. He mentioned, "I don't subscribe to the idea of North and South divisions. Here, we believe Janhvi is part of the South. The audience here has a deep affection for Sridevi ma'am, who is considered one of our own. In our villages, people regard Janhvi as their daughter and we have eagerly awaited her arrival. We genuinely believe that Jr NTR and Janhvi make an excellent pair."

Janhvi captivated audiences with her stunning appearance in *Devara: Part 1*, marking her successful entry into the commercial film space. Following the film's success, she continues to display her versatility on screen.

Looking ahead, Janhvi has an exciting slate of projects lined up, including *Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari*, *RC16*, and several others!



HOMBALE FILMS CELEBRATES A TRIUMPHANT NIGHT AT THE 70TH NATIONAL FILM AWARDS!

Hombale Films, helmed by visionary founders Vijay Kiragandur and Chaluve Gowda, has made significant strides in the Indian film landscape, broadening its horizons to include music and digital marketing alongside production and distribution. This year was no exception, as they shone brightly at the 70th National Film Awards for 2022, securing four prestigious awards.

The accolades included Rishab Shetty's win for Best Actor, the recognition of *Kantara* as the Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment, and *KGF: Chapter 2* clinching awards for Best Action Direction and Best Kannada Film.

The atmosphere was electric as Vijay Kiragandur, Rishab Shetty, Prashanth Neel and Chaluve Gowda expressed their elation over this remarkable achievement.

Director Prashanth Neel shared his thoughts on the honour: "Receiving a National Award for *KGF* is incredibly humbling. This journey has been both thrilling and rewarding. Our initial goal was to create a film that resonates with audiences, and with the tremendous support from Yash. Hombale and our talented crew, *KGF* transcended boundaries, gaining global recognition. This success inspires us to reach for the stars with *KGF 3*."

Rishab Shetty, star of *Kantara*, described the film as a deeply personal endeavour: "*Kantara* is a passion project that stems from my roots. Winning this National Award reinforces our belief in creating authentic stories. The support from audiences has been a divine blessing, illustrating that regional narratives can resonate universally. I'm grateful to Hombale for their unwavering support throughout this journey, especially with a film that was my most ambitious project yet." With such an incredible year behind them, Hombale Films is gearing up to deliver more cinematic treasures, including *Kantara: Chapter 1*, *Salaar: Part 2—Shouryaanga Parvam* and the eagerly anticipated *KGF 3*.

