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Modi's 10-point plan to tone up India-ASEAN ties



MALDIVES PREZ
THANKS INDIA FOR FINANCIAL AID, CONSISTENT SUPPORT



Vettaiyan tackles tough issues but loses
FOCUS

QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer

KTR celebrated the Congress defeat in Haryana and the BJP's victory. The irregularities in EVMs will come out soon. Why didn't KTR speak about the BJP's defeat in Kashmir? KTR and MLA Harish Rao have been criticising Rahul Gandhi. However, barking dogs seldom bite. So there is no need to mind KTR's words



- G Madhusudhan Reddy, Cong MLA P4

DON'T MISS...

Goddess appears as Durga Devi on...

On the 8th day of the Dasara festivities at the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri on Thursday, the presiding deity, Durga Devi, appeared in the form of Sri Durga Devi Avataram. Devotees from across Andhra Pradesh flocked to the temple to offer special prayers, with many Bhavani devotees also participating in the poojas. The 10-day Dasara festivities are set to conclude on October 12, culminating in the grand finale featuring the 'Tepotsavam', a ceremonial boat festival on the Krishna...

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J-K statehood top on agenda of...

National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said the NC-Congress government will pass a resolution demanding the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood in its first cabinet meeting. "After the formation of the government, I hope in the first cabinet meeting, the cabinet will pass a resolution impressing upon the Centre to restore the statehood. The government should then take that resolution to the prime minister," Abdullah told reporters here. He expressed hope that...

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Equity mutual funds inflow...

Equity mutual funds attracted Rs 34,419 crore in September, marking a decline of 10 per cent from the preceding month, on a sharp slump in inflow in thematic and large-cap funds. This was also the lowest level of inflow since April when equity schemes saw investments of Rs 18,917 crore. Despite the drop in net inflows, this was still the 43rd consecutive month of net inflow in the equity-oriented funds highlighting the ever-increasing appeal of mutual funds among investors, data with the Association of...

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Nitish Kumar Reddy credits...

India all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy said the idea was to take on the Bangladeshi spinners and credited head coach Gautam Gambhir for boosting his confidence after his all-round effort powered the hosts to an 86-run win in the second T20I here. India, who had lost to Bangladesh the last time these two teams clashed here, landed in trouble with their top order blown away inside the powerplay but Reddy and Rinku Singh joined forces to turn the tables on Bangladesh. The pair put on 108...

-SPORTS

'Go to Andhra Pradesh'

- DoPT rejects IAS, IPS officers' requests to remain in TG
- Major administrative shake-up likely in Telangana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Centre has rejected the objections of some IAS and IPS officers who had requested permission to remain in Telangana after the bifurcation of United AP.

The officers, including prominent ones like Vakati Karuna, Ronald Rose, Amrapali Kata, Vaniprasad, Mallela Prashanthi, and IPS officers Anjani Kumar, Abhilasha Bisht and Abhishek Mohanty had asked the Centre to allot them to Telangana. However, their requests have been turned down, and they have now been ordered to report in Andhra Pradesh by October 16.

The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) issued orders relieving these officers from Telangana and directing them to take charge in Andhra Pradesh.

In a simultaneous move, some Telangana cadre IAS officers serving in Andhra Pradesh like SS Rawat, Ananth Ramu, Srujana and Sivashankar have been relieved by the DoPT and will now return to Telangana.

After the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh the Centre allotted officials to both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

Many officers objected to these

The officers, including prominent ones like Vakati Karuna, Ronald Rose, Amrapali Kata, Vaniprasad, Mallela Prashanthi, and IPS officers Anjani Kumar, Abhilasha Bisht and Abhishek Mohanty had asked the Centre to allot them to Telangana. However, their requests have been turned down, and they have now been ordered to report in Andhra Pradesh by October 16.

transfers and tried to remain in Telangana due to personal or professional reasons. They approached the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) and it ruled in their favour and allowed them to stay in Telangana.

However, the Centre filed a petition against the CAT ruling in the Telangana High Court. Earlier, in March, the Telangana High Court ordered the Centre to re-examine the officers' requests. Retired IAS officer Deepak Khandekar was appointed to review the objections. After his report, the Centre decided to reject the officers' requests and transfer them to AP.

The development comes after the rejection of a similar appeal by former Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar who failed to get any relief after challenging the Pratyush

Sinha Committee's recommendations allotting him to AP. Somesh subsequently resigned and took VRS.

The development has sparked discussions around cadre allocation and the challenges officials face after bifurcation, as many of these officers had expressed a strong preference to stay in Telangana.

The Khandekar Committee noted that the officer had challenged the approved guidelines for the allocation of IAS officers after the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh in 2014.

In a detailed report, the committee said that Amrapali Kata had cited her "permanent address" as Visakhapatnam for correspondence purposes in her UPSC form and had requested to be treated as an insider of Telangana.

However, the Pratyush Sinha Committee which was responsible for the initial allocation had ruled out her request based on approved guidelines. The Ministry accepted the Khandekar Committee's recommendation to reject her claim emphasising that the allocation of officers from the undivided cadre of Andhra Pradesh was done uniformly and in accordance with facts.



Devotee rush at Durga Temple in Vijayawada during the ongoing Dasara festival.

Gear up to cope with devotee surge in next 2 days: VMC chief

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) Commissioner HM Dhyanchandra held a teleconference with field staff on Thursday to review preparations for the ongoing Dasara Sarannavaratri festivities at the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri. He emphasised the need for heightened vigilance, as a surge in devotees is anticipated over the next few days, particularly on October 11 and 12, when the festivities conclude.

Dhyanchandra instructed staff to ensure proper sanitation and maintain drinking water facilities throughout the queue lines. He stressed the importance of continuously monitoring water points to ensure they are stocked and available for devotees, with hourly reports required to track water availability.

The Commissioner also high-



lighted the significance of cleanliness, directing staff to promptly remove waste from queue areas and maintain a clean environment. Temporary toilets set up for the event must be kept in sanitary condition, and officials are expected to supervise closely to ensure these facilities, including their water supply, remain fully functional and hygienic. He reminded staff to fulfil their duties efficiently and ensure smooth operations for the large number of devotees visiting the temple.

Lokesh to go on US visit from Oct 25 to Nov 1



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister Nara Lokesh is set to visit San Francisco, USA, from October 25 to November 1. The Government Order (GO) RT No. 1741 to this effect was issued by S Suresh Kumar, Secretary to Government (Political) (FAC), on Thursday.

During the visit, Minister Lokesh will attend the 9th Annual ITServe Synergy Conference on October 29 and 30. The visit also aims to attract investments and promote business development in Andhra Pradesh. The trip is subject to the necessary clearances from the Government of India.

Ratan Tata my role model: Narayana Murthy
P8

Nation bids tata to Ratan

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Ratan Tata, a towering icon of industry and philanthropy who died on Wednesday, was cremated after he was accorded a state funeral by the Maharashtra government. His funeral took place according to the rituals followed by the Parsi community. He was cremated in an electric crematorium.

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, who called Tata a "unique blend of morality and entrepreneurship", also declared a day of mourning in the state on Thursday to pay tribute to the industrialist.

The body of Tata was kept at the National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA) in south Mumbai's Nariman Point from 10.30 am to 4 pm on Thursday for people to pay their respects.

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Parsi rituals adapted

Since Ratan Tata was a Parsi, his funeral took place according to the rituals followed by the community. He was later cremated in an electric crematorium. Parsis do not cremate or bury their loved ones, unlike Hindus and Muslims, and they consider a human body as a gift of nature, which has to be returned. According to Zoroastrian

beliefs, cremating or burying would contaminate the elements of nature - water, air and fire. In the early hours of the day, the body is prepared for the funeral rites. The body is washed and dressed in traditional Parsi attire by the Nasseesalars, who are specialised pallbearers responsible for handling the remains.

Continued on Page 2

Maha cabinet seeks 'Bharat Ratna' for Tata



PNS ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra cabinet on Thursday passed a resolution urging the central government to confer 'Bharat Ratna', the country's highest civilian award, on legendary industrialist late Ratan Tata.

The cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde paid homage to the industry icon, who died in a Mumbai hospital on Wednesday night. A motion of condolence was passed during the meeting, a statement from the Chief Minister's Office said. The cabinet also passed a resolution urging the Centre to confer the Bharat Ratna on the late industrialist.

Tata has been feted with the country's second highest civilian honour Padma Vibhushan. The resolution said entrepreneurship is an effective way for growth of the soci-

ety. The country can be taken on the path of progress and development by setting up new businesses, it said.

"It also requires love for the country and honest feelings for society upliftment. We have lost a visionary leader who was committed to the country and the society. Tata's role in the industrial sector and upliftment of the society was unparalleled. He tackled all challenges by adhering to high morals, transparent and clean business administration with discipline," it said. He carved a niche for the Tata Group and the country on global stage, the resolution said.

It said Ratan Tata will always be remembered for his firm determination after the 26/11 terror attacks and contribution of Rs 1,500 crore to the PM Relief fund for the fight against COVID-19. He had opened all hotels of the Tata Group for COVID patients.



Telugu film personalities pay tribute to 'legend'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telugu film personalities, including Chiranjeevi, Mahesh Babu, Junior NTR and others on Thursday mourned the demise of veteran industrialist Ratan Tata, hailing his philanthropy and contributions to the country's industrial progress.

Ratan Tata's demise is a sad day for all Indians. For generations together, there is not a single Indian whose life has not been touched by his services one way or the other, Chiranjeevi said.

"One of the greatest visionaries our country has ever seen, a truly legendary industrialist, a philanthropist extraordinaire and a human being par excellence,

Continued on Page 2

A stickler for ethical business practices: CM Naidu



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has remarked that Ratan Tata made India globally visible through his value-based ethical business practices. He asserted that Tata's legacy is enduring and will continue.

Paying homage to Ratan Tata by offering floral tributes at his residence in Mumbai on Thursday, the Chief Minister described Tata as a rare businessman who adhered to ethical practices throughout his life. Calling Ratan Tata a great human being, he noted that Tata had a remarkable vision, with the Tata

Group operating in over a hundred countries.

Chandrababu Naidu highlighted Ratan Tata's philanthropic efforts, stating that he generously contributed to social causes. He recalled how, upon requesting a cancer hospital in Tirupati, Tata not only donated to that cause but also to the Basavataarakam Cancer Hospital in Hyderabad. Emphasising that the Tata Group serves as the best example of ethical business, Chandrababu noted that under Ratan Tata's guidance, the group achieved impressive results. He mentioned that the Tata Group has a turnover of \$400 billion and has generated one million jobs, making a significant contribution to the nation.

No V'wada Rural Mandal on AP CEO website

DASARI SRINIVASA RAO ds770456@gmail.com ■ VIJAYAWADA

Voters struggle to register names for upcoming Graduate MLC polls

The absence of Vijayawada Rural Mandal from the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Andhra Pradesh's website has become a big challenge for graduates attempting to register as voters in the Krishna-Guntur Graduate Constituency. Following the reorganisation of districts and the formation of the NTR district with Vijayawada as its headquarters, Vijayawada Rural, East, Central, West, and North mandals, among others, were included under its jurisdiction.

Despite the total of 20 mandals in the NTR district, Vijayawada Rural Mandal is missing from the CEO's online registration system, making it impossible for graduates in that area to submit their voter registration through Form-18. Graduates from regions such as Gollapudi, Nunna, Nidamanuru, and

Ambapuram—located within Vijayawada Rural Mandal—are unable to complete the registration process online due to the absence of their Mandal on the portal.

Vijayawada Rural Mandal (Revenue) surrounds Vijayawada city and is experiencing rapid development. As per the final electoral rolls published for the recent general elections, the Mandal has over 1.40 lakh voters, with a population exceeding 2 lakh. Many state and central government employees reside in Gollapudi, Nunna, Nidamanuru, and Ambapuram areas. Particularly, graduates from Vijayawada Rural Mandal in the NTR district are facing issues registering online. Although they can fill out Form-18 online, they are unable to submit it to the CEO as their Mandal is not listed on the website ceoandhra.nic.in, which

does not support online submission of Form-18. Graduate voter registration to close on Nov 7

Graduate voter registration commenced on October 1, following the directive from the Election Commission of India (ECI) to conduct an election for the Krishna-Guntur Graduate Constituency MLC. The CEO of Andhra Pradesh instructed all District Collectors

and District Election Officers of Krishna, Guntur, Bapatla, and Palnadu districts to prepare the Electoral Rolls.

A public notice under Rule 31(3) of the Registration of Electors Rules was issued on September 30, and graduate voter registration began on October 1, continuing until November 7. Graduates can apply for the vote by submitting Form-18 either online or offline to the respective District Election Officers. The

draft voter list for the Graduate Constituency will be published on November 23, after which objections will be accepted until December 9. The final Graduate Elector Rolls will be released on December 30, following the resolution of objections.

MLCS Lakshmana Rao to raise the issue with AP CEO

Upon learning about the issue from graduates, Krishna-Guntur Graduate Constituency MLC KS Lakshmana Rao expressed surprise. Speaking to *The Pioneer*, he stated that he would bring this issue to the notice of the Andhra Pradesh CEO.

'INTENSE POETIC PROSE'

Nobel Prize in literature awarded to South Korean author Han Kang

PNS ■ STOCKHOLM

The Nobel Prize in literature was awarded Thursday to South Korean author Han Kang for what the Nobel committee called "her intense poetic prose that confronts historical traumas and exposes the fragility of human life."

Mats Malm, permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy's Nobel Committee, announced the prize in Stockholm. Han, 53, won the International Booker Prize in 2016 for "The Vegetarian," an unsettling novel in which a woman's decision to stop eating meat has devastating consequences.



Her novel "Human Acts" was an International Booker Prize finalist in 2018. The literature prize has long faced criticism that it is too focused on European and North American writers of style-heavy, story-light prose.

Continued on Page 2

Pathological bias, naive ideas rule India's water sector

BY M. DINESH KUMAR & KAMANA JHA

If someone asks a person who knows India's water sector well, "What characterizes the country's water sector debate today?" the answer will be simple: 'naive ideas'. While scarcity of water starts hurting economic activities and affecting every walk of life in large parts of the developing world, there are a whole range of naive ideas being promoted by pseudo-intellectuals, though globally renowned academicians like Prof Asit K Biswas warn of serious water crises affecting large regions due to paucity of 'water management' in most developing countries. Prof Biswas argues that the political leadership of those countries lacks the will to take hard decisions when it comes to dealing with water management challenges.

In a recent article titled 'India's Water Management

Debate: Is the Civil Society Making it Everlasting?, Dinesh Kumar and Chetan Pandit wrote about the diametrically opposite views that exist in water management sector which create hindrance to using the best of modern science and technology for dealing with the problems. They note: "What makes the present scenario different from the past is the emergence of Civil Society (CS) advocates. The CS strongly campaigns for or against various policies related to water, energy, and the environment which have a huge impact on the nation's social fabric and the economy and therefore on its place in the international arena". Some scholars even argue that the real objective of the CS advocates is to influence the economic agenda, and water, energy, and environment policies are only tools to achieve this goal. In any case, these CS

groups are political entities as they try to influence the social and economic agenda. **Civil society and water management**

A water sector professional has to take cognizance of the political overtones of CS advocacies. A close examination of the current debate on water management in India amongst scholars and practitioners clearly reveals a 'pathological bias' of this class towards certain ideas. It often takes 'aggressive' forms, though interestingly the perpetrators voice their concern about 'destructive forms' of development, pursued by modern governments. The concern becomes genuine when we see that they dominate even drafting committees of important policy documents and use such opportunities to vehemently argue against infrastructure development in the sector. The recent flood damages in AP, Telangana, and to an extent in Delhi are out-

The recent flood damages in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and to an extent in Delhi are outcomes of negligence of such issues in the past by a few.

comes of negligence of such issues in the past by a few.

The civil society groups are largely against 'imported water supplied through household taps' to quench the thirst of millions living in water-scarce regions, and aggressively promote traditional water bodies as drinking water sources. They are against large dams for the 'negative social and environmental impacts' they create; and support decentralized water harvesting and are against building permanent water infrastructure in rural areas. They are against modern irrigation systems involving reservoirs and large conveyance systems, and believe

that only traditional ponds and tanks are sustainable; most of them hate irrigation and promote rain-fed crops, arguing that the latter do not consume water! They fight fiercely against hydropower dams which produce 'dirty power' and want only 'clean energy' from solar and wind power. **CSOs' water management alternatives**

A new solution for rejuvenating India's rivers being advocated by some 'water crusaders', which has received immense public attention, is 'tree plantation'. Often hype is created about its contribution to increasing groundwater recharge and enhancing the

flow and quality of water in the rivers. But the huge water loss from soil profile and shallow groundwater through trees which act as biological pumps is never considered. Even the role of trees in improving infiltration of rainwater is overplayed. Studies show grass cover will be much more effective in improving rainwater infiltration. While it is good to have an extra green cover, at what cost it comes is what is important.

Another 'silver bullet' for arresting groundwater depletion is cropping pattern shift in regions like Punjab and Maharashtra. Replacement of paddy by some low water consuming crops is strongly advocated for Punjab as if it is scientifically well established that paddy is a water guzzler! There is no doubt that irrigation water requirement for paddy is very high—1,000-1,500 mm depending on the climatic con-

ditions, weather, length of the growing season and 'method of growing', and much higher than many other cereals like wheat, jowar, and pearl millet. But the hydrology and water balance of paddy irrigated is hardly understood by the policy makers and practitioners.

Studies from different parts of the world, including Pakistan Punjab, Haryana in India and South Korea show that percolation of water from irrigated water to shallow groundwater is a major component of the total water applied to the paddy field, and it will be wrong to reconsider this water as consumed. While paddy is grown mostly during the monsoon season in many parts of Asia, paddy fields act as spreading basin for rainwater to infiltrate and help improve the groundwater balance. So, the solution to Punjab's groundwater depletion lies in reducing the cropping intensity, thereby cutting down the

evapo-transpirative demand for water in aggregate terms.

So, the real concern is not that we are unable to find solutions for our water problems very quickly. Obviously, the government at the Centre has long-term vision for water management sector in the country and appears to be working towards realizing that. The concern is about the way we end up implementing certain solutions that are not part of such long-term plans, without having any scientific evidence about their effectiveness. To avoid this, technocrats should be on board while such solutions are planned and implemented.

It is certain that India will face acute water scarcity, and many areas in central, peninsular and western India are already experiencing it in different manifestations. There is no 'if' about future water scarcity. The question is: What are we doing about it?

CM did everything possible for flood-hit: V'wada MP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada TDP MP Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni) asserted that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has done everything possible to assist the flood victims. Speaking at a press conference at the TDP headquarters in Mangalagiri on Thursday, the MP remarked, "Some members of the YSRCP have staged a dharna regarding the Vijayawada flood victims, but none of these leaders were visible during the relief efforts."



The MP highlighted that CM Naidu spent 12 days at the collector's office to support flood victims, visiting affected areas daily and instilling hope among those trapped by the

floods. "Today, the people of Vijayawada appreciate the relief efforts made by the Chief Minister. Ninety-eight percent of the residents feel that they recovered quickly from the flood disaster thanks to Chandrababu," he said. Sivanath alleged that the YSRCP, which did not secure opposition status in the recent elections, is spreading false propaganda about the flood relief efforts of the TDP-led NDA government. He noted that Rs 600 crore has been directly deposited into the bank accounts of four lakh flood victims across the state, with the total loss estimated at Rs 7,600 crore. He claimed that Chandrababu worked tirelessly for 18 hours during the floods and that 350 fire engines were deployed to clean 78,000 houses, a first-of-its-kind initiative in the country. He added that people voluntarily donated over Rs 450 crore to support the flood victims, trusting in CM Chandrababu.

MP Kesineni Sivanath pointed out discrepancies in the actual costs of food supplied to flood victims. He stated that while the actual cost was Rs 57.4 crore, YSRCP-affiliated media falsely reported it as Rs 368 crore. He mentioned that Rs 23 lakh was spent on matchboxes and candles but was misrepresented as Rs 23 crore. Similarly, Rs 11.22 crore was spent on water bottles, portrayed as Rs 26 crore, and Rs 18.34 crore was allocated for sanitation, but YSRCP leaders claimed it was Rs 51 crore. "At every stage, YSRCP leaders are spreading false information about the flood relief provided by the NDA government," MP Sivanath said.

SAAP chief, Sports Minister discuss preparations for National Games

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Following the announcement of the 38th National Games scheduled to be held in Uttarakhand from January 28 to February 13 next year, Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP) Chairman Alimini Ravi Naidu met Minister for Transport, Youth Services, and Sports M Ram Prasad Reddy on Thursday.

They discussed the preparation of the State teams to participate in the event. The SAAP Chairman also discussed the selection of the Andhra Pradesh teams, coaching camps, funds, and other related issues with the Minister. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu gives top priority to sports and games and encourages outstanding athletes in the State by offering jobs. Cash incentives are presented to those who win gold, silver, and bronze medals in the National Games.

'Nari Shakti Utsavam' from today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a key initiative to celebrate women's empowerment, Andhra Pradesh Tourism Department Managing Director Abhishikt Kishore extended an official invitation to the State's Minister for Tourism, Culture, and Cinematography, Kandula Durgesh, for the upcoming "Nari Shakti Utsavam." The event is set to take place at Babburi Ground near Punnami Ghat in Vijayawada from October 11 to 13, 2024.

The formal invitation was presented during a meeting on Thursday morning at Minister Durgesh's chamber in the Secretariat, Velagapudi. Kishore informed the Minister that the event, coinciding with the Dasara Sharannavaratri celebrations, will focus on women's empowerment and feature a range of programmes aimed at inspiring spirituality. The "Nari Shakti Utsavam" will honour talented women from various fields with recog-



ognition awards during the three-day event. It will also offer a platform for cultural exhibitions, folk dances, and a food festival showcasing both national and international cuisines.

Kishore highlighted that the programme will include cultural performances, speeches, and a special drone show narrating the history and significance of Goddess Kanakadurga, adding to the festive atmosphere along the banks of the Krishna River.

The event is expected to attract prominent dignitaries, including the wives of chief ministers, female ministers, IAS, IPS, and IFS officials, as well as judges and their spouses.

MD Kishore encouraged the dignitaries, including Minister Durgesh, to share their messages at the event. Minister Durgesh expressed his hope that this three-day festival would serve as a celebration of women's strength and community unity during the Dasara festivities.

World Mental Health Day: Awareness programme held

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On the occasion of World Mental Health Day, a comprehensive awareness programme was held at the New OPD Block of the Divisional Railway Hospital, Vijayawada, on Thursday. The event was organised under the guidance of Dr M Sowribala, Chief Medical Superintendent, Vijayawada Division. The program aimed to bring attention to the importance of mental health in professional environments, where workplace stressors can significantly impact employee well-being.

Dr M Jaideep, ACMS (Health & Family Welfare), Vijayawada Division, discussed the adverse effects of negative work environments on employees' mental health, such as increased substance abuse, absenteeism, and reduced productivity. Dr Srikanth Kollu, Consultant Psychiatrist, delivered a lecture on prevalent mental health concerns, available treatment options, and preventive measures. He emphasised the importance of reducing stigma around mental health issues.

Valmiki Jayanthi to be celebrated as State festival

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Minister for BC, EWS, Handloom, and Textiles, S. Savitha, has announced that Valmiki Jayanthi will be celebrated as a state festival on October 17. She emphasised that the celebrations should be organised under the leadership of collectors in all district headquarters. Minister Savitha stated that the main event will take place in Anantapur, and arrangements must be monitored regularly.

On Thursday, the Minister held a review meeting with BC Welfare Department Secretary Pola Bhaskar and departmental officials at her office in the Secretariat.

During the meeting, she mentioned that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu had instructed that Valmiki Jayanthi be observed as a state festival. Following the Chief Minister's directives, steps will



be taken to organise the celebrations in all district headquarters, with collectors leading the efforts. The Minister has tasked Secretary Pola Bhaskar with issuing necessary instructions to the collectors. The main event in Anantapur will feature simultaneous celebrations across the state, with arrangements to be made accordingly. She further noted that the Chief Minister has called for grand celebrations for Valmiki Jayanthi.

Later, BC Welfare Department Secretary Pola Bhaskar confirmed that direc-

tions would be issued to the collectors for the official organisation of Valmiki Jayanthi.

Minister Savitha also presented a cheque for ₹3.50 lakh, donated by benefactors from the Penukonda constituency, to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) for financial assistance to the flood victims in Vijayawada. She handed over the cheque to CM Chandrababu Naidu following the Council of Ministers meeting at the Secretariat on Thursday.

Ministers discuss box culverts on V'wada-Nuzvid road

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister P. Narayana paid a courtesy visit to the Minister for Roads and Transport, Investments and Infrastructure B.C. Janardhan Reddy's office at the Secretariat on Thursday.

During the meeting, the ministers addressed the inundation of Roads and Buildings (R&B) roads in several areas due to the Budameru floods within Vijayawada city limits. They noted that the road leading to Nuzvid had been temporarily excavated at various points to drain floodwater that



had accumulated in residential areas, thereby preventing a major disaster. However, the road was subsequently restored.

The ministers discussed the necessary steps for a permanent solution should floods occur in the future. They specifically directed Principal Secretary of the Roads and

Buildings Department, Kantil Dande, and Vijayawada Municipal Commissioner Dhyana Chandra to collaborate with the State Roads and Buildings Department and the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation to prepare proposals for constructing box culverts in place of the temporarily removed roads.

Complaint lodged for morphing Priyanka's photos

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A complaint was lodged for morphing Priyanka Gandhi's photo and disseminating content. In a letter to the Cyber Crime wing of Hyderabad City Police, Chatari Dasharath, BRSV State general secretary, said that legal action must be taken on strangers who were involved in Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi's photo morphing on social media platforms. On X, three accounts were associated with the dissemination of this content.

He also mentioned the accounts of individuals Karunakar Kommarreddy (@karunakaromreddy), Vivekanand Reddy (@VAnand_JNC and Pulse of Telangana (@sreerreddi77).

Nation bids tata...

Continued from Page 1

His body was then taken to the Worli crematorium for last rites. Union Home Minister Amit Shah attended the last rites of Ratan Tata on behalf of the Centre. Amit Shah, Union Minister Piyush Goyal and other ministers and top businessmen like Ambanis were present at the site. The Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said the tricolour on government offices in Maharashtra would be flown at half-mast as a sign of mourning. There will be no entertainment events as well.

In a post on X, Eknath Shinde called Tata, who spearheaded the salt-to-software conglomerate for several decades, a living legend who successfully helped the 150-year-old Tata Group. "Ratanji Tata was a living legend who successfully led the Tata Group with a tradition of excellence and integrity spanning nearly 150 years. The decisiveness and mental toughness he dis-

played time after time took the Tata Group to different industrial heights," Shinde tweeted.

Maharashtra minister Deepak Kesarkar said all programmes of the state government scheduled to take place on Thursday have been cancelled.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi consoled the death of Ratan Tata, calling him a visionary business leader and a compassionate soul. The PM said one of the unique aspects of Tata was his passion towards dreaming big and giving back. "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," PM Modi said.

Telugu film...

Continued from Page 1

Shri Ratan Tata's contributions not only built the illustrious TATA brand into a global powerhouse but also stupendously contributed to our Nation building," he said on X.

Describing Ratan Tata as a giant of industry and a beacon of humanity, actor Mahesh Babu said the departed industrialist's generosity, wisdom, and unwavering commitment for the greater good has left an indelible mark on the world.

In his message, Junior NTR said Ratan Tata's selfless philanthropy and visionary leadership have transformed countless lives. "India owes him a debt of gratitude." Actor Ram Charan termed Ratan Tata's demise as a huge loss to the nation.

"An iconic legend and guiding light, he touched the lives of many, from the common man to business pioneers. A deeply loved philanthropist, Ratan Tata Sir's legacy will live on in the hearts of millions," he said.

Nobel Prize in...

Continued from Page 1

It has also been male-dominated, with just 17 women among its 119 laureates so far. The last woman to win was Annie Ernaux of France, in 2022.

Six days of Nobel announcements opened Monday with Americans Victor Ambros and Gary Ruvkun winning the medicine prize. Two founding fathers of machine learning — John Hopfield and Geoffrey Hinton — won the physics prize on Tuesday.

On Wednesday, three scientists who discovered powerful techniques to decode and even design novel proteins were awarded the Nobel Prize in chemistry.

The Nobel Peace Prize will be announced Friday and the economics award on October 14.

The prize carries a cash award of 11 million Swedish kronor (USD 1 million) from a bequest left by the award's creator, Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel. The laureates are invited to receive their awards at ceremonies on December 10, the anniversary of Nobel's death.

Parsi rituals adapted...

Continued from Page 1

The body is then wrapped in a white shroud, known as the 'sudreh' (cotton vest) and 'kusti', a sacred cord that is worn round the waist.

Before the body is taken to the final resting place, prayers and blessings are performed by the Parsi priests.

These rituals are designed to help the soul of the deceased transition smoothly into the afterlife. The family and close relatives gather to pay their respects and participate in these prayers.

Traditionally, the body would be taken to the Tower of Silence, or 'Dakhma', a structure specifically designed for Parsi funerals. The body is placed atop the 'Dakhma', where it is exposed to the elements and scavenger birds, typically vultures. This practice, known as 'Dokhmenashini', ensures that the body is returned to nature without pol-

luting the sacred elements of fire, earth and water. The vultures consume the flesh, and the bones eventually fall into a central well within the tower, where they are further decomposed.

However, given the current environmental and practical challenges and the decline in vulture populations, the funeral might incorporate modern adaptations.

In some urban areas, solar concentrators are used to accelerate the decomposition process.

Alternatively, some Parsi families now opt for electric cremation, which is seen as a more practical and environmentally friendly option.

If the 'Dakhma' method is not feasible, the body will be taken to an electric crematorium. Here, the body is cremated in a manner that respects the Zoroastrian principles of not contaminating the earth, fire or water.

Goddess appears as Durga Devi on Day 8

Thousands throng temple atop Indrakeeladri, perform 'poojas'



PICS: CH: vijayabhaskar

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On the 8th day of the Dasara festivities at the Sri Durga Malleeswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri on Thursday, the presiding deity, Durga Devi, appeared in the form of Sri Durga Devi Avataram. Devotees from across Andhra Pradesh flocked to the temple to offer special prayers, with many Bhavani devotees also participating in the poojas.

The 10-day Dasara festivities are set to conclude on October 12, culminating in the grand finale featuring the 'Teppotsavam,' a ceremonial boat festival on the Krishna River. Authorities from various departments, including Water Resources, Revenue, Fire, and the Durga Temple, have made extensive preparations for the event, including readying the Hamsa Vahanam for the ritual. A trial run of the Hamsa Vahanam was scheduled for Thursday but had to be postponed to Friday due to high water inflows in the river.



Several VIPs visited the temple on Thursday. Union Minister of State for Heavy Industries, Bhupatiraju Srinivasa Varma, was warmly welcomed by the temple authorities and offered a special darshan of Durga Devi. He praised the arrangements made at the temple and expressed gratitude for the facilities provided for devotees. He also prayed for the well-being of the people and the state.

APSRTC Chairman Konakalla Narayana Rao also visited the temple, receiving Laddu Prasadam and Sesa

Vastram after his darshan. He expressed gratitude to Durga Devi for her blessings, which he believes aided him in assuming his position. Other prominent figures, including Vijayawada West MLA Yalamanchili Satyanarayana Chowdary (Sujana Chowdary) and Vizianagaram MP Kaliseti Appalanaidu, also visited and praised the arrangements made by the Endowments Department.

NTR District Collector Dr G. Srijana, Police Commissioner S.V. Rajasekhara Babu, and Durga Temple Executive Officer K.S. Rama

Rao supervised the arrangements, ensuring the smooth flow of devotees through the queues and addressing their concerns. Minister for Endowments Anam Ramanarayana Reddy closely monitored the situation, guiding officials to manage the crowd effectively.

According to temple authorities, on the 8th day of the festival, the temple generated an income of Rs 75 lakh through the sale of darshan tickets, prasadam, tonsuring, and other special poojas. In comparison, the income on the 7th day, during the auspicious Moola Nakshatram, was Rs 39 lakh.

Today's 'alankaram': Sri Mahishasura Mardini

During the Dasara Sarannavaratri festivities, the goddess Kanaka Durga Devi will be adorned as Sri Mahishasura Mardini Devi, considered the most 'Ugra Avataram' (fiery form) of Devi. She is known for killing Mahisha on Navami, which is referred to as Maharnavami.

Corporators' study tour triggers a row

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A group of corporators and officials from the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) is preparing for a week-long study tour of South India from October 20 to 27. This tour, which focuses on solid waste management, development programmes, and Swachh Bharat initiatives in Coimbatore, Mysore, and Bangalore, has stirred considerable controversy among the corporators.

While the intention is to learn from other cities, many corporators have raised strong objections, deeming it an unnecessary expense. JSP Corporator PLVN Murthy, who represents Ward 22, has chosen to boycott the tour, pointing to the high costs and the financial difficulties the corporation is currently facing. "Last year, the corporation spent about Rs 1.80 crore on the study tour. This year, expenses could exceed Rs 2 crore. Given the significant challenges the GVMC is dealing with, a costly tour is unjustifiable. This is public money being misused," he remarked.

In a similar vein, CPI(M) Corporator B Ganga Rao has also declared his intention to boycott the trip. He criticized the study tour as more of a sightseeing venture than a sincere attempt to enhance civic governance. "This is merely a pleasure trip to tourist destinations in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

Jagan boosts cadre morale in crucial meeting



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) President and former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy convened an important meeting with local representatives and party workers from the Repalle constituency at the Tadepalli party office. He reiterated his call for unity among party workers and urged them to continue striving for the betterment of the people, assuring them that their efforts would not go unnoticed and would always be rewarded.

In his address, YS Jagan stressed the importance of values, integrity, and resilience. He reminded attendees that hardships are temporary and that light always follows darkness, encouraging them to remain steadfast in their principles. He underscored that it is their character and commitment to these values that will guide them through difficult times and serve as a protective shield. YS Jagan urged party workers to draw inspiration from his own experiences, having faced numerous challenges, including wrongful imprisonment, yet continuing to serve the people. He reaffirmed that truth and good deeds will always prevail and extended his full support to Ganesh, a dedicated party worker who has consistently stood by the party and its members.

YS Jagan expressed disappointment over Mopidevi Venkataramana's departure from the YSRCP, noting that the party had always treated him with respect, offering him key positions such as MLC, minister, and Rajya Sabha MP. He remarked on the unfortunate nature of Mopidevi's decision to leave the party despite the significant support and opportunities he had received from YSRCP.

He also highlighted the current turmoil under the "Red Book" governance, citing rampant intimidation and false cases against individuals. YS Jagan pointed out that corruption has reached unprecedented levels, leading to the collapse of various systems. He noted the proliferation of gambling clubs in every constituency and expressed concerns over increased liquor sales through distillery deals and syndicates, along with the push to establish belt shops in every village. He further highlighted the worsening situation regarding sand, stating that while the government previously generated revenue from sand sales, it is now being sold at more than double the price, despite claims of regulation.

Additionally, YS Jagan emphasized the YSRCP's commitment to fulfilling manifesto promises during their governance from 2019 to 2024, despite challenges such as COVID-19. He highlighted revolutionary changes in education, healthcare, and agriculture, including digital learning, the expansion of Aarogyasri, and free crop insurance. He also criticized Chandrababu Naidu for misleading voters with false promises.



YSRCP seeks compensation for flood victims

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP Congress Party (YSRCP) leaders and cadres from NTR District staged a protest at Dharna Chowk in Vijayawada, demanding immediate compensation for flood victims. The protestors raised slogans against the state government and Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, accusing them of neglecting the flood-affected people.

YSRCP NTR District President Devineni Avinash led the protest, criticising the state government and Chandrababu Naidu for failing to provide adequate relief. Avinash accused Naidu of being responsible for the floods in the district and highlighted that areas like Jakkampudi Colony and Ajith Singh Nagar were heavily submerged. He further alleged that flood victims have been waiting daily at the Vijayawada collectorate, with no compensation forthcoming.

Avinash also targeted the TDP-led NDA government for inaction, accusing them of focusing on photo opportunities rather than delivering real assistance.

Community-managed natural farming in State lauded

8-member NITI Aayog team to tour Krishna and Eluru districts

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Prof Ramesh Chand, member of the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog, has praised the farming system of the Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming (APCNF) conducted under the guidance of Rythu Sadhikara Samstha. "It is an inspiration for other States," he said and added that natural farming will change the lives of small and marginal farmers.

An eight-member team led by Prof Ramesh Chand is in the State to conduct an awareness tour in the Krishna and Eluru districts for two days, on APCNF which is being successfully implemented in the State.

Firstly, the team visited the Swarna Bharati Trust located at Atkuru of Ungutur mandal in Krishna district. Rythu Sadhikara Samstha Executive Vice Chairman T Vijaykumar gave a PowerPoint presentation and highlighted the importance of natural farming, its aims and models. He said that APCNF was launched in 2016



Rythu Sadhikara Samstha Executive Vice-Chairman Vijaykumar explaining the APCNF system to the NITI Aayog team at the Swarna Bharati Trust at Atkuru in Krishna district on Thursday

with 40,000 farmers. Now, there are 10 lakh farmers. In addition to the State government, Azim Prem Ji, Co-Impact, KFW and other organisations have been extending their support to the cultivation system.

He said the State government is supporting the farmers to earn an additional income. The Pre-Monsoon Dry Sowing (PMDS) was started with 11 farmers in 2018 and thousands of acres are being cultivated under this system. They also encourage the farm-

ers to cultivate inter crops by implementing A Grade and ATM models.

Team member Dr Praveen Kumar Singh, Agriculture Commissioner, Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, spoke about the 365-day income generation, green cover, labourers' requirements, and other key subjects. He emphasised that there is a need to research Jeevamrutham and Solid Jeevamrutham.

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) Deputy Director Dr Suresh

Kumar Chaudhari praised the State government for implementing PMDS in the drought-prone Anantapur district. The scheme can be introduced across the State to earn additional income and for that, more research should be conducted, he added.

NITI Aayog Programme Director Neelam Patel, ICAR Assistant Director-General Dr Rajbeer Singh, Indian Institute of Farming Systems Research Director Dr Sunil Kumar and others interacted with the farmers. Also, they explained the best methods for APCNF. Acharya NG Ranga University Vice-Chancellor Dr R Sarada Jayalakshmi Devi, Horticulture and Fisheries Department Principal Secretary A Babu, Agriculture Department Director Dr S Dilli Rao, Horticulture Director S Srinivasa Rao, APCNF District Project Manager Parthasarathy, Krishna district Agriculture Officer N Padmavathi, Rythu Sadhikara Samstha CEO B Rama Rao, ED Samuel Anand and others were also present.

Vizag honey-trap case: Woman held for duping multiple men

Korupolu Joy Jamima used social media to target wealthy men

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A honey-trap case has come to light in Vizag, with the arrest of Korupolu Joy Jamima, a 27-year-old woman, who allegedly duped multiple men including wealthy individuals under the guise of love and marriage. "We have arrested the main accused, Korupolu Joy Jamima, and are investigating her accomplices," said Vizag City Police Commissioner Shankrabathra Bagchi. "We are working to identify the exact number of victims who have fallen into this trap."

According to police investigations, Jamima used social media platforms to target wealthy men, befriended them and gain their trust before luring them to private locations. "She would administer sedative-laced drinks, rendering her victims unconscious, and then take compromising pho-



tos," said a police official. "These photos were used to blackmail the victims with threats of public exposure."

Several victims have come forward with similar accounts. An NRI youth, who fell victim to Jamima's trap, described how she befriended him online and invited him to her home. "She sprayed a sedative-laced perfume and offered me a drink, leaving me unconscious," he said. "Her gang then took photos of the two of us together and demanded money."

Another victim, an engineering graduate, claimed that Jamima visited his coffee shop under the guise of seeking

business assistance. "She later invited me to a guest house, where I was given a sedative-laced drink, and compromising photos were taken," he said. "Jamima then threatened me and demanded money."

Jamima's tactics also included filing false complaints against her victims, accusing them of cheating and sexual assault. "This added another layer of complexity to her schemes," said Commissioner Bagchi. "We urge anyone who may have been victimised by this gang to step forward and provide information."

The scandal has raised serious concerns about the extent of Jamima's operations and the potential for more victims to emerge. "We will leave no stone unturned in investigating this case," said Bagchi. "We assure the victims that justice will be served."

The police have urged anyone with information to come forward and contact the Bheemili Police Station. "We need the public's help to unravel the full extent of this honey-trap operation," said an official.

Aus team visits GITAM University

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A high-level Australian delegation, led by Deputy Consul General for South India David Eggleston, visited GITAM Deemed to be University on Thursday, marking a significant step in fostering educational and leadership collaboration between India and Australia. The team included Royal Australian Navy Fleet Commander Rear Admiral Christopher Smith and other Australian Navy officials. During the visit, the Australian delegation engaged in discussions with GITAM's In-Charge Vice-Chancellor Prof Y Gowtham Rao, and interacted with students.

Eggleston emphasised the importance of strengthening the growing bilateral relations between India and Australia. He highlighted the strategic role played by the Australian Consulate-General in South India, which covers key States like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Union Territories such as Pondicherry, Lakshadweep, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Say 'no' to wall posters: GVMC Commissioner

Vizag's aesthetic appeal being marred by wall posters and graffiti

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In an effort to preserve the beauty and cleanliness of Visakhapatnam, Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) Commissioner P Sampath Kumar has urged the public to refrain from pasting unauthorised posters on public and private walls. He stressed that the city's aesthetic appeal is being marred by defacement through wall posters and graffiti, which not only tarnishes the look of Visakhapatnam, but also damages public property.

"Our city deserves to stay beautiful," said the Commissioner during a press briefing on Thursday. "We are committed to ensuring that Visakhapatnam remains a clean, green, and well-maintained urban space. Unauthorised wall posters deface our city's charm,



and it is imperative that we all take responsibility to stop this practice."

Sampath Kumar reiterated that strict action will be taken against violators, including penalties and fines. "We want to send a clear message: help us maintain the city's charm by keeping the walls clear. Those who are caught putting up illegal posters will face strict penal-

ties from the GVMC," he added. The Commissioner highlighted the GVMC's ongoing efforts to make the city more attractive to residents and visitors alike. "This is a collaborative mission between the authorities and the people. Together, we can ensure that Visakhapatnam remains a city we can be proud of. Public cooperation is essential in keep-

ing our streets, buildings, and public spaces free from any form of defacement."

The GVMC has been working on various initiatives to beautify the city, including wall murals and green spaces, which have received positive feedback from the community. "It is disheartening to see that these efforts are sometimes overshadowed by acts of vandalism, such as the posting of unauthorised advertisements and political posters. We urge businesses, political organisations, and individuals to respect the city's spaces and support our vision for a cleaner, more vibrant Visakhapatnam," he concluded.

Local residents have expressed support for the initiative, noting that the issue of wall posters has long been a problem. "I fully support this move by the GVMC," said a local resident.

Transponders installed on motorised fishing boats

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As part of a nationwide initiative under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana, the State Fisheries Department is equipping mechanised and motorised fishing boats with transponders. This system, which operates as a two-way communication device, is designed to assist boats in distress and help them navigate according to the national hydrographic chart, preventing unintended maritime border crossings. In addition, it will aid in the detec-

tion of nesting areas of endangered species, such as the Olive Ridley turtles.

Speaking to The Pioneer, G. Vijaya, Joint Director of Fisheries, said, "We have recently received 650 transponders and have successfully installed them on 200 boats. Our goal is to equip all 687 mechanised and motorised boats in the district with these devices by Dasara. The urgency behind this project is underscored by the risks faced by fishing boats, which can inadvertently stray into neighbouring waters of Pakistan, Bangladesh, and



Sri Lanka. The transponders serve as a crucial safeguard, preventing such incidents and ensuring that fishermen stay within India's national boundaries. "These

transponders are a lifeline for fishermen who could unknowingly drift into foreign waters," Vijaya said. "This technology ensures their safety and prevents any potential diplomatic issues."

Beyond maritime security, the transponders also play a vital role in environmental conservation. Olive Ridley turtles, an endangered species, frequently nest along India's coastline. The transponders will aid in locating and protecting these nesting areas. To ensure the effective use of the system, the Fisheries

Department is conducting workshops to familiarise master trainers with the technology. These trainers will then impart the technical knowledge to sailing teams, ensuring adherence to the Indian Coast Guard's standard operational procedures.

Hrushikesh Besoi, Deputy Director of the Central Institute of Fisheries Nautical and Engineering Training (CIFNET), highlighted the versatility of the transponders. "The devices can be connected to mobile phones, providing multiple options for

assistance. In case fishermen do not have a mobile phone, they can press a red button on the transponder, sending an emergency signal directly to ISRO's hub in Chennai."

With a battery life of 24 hours and the ability to recharge using the boat's engine, the transponders offer an unprecedented level of security for fishermen at sea. "This technology is a game-changer, providing fishermen with a safety net in times of distress and preventing dangerous situations," Besoi noted.

SRM-AP sends students to Mt Everest base camp

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

SRM University-AP has flagged off the much-awaited Everest Base Camp Expedition that will take place from October 12 to 27. This is the first initiative by any private university in India.

A team of 18 students and faculty under the leadership of Sidharth Tripathy, Director-Entrepreneurship and Innovation, will be sent to conquer Mt Everest Base Camp. The audacious adventure was flagged

off by Dr R Premkumar, Registrar of the university, and Prof Bharadhwaj Sivakumar, Dean of Paari School of Business.

"To enhance the quality of entrepreneurship, it is pivotal to foster a mindset that can take risks, tackle huge challenges and overcome tribulations from a broader perspective. Our motive as a 21st-century university is to cultivate this mindset," remarked the expedition leader, Sidharth Tripathy.

Tomatoes, onions, edible oil at subsidised prices

WEST GODAVARI COLLECTOR INAUGURATES SALES OUTLET

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

In light of the steep hike in the prices of tomatoes, onions, and edible oils, the government has opened a sales outlet to provide these essential commodities at subsidised prices.

District Collector Chadalavada Nagarani inaugurated the subsidised sales outlet at the municipal complex near the Flyover Bridge on Thursday, accompanied by MLA Pulaparti Ramanjaneyulu.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Nagarani stated that the prices of tomatoes, onions, and edible oils have skyrocketed, making them unaffordable for the common man. To address this issue, the government has opened sales outlets to provide these items at affordable rates, she explained.

"Special counters have been set up at Rythu Bazaars in Bhimavaram, Palakollu, and Narasapuram to sell tomatoes, edible oils, and onions at



subsidised prices. Tomatoes are priced at Rs 50 per kg, Kurnool variety onions at Rs 32 per kg, Maharashtra variety onions at Rs 47 per kg, palm oil packets at Rs 119, and

sunflower oil packets at Rs 127. All items are being sold below market prices," the Collector informed, urging the public to take advantage of this opportunity. She added that con-

sumers can purchase these subsidised items by presenting their Aadhaar or ration card at the sales outlets or Rythu Bazaars.

MLA Pulaparti Ramanjaneyulu expressed concern over the rising prices of tomatoes, oils, and onions. He assured the public that there is no need to worry as the government, through the Civil Supplies Department, is making these commodities available at reduced prices.

The MLA further announced that red gram and black gram would also be sold at subsidised rates and encouraged the public to benefit from this initiative. The Collector and MLA formally sold tomatoes, onions, and oil packets to buyers during the event. Joint Collector T Rahul Kumar Reddy, Civil Supplies Corporation Manager T Shivaram Prasad, DSO N Saroja, and District Marketing Officer Sunil Kumar were among those present at the programme.

BJP sacks Guntur dist chief after row over video call

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Guntur district BJP president Vanama Narendra Kumar has found himself in trouble after a video call, in which he was seen speaking to a woman in an objectionable manner, went viral on social media.

In the video, Narendra Kumar was heard asking the woman, "Will you meet me tomorrow?" and also saying, "We will drink tomorrow, just like we did last time."

Following the incident, the BJP conducted an internal inquiry and asked Narendra Kumar to resign from his position. Acting on the instructions of the State leadership, he resigned, and his resignation was accepted.

In a related development, the BJP State leadership suspended the woman, who is also a BJP leader, for leaking the video footage. The emergence of this footage featuring a senior BJP leader has created a commotion within the party, which is known for its emphasis on discipline.

FRAUD IN ICICI BANK BRANCH

Rs 28 cr of depositors' money misappropriated

PNS ■ NARASARAOPET

In a major financial fraud, Rs 28 crore of depositors' money has been misappropriated by the branch manager at the ICICI Bank branches in Chilakaluripet and Narasaraopet.

The management of ICICI Bank has lodged a complaint with the police, leading to an inquiry conducted by the CID team, headed by Additional SP C.H. Adinarayana, at the Chilakaluripet branch on Thursday.

Speaking to the media, Additional SP Adinarayana confirmed that the misappropriation of funds was discovered at both the Chilakaluripet and Narasaraopet branches of ICICI Bank. A complaint received from bank officials revealed that Guda Naresh Chandrasekhar, who served as the branch manager at the two locations, had diverted substantial amounts of money from 72 depositors. Preliminary investigations indicated that he had engaged in financial irregularities at both branches.

ICICI Bank's Vijayawada



Zonal Manager, Dinesh Mohra, submitted a complaint to the CID, stating that Rs 28 crore of depositors' money was misappropriated. The CID officials visited both branches today and interacted with the affected customers, he reported.

The CID officials are said to have identified that Guda Naresh Chandrasekhar committed the fraud with the assistance of two accomplices. However, a thorough investigation is necessary to determine the exact amount of depositors' money that was diverted or misappropriated, the Additional SP added. The ICICI Bank management has assured the depositors that their misappropriated funds will be

returned. Meanwhile, some individuals affiliated with the AISF staged a dharna in front of the bank in Chilakaluripet, demanding strict action against the ICICI Bank staff involved in the fraud.

TDP senior leader and MLA Prathipati Pulla Rao extended his support to the depositors who have lost money. He stated that when interest on fixed deposits was not credited to their accounts, the depositors approached the bank officials, who informed them that there were insufficient funds in their deposits. Pulla Rao urged the police to expedite the investigation and ensure justice for the depositors.

Govt committed to uplift of Chenchu community: Collector



The Collector visited a Chenchu family to learn about their living conditions and also inspected the Anganwadi Centre and nutria garden in Chenchu Gudem.

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam District Collector A. Thameem Ansariya appreciated the efforts of SARDS in uplifting the living standards of the Chenchu tribal community and educating them. She noted that both the Central and State governments are implementing numerous welfare programmes aimed at improving the lives of the Chenchu tribals.

The Collector inaugurated the MECCD Centre, Bala Prakasam Bhavanam, at a Chenchu habitation in Allipalam village, Yerragondapalem mandal, on Thursday. During her visit, she praised the efforts of SARDS and

highlighted the implementation of various welfare schemes under the PMJANMAN programme, specifically benefiting the Chenchu community.

During the event, Chenchu tribals urged the government to construct houses, and provide educational facilities, and hostels for their children. The Collector assured them that steps would be taken to address their requests.

Ganjivaripalle Panchayat Sarpanch Subba Reddy expressed gratitude to the Collector for inaugurating Bala Prakasam Bhavanam, which was constructed at a cost of ₹26 lakh. He mentioned that about 74 Chenchu families reside in the Chenchu Gudem

habitation, where children are deprived of education due to the lack of hostel facilities. He requested the Collector to build a hostel for the students, as Ganjivaripalle village is located 7 km away from Chenchu Gudem.

Later, the Collector visited a Chenchu family to learn about their living conditions and also inspected the Anganwadi Centre and nutria garden in Chenchu Gudem. She directed the MPDO to set up an Aadhar registration centre in the village to register the names of the tribals. Markapuram Sub-Collector S. Venkat Trivina and other officials accompanied the Collector.

Guv, CM, Dy CM condole Ratan Tata's passing

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Governor S Abdul Nazeer, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, and Deputy Chief Minister K. Pawan Kalyan have expressed their condolences on the death of Ratan Tata.

In a message on Thursday, Governor S Abdul Nazeer conveyed his deep sorrow over the passing of Ratan Tata, one of India's most illustrious and respected businessmen, who died in a Mumbai hospital on Wednesday.

Governor Nazeer stated that Ratan Tata was renowned not only for his significant contributions to the business world but also for his philanthropic efforts. He extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved



family.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu took to social media platform 'X' to mourn Ratan Tata's death, saying, "Few individuals have left such an enduring imprint on this world with their vision and integrity as Ratan Tata. Today, we have lost not just a business titan, but a true humanitarian whose legacy transcends the industrial landscape to live on in every heart he touched.

As I mourn his passing, I reflect on his remarkable contributions to industry, philanthropy, and nation-building that will forever inspire generations. My deepest condolences to his loved ones and the Tata Group." Deputy Chief Minister K. Pawan Kalyan also expressed his sorrow over Ratan Tata's demise. In a statement on Thursday, he said, "I am saddened to hear that the legendary industri-

alist Padma Vibhushan Sri Ratan Tata has passed away. I pray to God for his soul to rest in peace. The Tata Group is one of the torchbearers of the Indian industrial sector. Sri Ratan Tata played a vital role in advancing the country's industrial and commercial industries, elevating this industrial empire from Rs. 10,000 crore to Rs. 1 lakh crore." Pawan Kalyan highlighted Ratan Tata's encouragement

of youth talent and support for start-up companies. "Ratan Tata was a philanthropist who devoted much of his wealth to charitable causes. During the Covid crisis, he announced a donation of Rs. 1,500 crore, demonstrating his generosity. Ratan Tata, who has made significant contributions to both the industrial and social service sectors, is a role model for the new generation of entrepreneurs," he said.

AP Minister Nara Lokesh on his X page said Ratan Tata was a billionaire who lived in a billion hearts. In a post on X, YSR Congress Party chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy condoled the death of Ratan Tata and said he was a true visionary whose kindness, integrity, and leadership will continue to inspire.

'Bathukamma not an event but a festival'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Criticising BRS Working President KT Rama Rao for terming Bathukamma as an event, the Congress's Deverakadra MLA, G. Madhusudhan Reddy, said, "KTR ... Bathukamma is not an event but a festival."

Speaking to the media at the CLP Media Hall on Thursday, Madhusudhan said the BRS thinks Bathukamma means Kavitha, however, where is Kavitha as the Bathukamma festival is going on in a big way.

He said that women are celebrating Bathukamma grandly under the Congress government. Asking the BRS to reveal where opposition leader K. Chandrasekhar Rao is, Madhusudhan took serious exception to KTR saying that there was corruption of Rs 1 lakh crore in the Musi River Front Development Project even before the DPR was prepared.

He warned the BRS that it would not get even three seats in the next elections if it spread lies.

Madhusudhan said that KTR's words stink more



than the Musi River. He said that KTR celebrated Congress defeat in Haryana and the victory of the BJP. He said that the "irregularities" in EVMs will come out soon and asked KTR why he did not mention the defeat of the BJP in Kashmir.

He said that KTR and Harish Rao have been criticizing Rahul Gandhi, however, barking dogs will not bite. So there is no need to care about KTR's words. Madhusudhan made it clear that nothing would happen to the Congress even if KTR's grandparents came. The KTR family engaged in scams in the last 10 years. They are spreading lies as scams are not taking place under the Congress government, he pointed out.

Villagers shocked over woman ASI's suicide bid

PNS ■ MEDAK

Poignant scenes were witnessed when a woman Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) attempted suicide by consuming pesticide on the premises of a police station at Chilipched village under Kowdipalli mandal in Medak district. The woman ASI accused a sub-inspector, identified as Yadagiri, of harassing her out of vendetta. The woman ASI has been posted to the Chillpched police station long back. She said she has been discharging her duties with diligence. However, the Sub-Inspector has been harassing her by accusing her of dereliction of duty and not attending to duties regularly. She also accused the Sub-Inspector of abusing her and mentally harassing her. She left a suicide note also.

The woman ASI's colleagues rushed her to the Government Hospital at Jopiget after she consumed pesticide. The doctors declared her out of danger. The incident created a stir in the village.

If a woman ASI lacks security, how can it be expected that the police can provide security to common people, people are asking.

NITI Aayog team visits Eluru, interacts with farmers

PNS ■ ELURU

A delegation from NITI Aayog (Agriculture), led by Professor Ramesh Chand, visited the district to assess natural farming activities.

The eight-member team visited Venkatapuram village to observe natural farming practices and examine the AMDS kits. They also assessed the paddy compact blocks and noted the differences between conventional and natural farming methods.

The NITI Aayog team interacted with members of women's organisations, explaining the benefits of natural farming. They also engaged with farmers at the TTDC office in Vaturu.

Among the NITI Aayog team were Executive Director Samuel Anand, Senior Consultant V. Rayudu Prasad, and Dr. Jakeer Hussain. District Project Manager Tata Rao accompanied the team.

Ratnakar's story finds a place in degree curriculum

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Noted Telugu short story writer and social activist Ratnakar Penumaka from Yanam, near the East Godavari district, has gained recognition as his story, 'Ee Polam Ammadunu' (This Farm is for Sale), has been included in the Andhra Pradesh Collegiate Education Department's degree curriculum for the third semester, Unit IV syllabus for Telugu language students. A 10-hour teaching period has been allocated for Unit IV, titled Katha - Sahityam (Story Literature).

Ratnakar's 'Ee Polam Ammadunu,' which won the first prize in Sahari online weekly magazine's 2022 short story competition, addresses environmen-

tal destruction while highlighting the critical importance of agriculture. He stated, "This story inculcates love for nature and villages in students. It helps them understand the necessity of agriculture and the looming threat of drought if we neglect it."

Born in Kutukuru to the late Vijayakumar, a teacher, and Mary Rose Haimavathi, a homemaker, Ratnakar spent his childhood in Jegurupadu village in East Godavari district. He completed his schooling at Navodaya Vidyalaya in Peddapuram, pursued his intermediate studies at Ideal College in Kakinada, and obtained his graduation and MBA through correspondence. His voracious reading habit naturally led him to writing; over the past three years, he has authored



In an interview with The Pioneer, Ratnakar shared that his latest literary work includes the story selected for the degree curriculum. His writings are distinguished by the traditional colloquial language used by many authors in the Godavari region.

60 short stories, five novels, and 30 poems.

In an interview with The Pioneer, Ratnakar shared that his latest literary work includes the story selected for the degree curriculum. His writings are distinguished by the traditional colloquial language used by many authors in the

Godavari region. This unique approach aims to capture the spoken language of the working-class people of Konaseema and the Godavari districts, adding an authentic and raw flavour to his narratives.

Ratnakar expressed that having his writing included in the degree curriculum is a

significant achievement. He feels fortunate to have been writing since childhood. He noted that renowned writers like Gurram Joshua and Kolakaluri Inak have also been published as lessons, and he feels honoured to be recognised alongside them. He expressed his emotional regret that he could not share this achievement with his parents.

In addition to his writing, Ratnakar is a dedicated social activist. After resigning from his career as an HR manager in multinational companies, he established a charity organisation, AJK Seva Sangham, in Yanam in 2005 to serve the underprivileged, which he continues to run independently. He has donated blood 41 times and consistently supports various service initiatives.



Ratan Tata's love for dogs transcended his persona, strays welcomed in Tata offices
-Raj Thackeray

STRAYS WELCOMED IN TATA OFFICES

MNS president Raj Thackeray on Thursday fondly remembered that he and industrialist Ratan Tata shared a common thread of their love for canines and said stray dogs were welcomed in all Tata premises, be it the Taj Mahal hotel or group headquarters. His love for dogs transcended his persona to a level beyond words, recalled the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief. In a post on X, Thackeray said Tata was to be felicitated at the Buckingham Palace in the UK for his unmatched philanthropy. However, at the very last moment, his

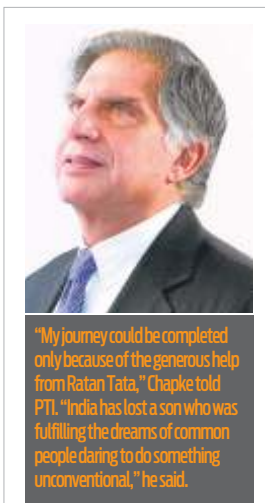
pet dog took ill. Tata immediately called up the then Prince Charles and conveyed his regrets as he couldn't leave his ailing dog alone. This highlights what a remarkable human being he was, Thackeray said. "Another aspect of Ratan Tata that is very heartwarming and that resonates with me is his love for dogs. Stray dogs are looked after and welcomed in all his premises, be it the Taj Mahal hotel or his group headquarters," he said. Tata, who is credited with transforming the Tata Group into a globally renowned conglomerate, died at age 86 at the Breach Candy Hospital in Mumbai on Wednesday night.

Bombay House is different from any other conglomerate's headquarters. While every visitor is frisked at the entrance of the colonial-era building, one should not be surprised to see a street dog stroll in nonchalantly. For decades, specific instructions have been

issued to the staff to allow a free entry and exit for the strays who may want to come in. All of it is courtesy the love and concern for the canines of one man, Ratan Tata, who held office as the chairman of Tata Sons between 1991 and 2012, and came back later for a short stint.

Helped scribe circumnavigate the world

When former journalist Vishnudas Chapke set out to circumnavigate the world in 2016, he banked on crowdfunding. But the tour became increasingly challenging as he struggled for money and even contemplated calling it off midway. But he did fulfil his dream of travelling around the world crossing as many borders as possible, thanks to the generous help of Ratan Tata, recollected Chapke on Thursday. Chapke is one of the countless people whose lives were touched by Ratan Tata's philanthropy. Tata, credited with transforming the Tata Group into a globally renowned conglomerate, died at age 86 at the Breach Candy Hospital in Mumbai on Wednesday night. "My journey could be completed only because of the generous help from Ratan Tata," Chapke told PTL. "India has lost a son who was fulfilling the dreams of common people daring to do something unconventional," he said.



Chapke said he was in Chile and struggling with finances when a call from Tata Trusts renewed his morale and fuelled his journey. "Tata had read about my attempt as well as

my struggle to fulfil my dream. While in Chile, I got a call from Tata Trusts asking if I had checked my bank account," Chapke, now 42, recalled. "The cost of checking the account balance was over \$2. So, I told the official I would get it checked through my sister in Maharashtra's Parbhani district," Chapke recalled. The official chuckled and told him that as Tata Trusts had sponsored his circumnavigation, he could check his account anywhere and let two-three dollars go. The official also assured that funds would never be short for his dreams, said Chapke. "The funds had been lying in my bank account for four weeks and I was not even aware of it," he said. The financial assistance came when Chapke was finding it hard to get going. The former scribe, who lives in Mumbai's Mankhurd area, said he would stay as a guest at somebody's residence, walk as much as possible, use public transport and eat whatever people offered him.

Goodbye my lighthouse, Tata's long-time associate Naidu bids adieu to his boss



Shantanu Naidu, a long-time associate of Ratan Tata, on Thursday bid adieu to the industrialist, comparing his boss to a 'lighthouse'. "The hole that this friendship has now left with me, I will spend the rest of my life trying to fill," Naidu, a general manager in the Office of RNT, wrote on a professional networking site in the early hours. Later in the morning, everybody saw Naidu riding out of

Tata's house on a Yezdi motorcycle, leading the truck carrying his boss' mortal remains. "Grief is the price to pay for love. Goodbye, my dear lighthouse," said the short post, accompanied by a picture of the two in what seems like a chartered aircraft. It was the mutual love and concern for dogs which had formed a bond between Tata and Naidu, a Pune-based youngster who had started

working for a Tata group company. Pained by the sight of a stray dog's death, Reddy created a reflective collar to help motorists notice the strays quicker and wrote to Tata about the same. Tata replied with much more than an acknowledgement. Naidu received an investment from Tata for this venture and an enduring bond. Naidu soon went to the US for his masters and on the return, got placed in the Office of RNT, the private office of the industrialist post his stint as Tata Sons Chairman. Outside of his day job of managing affairs for Tata, Naidu kept creating socially relevant platforms and services, and his indulgent boss often backed these ideas, up prime among them was Goodfellows, a subscription-based companionship service for senior citizens started in 2022.

NHRC notice to Delhi govt over boy's death in drain

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
The NHRC on Thursday said it has issued notices to the Delhi government, the city police chief, the DDA and the MCD over reports that a five-year-old boy died allegedly after falling into an open drain in Alipur area. This is the fifth such incident in the national capital in the recent past, the National Human Rights Commission said in a statement. The human rights panel has taken suo motu cognisance of a media report that a five-year-old boy died after falling into an open drain in the Alipur area of northwest Delhi on October 7, it said. The contractor, who worked there, had reportedly left the drain open at various places without placing any warning signs, the statement said. The NHRC has observed the contents of the news report about this case and similar incidents in the recent past, if true, raise a serious issue of violation of the human rights of the victims due to apparent negligence of the civic authorities.

Modi's 10-point plan to tone up India-ASEAN ties

PNS ■ VIENTIANE (LAOS)
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday announced a 10-point plan to strengthen India-ASEAN comprehensive partnership and asserted that ties with the regional grouping were critical to guiding Asia's future. Addressing the 21st India-ASEAN Summit here, Modi noted that India-ASEAN trade had doubled to over USD 130 billion in the past decade and announced a review of the trade in goods agreement to harness the greater economic potential of the partnership. "I believe that the 21st century - the Asian century - is the century of India and ASEAN nations," the Prime Minister said while addressing the leaders of the ASEAN nations that include Malaysia, Thailand, Brunei, Cambodia,



Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Vietnam, Laos and Singapore. The Prime Minister said India was commemorating the 10th anniversary of its Act East Policy, which has given new energy, direction and momentum to the historic relationship between India and the ASEAN nations. "The India-ASEAN Summit was a productive one. We discussed how to further strengthen the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between India and ASEAN. We look forward to deepening trade ties, cultural linkages and cooperation in technology, connectivity and other such sectors," he said in

a post on X after the summit. The 10-point plan to further strengthen the India-ASEAN partnership includes celebrating the year 2025 as the ASEAN-India Year of Tourism, doubling the number of scholarships at Nalanda University and providing new grants for ASEAN students at Agricultural Universities in India. Prime Minister Modi also announced celebrating the decade of Act East Policy through several people-centric activities including Youth Summit, Start-up Festival, Hackathon, Music Festival, ASEAN-India Network of Think-Tanks and Delhi Dialogue. Modi also announced organising the ASEAN-India Women Scientists Conclave under the ASEAN-India Science and Technology Development Fund. He said India would

"I believe that the 21st century - the Asian century - is the century of India and ASEAN nations," the Prime Minister said while addressing the leaders of the ASEAN nations that include Malaysia, Thailand, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Vietnam, Laos and Singapore.

make available USD five million for enhancing disaster resilience and also initiate a new Health Ministers' track towards building Health Resilience. The Prime Minister also announced initiating a regular mechanism of ASEAN-India Cyber Policy Dialogue towards strengthening digital and cyber resilience and organising a workshop on Green Hydrogen. Modi also invited ASEAN leaders to join the 'Plant a Tree for Mother' campaign towards building climate resilience.

PM Modi witnesses Laotian Ramayan performance



PNS ■ VIENTIANE
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday witnessed a "captivating performance" of the Laotian adaptation of the Ramayan that reflects the shared heritage and age-old civilisation connection between India and Laos. Modi is in the Laotian capital to attend the ASEAN-India and East Asia summits. After his arrival here, the prime minister witnessed an episode of Lao Ramayan - called Phalak Phalam or Phra Lak Phra Ram - performed by the prestigious Royal Theatre of Luang

Prabang. "PM @narendramodi witnessed a captivating performance of the Lao Ramayana, known as Phalak Phalam or Phra Lak Phra Ram. This unique rendition of the Ramayan reflects the deep cultural ties and shared heritage between India and Lao PDR," the prime minister's office said in a post on X. According to phralakphalam.com, the Lao Ramayan differs from the original Indian version. It had reached Laos late, around the 16th century, brought by Buddhist missions.

J-K statehood top on agenda of Omar's first cabinet meet

PNS ■ SRINAGAR
National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said the NC-Congress government will pass a resolution demanding the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood in its first cabinet meeting. "After the formation of the government, I hope in the first cabinet meeting, the cabinet will pass a resolution impressing upon the Centre to restore the statehood. The government should then take that resolution to the prime minister," Abdullah told reporters here. He expressed hope that the government in Jammu and Kashmir will be able to run smoothly unlike in Delhi. "There is a difference between us and Delhi. Delhi was never a state. No one promised Delhi a statehood.



Jammu and Kashmir was a state before 2019. We have been promised the restoration of statehood by the prime minister, the home minister and other senior ministers who have said that three steps will be taken in J-K - delimitation, election and then statehood. "Delimitation has happened, the elections have now taken place as well. So, only the state-

hood remains which should be restored," he added. Asked how important was the need for coordination between the new J-K government and Centre, the NC leader said nothing can be achieved by having a confrontation with New Delhi. "Let the government be formed first. This question should be posed to the chief minister. There should be a cordial relationship with New Delhi. My advice to him (CM) will be that we cannot address any issues by having a confrontation with the Centre. "It is not that we will accept the BJP's politics, or that the BJP will accept our politics. We will continue to oppose the BJP, but it is not our compulsion to oppose the Centre," he said.

'Foolish to seek Article 370 restoration from BJP'

National Conference Vice President Omar Abdullah Wednesday said hoping for the restoration of Article 370 from the very people who snatched it would be "foolish," but his party would keep the issue alive and continue to raise it. "Our political stand will not change. We have never said that we will remain silent on Article 370 or that Article 370 is not an issue for us now," Abdullah told reporters here when asked what the stand of the party would be on the matter after government formation. The NC leader expressed hope of getting some special provisions for J-K once a new government gets elected in the country. "I have said this many times before the elections that hoping for the restoration of Article 370 from the people who snatched it will be foolish," he said.

OMAR ABDULLAH ELECTED NC LEGISLATURE PARTY LEADER

Omar Abdullah was on Thursday unanimously elected as the leader of the National Conference legislature party, party president Farooq Abdullah said here. "A meeting of the legislature party was held where everyone unanimously chose Omar Abdullah as its leader," the senior Abdullah said. He said a meeting of the

pre-poll alliance partners would be held on Friday to take the process of government formation further. Earlier, all the newly elected MLAs of the National Conference (NC) met at party headquarters Nawa-i-Subah to elect their leader, who is most likely to be the chief minister as well, in the Jammu and Kashmir assembly.

The NC has emerged as the single largest party in the assembly polls with 42 seats and has a comfortable majority in the 95-member House as its alliance partners Congress and CPI(M) have won six seats and one seat respectively. The meeting was convened by party president and Omar's father Farooq Abdullah. leader but questioned whether the huge majority was for hooliganism and destruction of properties. "The NCs elected MLA from Srigufwara-Bijbehara (Bashir Veer) is indulging in hooliganism. His workers are destroying the outer walls of the houses of PDP workers, a cowshed belonging to a PDP worker was also burnt.

Iltija Mufti accuses NC, CPI(M) of hooliganism after Assembly poll victories

PNS ■ SRINAGAR
The PDP on Thursday accused the NC and CPI(M) of indulging in hooliganism after victory in the Jammu and Kashmir assembly elections. Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters here, People's Democratic Party

(PDP) leader Iltija Mufti congratulated the National Conference (NC) on its victory and the party vice president Omar Abdullah on his election as the legislature party

leader but questioned whether the huge majority was for hooliganism and destruction of properties. "The NCs elected MLA from Srigufwara-Bijbehara (Bashir Veer) is indulging in hooliganism. His workers are destroying the outer walls of the houses of PDP workers, a cowshed belonging to a PDP worker was also burnt.

Asia's largest imaging Cherenkov telescope inaugurated in Ladakh

PNS ■ MUMBAI
The Major Atmospheric Cherenkov Experiment (MACE) observatory, the largest imaging Cherenkov telescope in Asia, has been inaugurated at Hanle in Ladakh, giving a boost to scientific research. Located at an altitude of 4,300 metres, it is also the highest of its kind telescope in the world, a statement said here on Tuesday.



It was inaugurated on October 4 by Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) secretary Ajit Kumar Mohanty. The telescope has been indigenously built by the Mumbai-based Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) with support from the Electronics Corporation of India Ltd (ECIL) and other Indian industry partners. The inauguration of MACE observatory was a part of the platinum jubilee year celebrations of the DAE. "The Major Atmospheric Cherenkov Experiment (MACE) observatory was inaugurated by Dr Ajit Kumar Mohanty, DAE secretary and

chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, at Hanle, Ladakh, on October 4, 2024," the statement said. In his inaugural address, Mohanty applauded the collective effort that brought the MACE telescope to fruition. He said the MACE observatory is a monumental achievement for India, and it places the country at the forefront of cosmic-ray research globally. The telescope will allow scientists to study high-energy gamma rays, paving the way for deeper understanding of the universe's most energetic events, Mohanty said. He emphasised the significant role that MACE project plays not only in advancing scientific research, but also in supporting the socio-economic development of Ladakh.

Gold chains, iPhones worth over Rs 1 crore seized at Chennai airport

PNS ■ CHENNAI
Over 3,000 units of E-cigarettes, two gold chains and four Apple iPhones worth Rs 1.02 crore were seized and an air passenger has been arrested in this connection, the Customs department said on Thursday.

Acting on specific input that the goods were being smuggled into India from Malaysia, the sleuths intercepted the passengers on arrival from Kuala Lumpur on October 8 at the international terminal here, a press release from the Customs department said.

AAP govt raises MLALAD fund by Rs 5 cr ahead of Delhi Assembly polls

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
The AAP government on Thursday raised the annual MLA Local Area Development fund from Rs 10 crore to Rs 15 crore ahead of Assembly polls in the national capital. Addressing a press conference, Chief Minister Atishi claimed that the MLALAD fund in Delhi was the

highest in the country. A meeting of the Cabinet held earlier in the day decided to raise the fund by Rs 5 crore per MLA per year, she said. "This amount is three times more than other states," she said. The government under the leadership of Arvind Kejriwal is working for the betterment of the city's people whether they are living in slums or bungalows, she added.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

India loses its 'Ratan'

Ratan Tata not only redefined Indian business practices but also set new standards for ethical leadership and corporate responsibility

The passing of Ratan Tata, one of India's most influential and revered business leaders, marks the end of an era for Indian industry and philanthropy. A visionary who transformed the Tata Group into a global powerhouse, Ratan Tata not only redefined Indian business practices but also set new standards for ethical leadership and corporate responsibility. His demise has left an indelible void in the Indian business landscape and his contributions will continue to shape India's socio-economic fabric for generations to come. Ratan Tata's leadership of the Tata Group from 1991 to 2012 is widely recognised as a period of extraordinary innovation and growth. He was instrumental in leading the conglomerate's diversification, moving it beyond its traditional industries like steel and textiles into sectors such as information technology, automotive, telecommunications and hospitality. Under his stewardship, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) became a global leader in IT services. Tata Motors expanded its reach with the acquisitions of British automotive giants Jaguar and Land Rover in 2008. Tata's vision of making India a global player was rooted in a deep sense of nationalism, combined with a keen awareness of global business trends. Ratan Tata's most cherished moment came when Tata Motors launched the Nano in 2008 despite all odds. Though the Nano did not achieve commercial success, the boldness of the vision highlighted Tata's commitment to solving Indian problems with innovative solutions and realising the aspirations of Indian middle class. Known for his humility and discretion, he always emphasised that businesses should serve society at large. "We have to touch the lives of people in ways



that matter," Tata often said. Nearly two-thirds of Tata Group's profits are directed to social work through Tata Trusts, a remarkable legacy in Indian philanthropy. The Tata Trusts, under his guidance, funded several initiatives in healthcare, education and rural development. Tata maintained a reputation for being soft-spoken and modest, rarely allowing his personal life to take centre stage in the public eye. His leadership during the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, where the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel was one of the primary targets, showed his resilience. Tata visited the families of affected staff members, providing support and ensuring that the hotel was rebuilt, symbolising the spirit of survival and recovery. Despite numerous achievements, Tata faced failures with grace. His decisions, such as the Nano, received criticism, but he handled setbacks with the dignity that defined him. His resilience and forward-thinking approach is his legacy that would inspire many. Ratan Tata's life was not just about business. His love for architecture, aviation and cars was well known. Despite his status as one of India's richest individuals, he led a simple life, often seen without an entourage, and known for driving himself. With Ratan Tata's passing, India has lost a visionary and a kind hearted leader who would be remembered for his achievements and resilience. Rest in peace!

that matter," Tata often said. Nearly two-thirds of Tata Group's profits are directed to social work through Tata Trusts, a remarkable legacy in Indian philanthropy. The Tata Trusts, under his guidance, funded several initiatives in healthcare, education and rural development. Tata maintained a reputation for being soft-spoken and modest, rarely allowing his personal life to take centre stage in the public eye. His leadership during the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, where the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel was one of the primary targets, showed his resilience. Tata visited the families of affected staff members, providing support and ensuring that the hotel was rebuilt, symbolising the spirit of survival and recovery. Despite numerous achievements, Tata faced failures with grace. His decisions, such as the Nano, received criticism, but he handled setbacks with the dignity that defined him. His resilience and forward-thinking approach is his legacy that would inspire many. Ratan Tata's life was not just about business. His love for architecture, aviation and cars was well known. Despite his status as one of India's richest individuals, he led a simple life, often seen without an entourage, and known for driving himself. With Ratan Tata's passing, India has lost a visionary and a kind hearted leader who would be remembered for his achievements and resilience. Rest in peace!

PICTALK



People purchase decorative items from a shop ahead of 'Ayudha Pooja' festival, in Bengaluru

Why technology can't ease people's suffering



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

While advancements in technology have improved lives in many areas, the failure to mitigate the destruction caused by recurring floods exposes a glaring disconnect

The rains were here. They were here for a long time—if one goes by the weeks and months, the news channels were reporting their havoc from one end of the country to the other. From streets in Surat to fields in Biraol of Darbhanga, water was found everywhere. From the hills of Himachal to the banks of Kavery, water was found in all the wrong places. Physical devastation and human tragedy were writ large. Rains are not new, and equally clearly, technology is progressing by leaps and bounds.

One wonders when 'the train shall meet'. One would have thought that repeated experiences, such as what Kosi has caused in north Bihar, would have changed the contours of its effects. It would not be the same in terms of embankments breaking in the same style, and it would not be the same manner of misery caused by the devastation of fragile huts and repeated breaking of embankments over and over again. Surely the country that boasts the landing on the moon and explorations of the planet can better respond to the devastations of nature.

There is a missing link somewhere which is so close to all that it's not even visible to the affected people. In some other countries, people are talking and doing as it were. They are changing the course of rivers and planning habitation in a manner that makes life less vulnerable and the potential for tragedy more manageable. To get back to the example of Bihar, whether it be the neighbourhood of the Budhi Gandak River or Kosi, habitations have been built to keep them away from the reach of floods.

However, the devastations have their ways of surprising. Consider the recent claim of the UGC Chairman in the printed world about the citations of Indian research in international forums. Consider the pronouncement of the political elite on the scientific breakthroughs of leading centres of science and

technology in the world of research.

All of them are legitimate claims duly annotated and evidence tested. The question remains how much of this technology has altered the quality of life of the people? It is not all a dreary story. Technology has changed the lives of several crores of people, especially in matters which have to do with the supply of clean water. This is as true as the story of the fury of floods.

However, somewhere the coexistence of such opposite experiences remains an enigma and difficult to explain. Science and technology cannot be bereft of responsibilities to society at large. Equally clear is the fact that death and destruction experiences would serve as the bottom line of the outcomes of devastation.

Somehow a bottom connection between technological progress and its tangible effects needs to be established. Somewhere the definition of progress and growth



THEY ARE CHANGING THE COURSE OF RIVERS AND PLANNING HABITATION IN A MANNER THAT MAKES LIFE LESS VULNERABLE AND THE POTENTIAL FOR TRAGEDY MORE MANAGEABLE

has to cover elimination of the same stories of destruction and death in the same regions over and over again. So long as the devastation of Kosi remains an annual affair with the same results most of the time, there is something in the developmental agenda that needs to be addressed.

It is not an easy question to answer, especially after decades of application of the prescriptions whether it be a Planning Commission or the Niti Ayog. These questions need to be flagged and repeated till answers are found. In a country filled with bright people like India, there must be actionable solutions to mitigate human misery. Perhaps the part answer would lie in empowering local people with skills, resources, and more to handle local problems. Higher levels of administration, like the district at the state level, have to deal with issues of connectivity, coordination, mobilisation of resources, and using the skills of the people with commitment in

that part of the country to work for the welfare of the local context and the local circumstances. Far too much have rewards been focused on recognition gained abroad and talking of the big and the grand.

While there may be nothing wrong with that recognition and solutions to local problems should be picked up by the decision making system, the influential clientele, and the political elite. A culture has to be built to identify the local problems and use means of technology and resources to handle them at a local level. Interventions of this variety should recognise the same approval and celebration as an invitation from abroad or for that matter making of the great in a foreign institution. Somewhere a paradigm change would help the mitigation of local problems. It can be done and needs to be done.

(The writer is an internationally acclaimed management consultant; The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RATAN TATA IS NO MORE

Madam—A true gem can only be distinguished by its value and brightness. However, if a gem is hidden within a person, its value and sparkle are not visible to recognise it. Ratan Tata, India's famous industrialist, was another such figure whose contributions will be remembered for centuries to come. Everyone knows about his outstanding social efforts and affection for pets. Ratan Tata had a heart that beat for dogs till his last breath. Ratan Tata was nothing short of a deity to the stray dogs roaming the streets, which others looked down on or ignored. The doors of his Taj Hotel were always open to dogs. Ratan Tata asked for aid by posting a photo of a dog on his Instagram account on June 26, 2024.

He posted a lengthy post requesting a blood transfusion for the seven-month-old dog. After that, several people brought their dogs to give blood transfusions. Ratan Tata founded the Small Animal Hospital Mumbai (SAHM), the first of its kind in the country, equipped with state-of-the-art facilities for 24/7 care, inspired by his struggle to find advanced treatment for his dog abroad. He encouraged people to adopt stray dogs rather than buying pets, promoting animal welfare.

Amrapali Roy | Jamshedpur

KASHMIR REJECTS BJP

Madam—This is in response to the report titled 'Victory for Democracy'. It is strange why one and only the 'reverberations' of the Haryana mandate would travel 'far and wide,' but not that handed out by the Jammu and Kashmir electorate! Despite so zealous chest-thumping revolving around the 'peace' in Kashmir Valley following the "historic" saga of 5th August 2019, the BJP simply gets thwarted in the region. However, the result is far from surprising, as no self-respecting Kashmiri Muslim will ever vote for a party swearing in the name of Hindutva in this

Press freedom is sacrosanct



The Supreme Court's recent ruling affirming the right of journalists to criticise the government without retaliatory action comes as a breath of fresh air for the media's honest warriors—journalists—who do not want to join the bandwagon in sucking up to those in power. However, doubts remain as to how far this momentous judgement will

hold water. The "one man show" that we have witnessed over the past decade offers very little hope that the SC's verdict will be honoured (remember how the SC's dictate that bail, not jail ought to be the rule is being flouted almost to the point of being ignored).

If the PM has a grudge against a "colonial mindset," ordinary Indians have a lot to complain about a "post-colonial mindset," as displayed by not only the present dispensation but the Congress before it. Even before Modi took over in the year 2014, the media was not as independent as expected in a nation that is supposedly rooted in democratic principles. Modi has only picked up from where the Congress left, as far as freedom of the press is concerned.

Avinash Godbole | Dewas

multi-religious secular nation and also would never forgive such elements who had made a mockery of federalism not only by unilaterally abrogating special provisions and rights guaranteed by the Constitution itself but also dividing the state and relegating it to a mere Union Territory. Kashmiri electorate have transmitted a clear message that communal forces should be thwarted not only by protesting against it but also through wise tactical voting so that secular votes get polled in favour of the strongest party/coalition by preventing division of votes. And surely if the victory of the BJP in Haryana is "Triumph of democracy," that of the National Conference-Congress alliance in Jammu and Kashmir also demands the same epithet! Let the mandate of the Union Territory (especially Kashmir Valley) reverberate and travel far and wide, giving the secular force renewed vigour and hope that the Idea of India can still be saved by standing in a united way way.

Kajal Chatterjee | Chennai

EXIT POLLS FAIL

Madam—It is not for the first time that the exit polls have proven wrong and detailed methodologies for the recent election surveys were not used. In the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, exit polls overestimated the BJP-led NDA performance, projecting over 400 seats when the alliance actually secured 293. A large number of pollsters in India now failed to accurately predict election outcomes in Haryana and J and K. In Haryana, most agencies had forecast fewer than 30 seats for the BJP, but official results showed the party winning 48 out of 90 seats. Pollsters had predicted 10-year anti-incumbency but proved altogether wrong.

Voters in J and K kept parties guessing till the very end. For all the speculative intrigue ahead of J and K's much awaited election, J and K (NC 42, BJP 29, Cong 6) spoke as one—no-hung verdict. Pollsters got it wrong.

SK Khosla | Chandigarh

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

MSMEs and food processing: A path to economic growth

Revitalising the MSME and food processing sectors in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, can boost economic growth, raise farmers' incomes and strengthen food security

Both Bihar and Andhra Pradesh have been advocating for special government packages, emphasising the importance of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) as a key driver for development. The governments of these states, as well as the central government, recognise the significant potential in the MSME sector, particularly in food processing, and have prioritised it accordingly. Chief Ministers N Chandrababu Naidu and Nitish Kumar share concerns over the stagnation of the MSME sector in recent years, and both are committed to reviving it through various initiatives.

In Andhra Pradesh, Chief Minister Naidu has acknowledged the struggles faced by MSMEs over the past five years, emphasising the need to revitalise the sector. He highlighted the slow progress of MSME parks and raised concerns over pending government incentives, which have hampered the sector's growth. His administration aims to address these challenges by ensuring the release of overdue incentives and enhancing the participation of



farmers in MSME parks. By linking farmers directly to these parks, Naidu envisions a system where agricultural stakeholders can benefit directly from business opportunities. Similarly, Bihar's Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has voiced concerns about MSMEs and infrastructure development in his state. Kumar has aligned with Naidu in recognising the critical role of MSMEs in driving economic growth and ensuring regional prosperity. The coincidence of Bihar's representation in the central government, with ministers like Jitan Ram Manjhi and Chirag Paswan, has further fueled efforts to secure the necessary support for these initiatives. Prime Minister Narendra

Modi has encouraged these ministers to focus on fostering connections between DWCRAs groups and MSMEs to enhance economic opportunities for small enterprises. A significant allocation of Rs 100 crore as a credit guarantee for MSMEs has been announced, underscoring the importance of ensuring financial support for these small businesses. However, meaningful progress in the MSME sector is unlikely unless strong linkages are created between MSMEs and the food processing industry, as these sectors are highly interdependent.

The food processing industry, in particular, has been recognised as a powerful engine for economic growth. India is one of the largest producers of various food items, including milk, fruits, vegetables, millet, tea and fish. This creates a robust foundation for the growth of the food processing sector. India's position as one of the largest and fastest-growing economies in the world is bolstered by the significant role played by the food processing industry in ensuring food security and driving economic expansion.

The Ministry of Food Processing Industries reported that by the end of FY 2022-23, the sector contributed 7.66 per cent of the gross value added (GVA) in manufacturing and 8.45 per cent of the GVA in agriculture. Foreign direct investment (FDI) in the sector has been strong, with Rs 5,290.27 crore in 2021-22 and Rs 2,934.12 crore in 2020-21. However, challenges remain, as processed food exports saw a 17 per cent decline in FY24, dropping from \$13,078.3 million in the previous fiscal to \$10,881.81 million.

To address these challenges and promote growth, the government has implemented several initiatives, including the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY), Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industries (PLISFPI), and Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME). By increasing processing levels and creating employment, these programs also aim to raise farmers' incomes.

(The writer is a senior journalist; views are personal)



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH





FIRST COLUMN

SOLVE YOUR PROBLEMS

We must focus on solving our own problems objectively without going into cyclic thinking



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

This is very wise to do. Because we must be the prime movers for this. But we are in denial or wish to make a good impression on others. Mostly, we don't. We go into cyclic thinking; and get obsessed with our problems. This is not solving our problems. On the contrary, we are making them worse. Surprisingly, we have solutions to the problems of others, societies, nations, etc. Some of them may be good because we are likely to be objective about them. This is great except that we are not being asked. Then, there are other limitations. When it is our problem, we see mostly the dark side and do not think about how solving it will benefit us.

Regarding issues of others, we are also not seeing the nature of the person. We assume that they will be perfect without any faults like being ignorant, egoist, etc. Their circumstances may be very different from ours. In short, it is a complete waste of time to think of the problems of others. I have realised this, and now I try to focus on my problems; I have plenty. Out of them, I have chosen the six most important ones. As in my habit, I seek solutions from the Bhagavad-Geeta – the book of eternal wisdom. I will begin with the most pressing, which is being fearful. What has Lord Krishna instructed about this fundamental matter? (Verse # 2.40) In simple language, it means that one should take shelter from God to reduce fears.

I have done this and my fearful tendencies have reduced appreciably. Whenever I become fearful, I pray for guidance and help from



my Lord. Believe it; He guides and helps. My next serious problem is getting sexual thoughts and feelings. Lord Krishna has given its solution too. (3.43) I have realised that I cannot reason my way out of it. For example, I use lots of internet for useful information. What does pop out in between? I am getting good practice to press the Back – button. For the younger lot, the Lord has a solution too. He has allowed 'kama' (passion) in beings according to 'dharma' (religious principles). The third problem I seriously face is not being sincere about taking shelter from God. The tapasya (austerity) required defeats me.

The reason of course is the nature of my body. The mind, the senses and the intelligence all are material, and the tapasya required is spiritual. What is the solution? Pray for help and keep praying. That itself is a spiritual act. You will succeed as I am getting better. The fourth problem, which is a serious challenge for me is my 'ahankar' (ego). With success comes Shankar, i.e. I am superior. What is the solution according to the Geeta? What did Lord Krishna tell Arjuna, "If you don't heed my instructions due to your ahankar, you will perish." (18.58) I try to remind myself whenever I get too puffed up; that I don't wish to perish. The fifth giver of trouble to me is my weakness to gain attention, fame, etc.

I have realised that whatever I have achieved is due to the 'kripa' (mercy) of my Lord. By myself, I am close to zero as a small soul. What did Lord Krishna tell Arjuna? (11.33) I give credit for my successes to my Lord. The last one is interpersonal relationships. I have tried to reform my near and dear ones and surely failed miserably. They will improve when they desire to. It is working especially with my grandchildren. So, I am trying to improve my behaviour. This fits with my original requirement of solving my problems.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher; views are personal)

Celebrating unity and reconciliation through art



RAJDEEP PATHAK

In a world fraught with divisions, art transcends barriers, builds bridges. "Weaving Life to Weave Peace," underscores this profound connection



In a world often marked by discord and division, art emerges as a powerful medium that transcends barriers and speaks to our shared humanity. It serves as a universal language that unites people in their collective longing for peace, healing, and reconciliation. Against this backdrop, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, in collaboration with the Embassy of Colombia in India, recently hosted a poignant exhibition titled "Weaving Life to Weave Peace," an initiative of 'Tejidos Chakana'. This significant event, held shortly after the celebrations of October 2nd – Gandhi Jayanti, and the International Day of Nonviolence – underscores the deep connection between art and the pursuit of harmony in our world. The exhibition vividly highlights the transformative power of creativity as it honours the countless lives lost to conflict in Colombia – and the world per se – a nation that has weathered its share of internal strife and lost countless innocent citizens.

The Colombian artisans, Mateo Perea Bernal and Nancy Gomez presented an extraordinary array of stunning creations crafted with fine stone beads. Each meticulously designed portrait serves as a heartfelt homage to politicians, journalists, humourists, social thinkers, and others whose lives were tragically cut short by violence. Another defining moment of the exhibition was the unveiling of a remarkable portrait of Mahatma Gandhi, crafted out of an astounding, over 1.4 million stone beads by Ambassador H.E. Mr. Victor Echeverri of Colombia in India, with flags of both the Nations imprinted through the beads.

This unique piece stands as a testament to the ideals of peace and reconciliation that Mahatma Gandhi tirelessly championed throughout his life. In a touching gesture, it was generously donated to the Gandhi Smriti, serving as a fitting tribute to the legacy of a leader who devoted himself to the principles of nonviolence, till the last breath of his life. 'Tejidos Chakana' is a transformative Colombian initiative rooted in ancestral traditions, using the art of weaving to promote peace and reconciliation. Founded by artisans, it honours indigenous techniques and

local materials, preserving traditional craftsmanship while providing a platform for artisans to express their stories of struggle and resilience.

Each handcrafted piece reflects the creativity and strength of a nation recovering from conflict, weaving narratives of hope and unity for a brighter future. At the heart of 'Tejidos Chakana' is the belief that art can bridge divides and foster understanding. The initiative engages diverse communities through workshops and collaborative projects, empowering individuals to reclaim their voices and share their experiences. This cultural exchange promotes dialogue, enabling people to confront their past and imagine peaceful coexistence. Moreover, through vibrant exhibitions, 'Tejidos Chakana' celebrates the artistry and resilience of Colombian artisans, underscoring their vital role in the larger narrative of peace-building. The initiative is a testament to the power of creativity in healing communities and fostering social impact.

By promoting dialogue and cultural exchange, the aim is to foster an environment where healing can occur, allowing people to confront their past while envisioning a peaceful coexistence. The story of 'Tejidos Chakana' resonates deeply with Mahatma Gandhi's beliefs, particularly his emphasis on the use of hands, creativity, and self-reliance as essential elements of individual and societal transformation. Gandhi often spoke of the profound connection between manual labour and the soul, advocating for the dignity and significance of work that involves the hands.

He would say, "If I were a poet, I would write poetry on the possibilities of my five fingers". In his vision of education, known as 'Nai Talim' or "Basic Education," Mahatma Gandhi stressed the

importance of learning through productive activity, where creativity and craftsmanship were not merely tools for economic independence but essential means for cultivating inner peace, self-reliance, and a deeper connection with one's community. Much like 'Tejidos Chakana,' Mahatma Gandhi viewed the act of creating with one's hands as a form of empowerment, healing, and self-expression. For him, the spinning wheel, or 'charkha,' became a symbol of India's struggle for independence – more than just a tool for producing cloth, it represented self-sufficiency, unity, and the rejection of exploitative systems. By encouraging Indians to spin their yarn and weave their cloth, Gandhi promoted the idea that true freedom came from within, not only political or economic autonomy but also spiritual and cultural self-reliance. In both the Gandhian framework and the 'Tejidos Chakana' initiative, the act of weaving transcends its material purpose to become a metaphor for life itself. Just as threads are intricately woven to form a piece of fabric, so too are communities brought together by shared experiences, challenges, and hopes. Mahatma Gandhi believed that individual self-reliance was a precursor to true collective harmony – only when people could stand on their own feet would they be able to contribute meaningfully to the welfare of society.

Similarly, the artisans of 'Tejidos Chakana' are not just creating objects of beauty; they are weaving the very fabric of a peaceful and united future for their nation. Echoing Gandhi's ideas of community empowerment and education, as not merely a process of acquiring academic knowledge, but as a holistic development of the individual within a community setting, where the aim is to foster dialogue and cultural exchange, 'Tejidos Chakana' nur-

tures an environment of collective learning, where people confront their past traumas and work together towards reconciliation and in the process healing. This reflects Gandhi's belief in the power of community and the idea that true education is incomplete without the cultivation of moral and social values. Moreover, "Weaving Life to Weave Peace" also aligns with Gandhi's vision of nonviolence, or 'ahimsa,' as an active force for peace-building. Mahatma Gandhi believed that nonviolence was not just the absence of physical conflict but the presence of love, compassion, and understanding. In conclusion, it can be said without exaggeration that such powerful initiatives invite the world to witness the power of art as a catalyst for change, encouraging humankind to appreciate the beauty that arises from the collective journeys toward reconciliation and understanding. Moreover, through the lens of art, "Weaving Life to Weave Peace" commemorates the past and inspires hope for a future without conflicts, thereby promoting collective responsibility in weaving a tapestry of peace for generations to come.

As we engage with these artistic expressions, we are reminded that every bead, every creation, and every story contribute to a larger narrative of healing and unity in our world. In celebrating these artistic expressions, we honour the timeless message that true peace begins with the work we do ourselves – both in our hearts and with our hands. This is evident as Ambassador Victor points out that if one bead breaks, the entire frame collapses, signifying the unifying strength of community and peace-building. They are what can be called, "Peace Beads".

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti); views are personal)



THE ARTISANS OF 'TEJIDOS CHAKANA' ARE NOT JUST CREATING OBJECTS OF BEAUTY; THEY ARE WEAVING THE VERY FABRIC OF A PEACEFUL AND UNITED FUTURE FOR THEIR NATION

India's nutrition paradox: Tackling hidden hunger amid food sufficiency

The Global Hunger Index 2023 ranks India 111th out of 125 countries, highlighting that malnutrition, stunting and micronutrient deficiencies remain widespread

While India is not a country of widespread starvation, it does face significant challenges related to undernutrition and hidden hunger, particularly in rural areas. India has achieved self-sufficiency in food production and implemented programs to improve food access, such as the National Food Security Act and the National Nutrition Mission. However, issues like micronutrient deficiencies and income disparities exacerbate food insecurity in certain regions.

India's Nutrition Paradox: The Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2023 ranks India 111th out of 125 countries, highlighting significant challenges with undernutrition, particularly among children. Though India



SHRIRUPA SENGUPTA

produces enough food to meet caloric needs, ensuring nutritional adequacy remains a challenge. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019-2021) shows that while caloric intake is generally adequate, undernutrition persists—35.5 per cent of children under five are stunted, and 19.3 per cent suffer from wasting. Micronutrient deficiencies, such as anaemia due to iron deficiency among women and

vitamin deficiencies among children, further contribute to hidden hunger. Economic disparities and social inequities, including gender inequality and limited healthcare access, play significant roles in perpetuating undernutrition. Poorer segments of the population often lack access to a diverse, nutritious diet and rely heavily on staples like rice and wheat, with inadequate consumption of fruits, vegetables, and proteins.

Community-Led Nutrition Hubs: A Promising Solution Community-led nutrition hubs provide a grassroots approach to addressing food insecurity. Unlike top-down methods, these hubs leverage local knowledge and leadership to create sustainable, con-

text-specific solutions. They focus on balanced, nutritious diets rather than just caloric intake, helping to build community resilience against undernutrition.

Promoting Dietary Diversity: Nutrition hubs encourage the consumption of diverse foods, including fruits, vegetables, legumes, and animal products, essential for a balanced diet. By promoting dietary diversity, these hubs address micronutrient deficiencies and hidden hunger.

Supporting Vulnerable Groups: These hubs effectively reach vulnerable populations like children, pregnant women, and the elderly. They provide tailored nutritional support, fortified foods, supplements, and education on specific nutritional needs.



Leveraging Local Agriculture: Nutrition hubs support local food production and sustainable agricultural practices, increasing access to fresh, nutritious foods. This approach reduces dependence on external food supplies, which can be affected by price fluctuations and supply chain disruptions, particularly amid climate change.

Impact of Community-Led

Nutrition Hubs: Data from various studies highlight the effectiveness of community-led initiatives in improving nutritional outcomes and resilience. For example, a 2022 report by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) noted a 20 per cent reduction in stunting rates among children under five in regions of Uttar Pradesh following the introduction of nutrition hubs.

The Global Nutrition Report 2023 showed that such hubs have improved micronutrient intake, with a 30 per cent increase in iron-rich food consumption among women in Maharashtra, significantly reducing anaemia. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) also found that communities practising

sustainable agriculture supported by nutrition hubs had a 20 per cent increase in crop yields during droughts compared to traditional methods.

A Whole-of-Society Approach: Achieving the vision of a "Viksit Bharat" hinges on ensuring food security and building resilience through community-led initiatives. However, these goals require a whole-of-society approach that involves all community members, not just women. Men as Partners: Encouraging men to participate in nutrition hubs, whether through farming, cooking, or community organising, helps distribute responsibility more equitably and promotes gender equity.

Youth Engagement: Involving young people in these efforts

ensures the continuation of community-led initiatives and brings fresh ideas and energy to the table.

Local Govt Support: Local governments can support and scale these initiatives by providing funding, policy support, and infrastructure, making nutrition hubs integral parts of community development.

Gender Equity and Shared Responsibility: While women are often on the frontlines of nutrition and food security, the burden should not fall solely on them. Engaging men, youth, and local governance helps create more equitable and sustainable solutions.

(The writer is Director - Centre for Strategic Communications for Public Health at Swasti; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



TCS Q2 net profit up 4.99 pc to Rs 11,909 cr

Country's largest IT services firm TCS on Thursday reported a 4.99 per cent increase in its September quarter net profit at Rs 11,909 crore. The Tata Group company had reported a net profit of Rs 11,342 crore in the year-ago period, while in the preceding quarter, it had a post tax net of Rs 12,040 crore, a company filing said. Tata Consultancy Services' revenues rose 7.06 per cent to Rs 64,988 crore from Rs 60,698 crore in the year-ago period, and were marginally higher compared to Rs 63,575 crore in the preceding quarter. Its profit before tax came at Rs 16,032 crore, as against Rs 15,330 crore in the year-ago period. The TCS scrip closed 0.56 per cent down at Rs 4,228.40 a piece on the BSE on Thursday, as against gains of 0.18 per cent on the benchmark.



Ireda Q2 net profit grows 36 pc to Rs 388 cr

State-owned Ireda on Thursday reported a 36 per cent rise in its profit after tax to Rs 387.75 crore in the September quarter on higher revenues. The company had posted a profit after tax (PAT) of Rs 284.73 crore in the July-September period of the preceding 2023-24 fiscal, it said in an exchange filing. Its total revenue from operations rose 38.52 per cent year-on-year to Rs 1,630.38 crore from Rs 1,176.96 crore. Ireda's loan book increased by 35.88 per cent to Rs 64,564.36 crore from Rs 47,514.48 crore in the same quarter a year. Loan sanctions jumped around four-fold to Rs 8,723.78 crore against Rs 2,852.05 crore in the second quarter last fiscal. The company disbursed Rs 4,461.87 crore worth of loans, up 43.93 per cent from Rs 3,099.98 crore in the year-ago quarter.



RBI keeps policy rate unchanged for 10th time

The Reserve Bank of India on Wednesday decided to keep the policy rate unchanged for the tenth time in a row but changed its stance to 'neutral' that may lead to a cut in the forthcoming policies. RBI maintained status quo despite the US Federal Reserve lowering the benchmark rates by 50 basis points last month. The central banks of some developed nations have also reduced their interest rates. Announcing the fourth bi-monthly monetary policy for the current financial year, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has decided to keep the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent. The RBI has maintained status quo on benchmark interest rate since February 2023. Das said RBI will remain watchful of elevated food inflation even when India GDP growth remains strong. This was the first meeting of the reconstituted MPC. The three newly appointed external members are Ram Singh, Saugata Bhattacharya and Nagesh Kumar.

Ratan Tata my role model: Narayana Murthy

Losing "dear friend" Tata Sons Chairman Emeritus Ratan Tata is "very painful", IT industry veteran and Infosys co-founder N R Narayana Murthy on Thursday said as he acknowledged that he was a role model for him in value-based leadership. "He (Tata) was indeed a moral compass for me whenever I had some ambiguity and confusion in ethical issues," the 78-year-old said. After conferring an honour on Tata in 2020, the software icon had bent down to touch his feet and sought his blessings.

"Losing a dear friend like Ratan is very painful. Ratan was a role model for me in value-based leadership," Murthy said in his condolence message.

Insulted, Ratan Tata bought Jaguar, Land Rover

The story of two iconic brands Jaguar and Land Rover entering the Tata stable began with an insult Ratan Tata couldn't bear. Back in 1998, the legendary industrialist launched his dream project, Tata Indica -- India's first hatchback with a diesel engine. But sales initially were slow and Tata Motors decided to sell off its fledgling car business within a year of its debut.

US auto giant Ford was seen as an ideal candidate. The company acced-

ed to a meeting requirement from Ford Motors. Officials of the US firm came to Bombay House for talks sometime in 1999. During the meeting at the Tata headquarters, the American company evinced interest in buying out the business. To take the deal forward, Ratan Tata and his team flew to Detroit to meet Bill Ford, then the chairman of Ford. The meeting lasted about three hours but did not go well. The American businessman was condescending and "humiliated" the Indian businessman, according to a person who attended the meeting. The deal fell.

Nine years later, Ford was on the verge of bankruptcy following the Great Recession of 2008. Tata offered to buy two iconic brands in the Ford portfolio -- Jaguar and Land Rover. The \$2.3 billion all-cash deal was completed in June 2008 and Ford chairman Bill Ford thanked Tata, saying, "You are doing us a big favour by buying JLR," Pravin Kadle, who was part of the team that travelled with Ratan Tata to the US in 1999, had recounted during a public event in 2015.

Post-acquisition, the Tata Group has scripted one of the most fabulous turnarounds in the auto industry and has been able to position the marquee British brands as formidable entities in the fiercely competitive global car market.

Even as Tata Motors has come a long way and gained market share in India, it continues to earn a significant part of revenues from the JLR.



'Gave new heights to Indian industry'

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Thursday condoled the passing away of Ratan Tata and said that he gave new heights to the Indian industry with his tireless efforts and progressive approach. Tata Sons Chairman Emeritus Ratan Tata, who played a key role in transforming the group into a global conglomerate, passed away on Wednesday night in Mumbai. He was 86.

"Ratan Tata ji gave new heights to the Indian industry with his tireless efforts and progressive approach. The unprecedented example set by Ratan Tata ji in the field of public welfare and service to humanity will continue to inspire for centuries," Priyanka Gandhi said in a post in Hindi on X.

The Congress on Wednesday con-

doled the death of Ratan Tata, with Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi saying he was a man with a vision who has left a lasting mark on both business and philanthropy.

His visionary leadership made India proud: SJM

The Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) on Thursday condoled the demise of veteran industrialist Ratan Tata and said his visionary leadership always made India proud.

He had been the torch bearer of the 'swadeshi' movement of self-employment and entrepreneurship to brighten the path for young entrepreneurs, SJM national co-convenor Ashwani Mahajan said.

"Continuing the legacy of the first 'swadeshi' large steel industry, from the days of pre-independent India, the life of Ratan Tata has been a

source of inspiration for the budding entrepreneurs, not only in our country but across the world," he said.

AI, AI Express, Vistara make inflight announcements

Air India, Air India Express and Vistara are making inflight announcements on Thursday in remembrance of Tata Group patriarch Ratan Tata for whom aviation was especially close to his heart.

Officials on Thursday said the three airlines, part of the Tata Group, will be making announcements in remembrance of Tata in their flights during the day.

The demise of Tata also comes at a time when the conglomerate is in the process of completing the consolidation of its airline business -- the integration of Air India Express and AIX Connect was completed on October 1 while the merger of Vistara with Air India is set for November 12.

Vistara is a joint venture between the Tata Group and Singapore Airlines.

Air India CEO and MD Campbell Wilson told the staff that Air Indians especially acknowledge and are grateful for Tata's immense contribution to Indian aviation and to the Tata airlines.

In his message to employees, Air India Express MD Aloke Singh said Tata's passion and immense contribution to aviation and his guidance in the shaping the group and organisation makes the loss deeper.

RBI asks banks to use info from all relevant sources for risk assessment

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India on Thursday asked banks, NBFCs, and other entities regulated by it to use information obtained from all relevant internal and external sources for their risk assessment exercise.

Reserve Bank's Regulated entities (REs) have to carry out 'Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Risk Assessment' exercise periodically to identify, assess and take effective measures to mitigate their Money Laundering (ML), Terrorist Financing (TF) and Proliferation Financing (PF) risks for clients, countries or geographic areas, products, services, and transactions or delivery channels.

In this regard, the central bank has issued 'The Internal Risk Assessment Guidance for Money Laundering/Terrorist Financing' for the REs, particularly for the dealing staff and the Anti-Money Laundering (AML)/ Countering Financing of Terrorism (CFT)/ Counter Proliferation Financing (CPF) practitioners of the REs.

It specifies key principles for an internal risk

assessment (IRA) exercise.

"The enterprise-level risk assessment forms the bedrock of RBA (Risk-Based Approach). It enables the REs to understand how and to what extent they are vulnerable to ML/TF/PF risks which help REs in determining the allocation of attention and AML/CFT resources necessary to mitigate that risk," the RBI said.

REs should use information obtained from all relevant internal and external sources for the IRA exercise, it said.

Internal sources include data/information from specific business relevant information from other related verticals of REs (such as fraud/cyber/IT risk management verticals).

"To properly understand the products/services and the associated ML/TF risks, the IRA team may include officials, for instance, from the product/service owner department, internal audit function, compliance function, etc," it said.

The central bank also emphasised that a siloed approach wherein only the AML team is involved in the IRA exercise should be avoided.



Sensex, Nifty close higher amid buying in heavyweight stocks

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty settled higher on Thursday due to gains in banking, power and industrial stocks amid a firm trend in global markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rose 144.31 points, or 0.18 per cent, to settle at 81,611.41. During the day, it soared 535.74 points, or 0.65 per cent, to hit an intra-day high of 82,002.84.

The NSE Nifty increased 16.50 points, or 0.07 per cent, to close at 24,998.45. In the intra-day trade, it rose 152.1 points, or 0.60 per cent, to hit a high of 25,134.05.

"The market traded on a range bound trend with a negative bias ahead of the start of Q2 result. The Asian market started well but could not hold on to the gains as European markets waded on a negative trend in anticipation of the key US inflation data, global bond



yields are rising," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

From the 30 Sensex companies, Kotak Mahindra Bank, JSW Steel, HDFC Bank, Power Grid, IndusInd Bank, Maruti Suzuki India, NTPC, Axis Bank and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the gainers. Tech Mahindra, Sun Pharmaceuticals, Infosys, Titan, Tata Motors, Larsen & Toubro and Tata Consultancy Services were among the lag-

gards. Domestic broader market momentum was mixed with caution as the initial expectation of Q2FY25 results is subdued due to a subpar momentum in the global and rural demand, Nair added.

Shares of Tata Group companies on Thursday rose up to 15 per cent, with Tata Investment Corporation, Tata Chemicals, and Tata Teleservices among the major gainers.

Maldives Prez thanks India for financial aid, consistent support

PNS ■ MALE

Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu on Thursday expressed gratitude for India's financial assistance and its consistent support, especially during challenging times, as he and his wife Sajidha Mohamed returned after concluding their five-day state visit to the country.

In a press statement, Muizzu expressed gratitude for India's financial assistance, including the rollover of a USD 50 million Treasury Bill for another year.

The 46-year-old, who was sworn-in as Maldives president in November last year, also thanked India for additional support of INR 30 billion to USD 400 million under a bilateral currency swap agreement.

This was Muizzu's first state visit to India since taking office



at the invitation of President Droupadi Murmu.

During the visit, Muizzu held high-level meetings with President Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and several other senior Indian government officials. These discussions centred on strengthening the friendship and development partnership between the Maldives and India, the release said. India and the Maldives on Monday inked a currency swap

pact and agreed to extend development cooperation to build ports, road networks, schools and housing projects in the archipelago nation grappling with a financial crisis. Prime Minister Modi and Maldivian President Muizzu also launched the Rupay card in the Maldives, inaugurated the new runway at the Hanimadhoo International airport and agreed to further strengthen bilateral relations that had hit a rocky patch last year.

UPI transactions volume rises 52% to 78.97 b in Jan-Jun: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian instant payment system Unified Payment Interface (UPI) transaction volumes recorded a 52 per cent year-on-year surge to 78.97 billion in the first six months of 2024, according to a report.

In its India Digital Payments Report for the first half of 2024 (January to June), payment technology service provider Worldline said on Thursday that UPI continues to rule the payment market and is rapidly expanding its reach.

"The number of UPI transactions rose significantly from 8.03 billion in January 2023 to 13.9 billion by June 2024.

SC asks CBI to file response on bizman Ajay Nawandar's bail plea

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has directed the CBI to file its response on the bail plea filed by businessman Ajay Ramesh Nawandar in a Rs 34,615-crore bank fraud case involving Dewan Housing Finance Limited (DHFL).

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Prasanna B Varale has extended the interim protection granted to Nawandar to remain in hospital till October 14.

"In the meantime, the respondent is directed to get the petitioner's eyes tested from a senior consultant at the Dr Rajendra Prasad Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences, AIIMS, New Delhi, and submit a report before the court on the said date. "The respondent (CBI) will also file its counter-affidavit or obtain instructions as it may feel appropriate on the main petition seeking bail," the bench has said.

The top court was hearing Nawandar's plea challenging a May 31 order of the Delhi High Court that dismissed his bail petition.

The high court had noted that the CBI has taken a serious and consistent stand that the applicant is an influential per-

son with a considerable clout in Mumbai and other parts of Maharashtra, and there is every possibility that he will influence witnesses if released on bail as most of the witnesses are private witnesses.

"The conduct of the applicant on interim bail reflects his tendency to misuse the concessions granted by the courts and a propensity to manipulate. The trial court has rendered a finding that the applicant was time and again seeking extension of medical bail by exaggerating his medical ailments by manipulating records with the help of doctors in private hospitals," the high court had noted.

Earlier, the trial court, while denying bail to Nawandar, had said the accused allegedly entered into a conspiracy with the main accused -- the Wadhawan brothers -- in order to dispose of and conceal the proceeds of embezzled funds.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had conducted searches at Nawandar's premises and seized a large collection of uber-luxury watches worth crores of rupees, including Rolex Oyster Perpetual, Cartier, Omega and Hublot Michael Kors, and two paintings worth Rs 33 crore.



Equity mutual funds inflow drops 10 % in Sep; SIPs hit fresh high

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Equity mutual funds attracted Rs 34,419 crore in September, marking a decline of 10 per cent from the preceding month, on a sharp slump in inflow in thematic and large-cap funds.

This was also the lowest level of inflow since April when equity schemes saw investments of Rs 18,917 crore.

Despite the drop in net inflows, this was still the 43rd consecutive month of net inflow in the equity-oriented funds highlighting the ever-increasing appeal of mutual funds among investors, data with the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) showed on Thursday.

Moreover, monthly contri-

butions from the Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) rose to an all-time high of Rs 24,509 crore in September, as against Rs 23,547 in August.

This highlights the shifting investor sentiment towards disciplined and long-term wealth accumulation, Venkat Chalasani, Chief Executive, AMFI, said.

Overall, the mutual fund industry witnessed an outflow of Rs 71,114 crore in the month under review, after an investment of Rs 1.08 lakh crore in August, largely due to withdrawal to the tune of Rs 1.14 lakh crore from debt schemes.

Undeterred by the outflow, the industry's net assets under management rose to Rs 67 lakh crore last month from Rs 66.7



lakh crore in August.

"The mutual fund industry is proud to reach a milestone of 5.01 crore unique investors. This, along with the folio count surpassing 21 crore, underscores the efforts taken by the AMC's (asset management companies) and distributors to spread financial awareness. The 'Mutual Funds Sahi

Hai campaign' has helped build investor confidence which is indicated by the growing appreciation for mutual funds as a preferred investment avenue," Chalasani said.

Hitesh Thakkar, Acting CEO, ITI Mutual Fund, said investors are now able to understand that short-term volatility in the market is part

of a long-term wealth creation journey. That is the reason shares of financial assets have been increasing rapidly & within financial assets, MF shares are increasing gradually. As per the data, equity-oriented schemes witnessed an inflow of Rs 34,419 crore in September, way lower than Rs 38,239 crore attracted in August and Rs 37,113 crore in July.

Further, equity schemes saw inflows of Rs 40,608 crore and Rs 34,697 crore in June and May, respectively.

There were a plethora of new scheme launches in September, a trend which has been consistent of late. Cumulatively, these 27 new schemes managed to garner Rs 14,575 crore during the new

fund offering (NFO) period, Melvyn Santarita, Analyst - Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said.

The highest number of schemes were launched in the Index fund category -13 which cumulatively mobilised Rs 3,656 crore followed by the sectoral/thematic segment which saw the launch of 4 new schemes collecting Rs 7,842 crore during the month, he added.

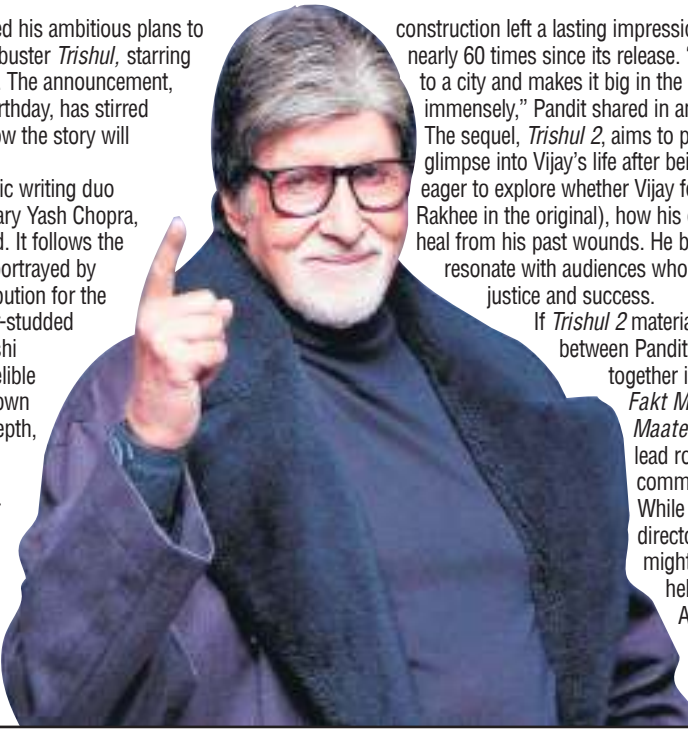
Within the equity schemes, sector or thematic funds attracted investors with the highest net inflows of Rs 13,255 crore during the month under review. However, the flow in the segment was less compared to Rs 18,117 crore in August.

Big B's *Trishul* gets sequel after 46 years

Producer Anand Pandit has revealed his ambitious plans to create a sequel to the 1978 blockbuster *Trishul*, starring the legendary Amitabh Bachchan. The announcement, made just ahead of Bachchan's 82nd birthday, has stirred excitement among fans eager to see how the story will continue.

The original film, penned by the dynamic writing duo Salim-Javed and directed by the visionary Yash Chopra, remains a hallmark of 1970s Bollywood. It follows the journey of Vijay, an angry young man portrayed by Bachchan, who grows up seeking retribution for the wrongs done to his mother. With a star-studded cast that included Sanjeev Kumar, Shashi Kapoor and Rakhee, *Trishul* left an indelible mark on Indian cinema. The movie, known for its gripping drama and emotional depth, is still celebrated today and is currently available for streaming on ZEE5.

Anand Pandit, a self-confessed admirer of the film, described his plans for *Trishul 2* as "a manifestation of his dream" and "a tribute to Amitabh Bachchan." The original movie's storyline of a determined man who starts from scratch and builds a name for himself in the cutthroat world of



construction left a lasting impression on Pandit. In fact, he has watched the film nearly 60 times since its release. "The story of a man who comes with nothing to a city and makes it big in the construction business inspired me immensely," Pandit shared in an interview.

The sequel, *Trishul 2*, aims to pick up where the first film left off, offering a glimpse into Vijay's life after being accepted by the Gupta family. Pandit is eager to explore whether Vijay found happiness with Geeta (played by Rakhee in the original), how his own family evolved and if he managed to heal from his past wounds. He believes that revisiting these questions will resonate with audiences who remember Vijay's relentless pursuit of justice and success.

If *Trishul 2* materialises, it will mark the fifth collaboration between Pandit and Bachchan. Their previous projects together include *Sarkar 3* (2017), *Chehra* (2021), *Fakt Mahilao Maate* (2022) and *Fakt Purusho Maate*. Pandit also supported Abhishek Bachchan's lead role in *The Big Bull* (2021), showcasing his commitment to the Bachchan legacy.

While the project is still in its early stages, with no director officially attached, Pandit hinted that he might bring on board a young, fresh filmmaker to helm the sequel. He has yet to approach Amitabh Bachchan or consult the original makers regarding the project, but the buzz around the potential continuation of *Trishul* is already building.



Parul Gulati, Gurfateh Pirzada to star in upcoming film set in Uttarakhand

Bollywood's latest on-screen pairing, Parul Gulati and Gurfateh Pirzada, are set to ignite screens with their captivating presence in a yet-to-be-titled series. Filming has begun in the picturesque and secluded corners of Uttarakhand, where the two actors have been busy bringing an intriguing storyline to life. This marks the first time that Parul and Gurfateh will share the screen, making the project one of the most talked-about new ventures in the industry. Rumour has it that the series will explore themes of friendship, thrill and adventure, though the plot remains tightly under wraps.

Despite the secrecy, early glimpses from the set have generated excitement among industry insiders. A source close to the production shared, "The chemistry between Parul and Gurfateh is truly something special. They bring an energy to their scenes that is palpable, creating moments that promise to keep audiences on the edge of their seats. This project is set to be an exhilarating watch."

Directed by Akhilesh Jaiswal, a seasoned storyteller known for his work on *Gangs of Wasseypur* and *Ugly*, the series has been eagerly awaited since its announcement. With Parul and Gurfateh at the helm, there's a wave of anticipation surrounding this fresh collaboration. Both actors have built a reputation for delivering nuanced and powerful performances and their fans are eagerly looking forward to experiencing their dynamic pairing on screen for the first time.

Angelina Jolie 'gives in' as Brad Pitt scores significant win

After years of bitter legal wrangling, Brad Pitt has won a significant battle in his ongoing feud with ex-wife Angelina Jolie. The actress recently decided to drop her high-profile lawsuit against the FBI and the Department of Justice, which stemmed from their tumultuous relationship and a controversial 2016 private jet incident. This decision comes as a surprising twist in the narrative of their post-divorce legal drama, offering a potential end to a saga that has stretched on for over eight years.

Jolie's lawsuit had been centered around obtaining additional documents related to the FBI's investigation into the 2016 incident, during which allegations of an altercation between Pitt and one of their children emerged. Although the case had been under scrutiny, it remained sealed, preserving the privacy of both parties involved. Sources close to the couple suggest that this move marks a turning point, with Jolie reportedly shifting her focus towards a more positive future.

An insider close to the former couple revealed that Jolie is now prioritising her own well-being and that of her children, with a renewed emphasis on enjoying life. "She's been focused on moving forward, finding happiness, and embracing a more relaxed outlook," the source shared. This change in attitude was evident when Jolie recently hosted two gatherings at her Atelier Jolie studio and attended the New York Film Festival with her children Pax, Zahara and Maddox. Observers noted her visibly lighter demeanor, describing her as "really relaxed and happy," as if she had "turned over a new leaf."

On the other side, Pitt's team has welcomed the latest developments, viewing the dropped lawsuit as a sign that their long-standing disputes could be drawing to a close. Throughout their legal battles, Pitt's camp had maintained that they had already received all necessary information from the reports related to the 2016 incident. They believed that the prolonged legal proceedings were merely a way for Jolie to cast shadows over Pitt's public image.

With the lawsuit withdrawal, Pitt is said to feel a sense of relief, potentially signaling an end to the adversarial chapter that has defined his and Jolie's post-divorce journey. For years, the former power couple's legal battles have been marked by accusations and counterclaims, turning their separation into one of the most closely followed Hollywood splits.

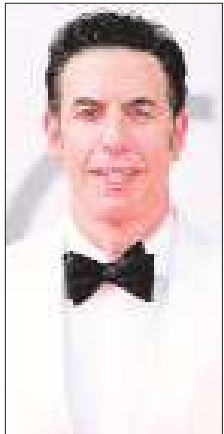
Now, with Jolie's apparent shift towards a more positive and personal outlook, there is hope that both stars can finally find some peace. Pitt is keen to move forward with a focus on his career and family, while Jolie appears ready to embrace new opportunities and create a more stable environment for her children. While it remains to be seen if all legal matters between the two are truly settled, this moment certainly marks a pivotal step towards closure.



Baron Cohen, Pike Join forces for Netflix's gender-bending comedy



Get ready for a twist on romantic comedies! Sacha Baron Cohen will star as a womanizing chauvinist trapped in a parallel universe ruled by women in Netflix's upcoming film, *Ladies First*, directed by Thea Sharrock. This fresh take is inspired by the French film *Je Ne Suis Pas Un Homme Facile*, directed by Eleonore Pourriat. In this intriguing narrative, Cohen's character will face complications thanks to an outspoken female counterpart portrayed by Rosamund Pike. The film is co-produced by Liza Chasin of 3dot Productions, alongside Eleonore Dailly, Edouard de Lachomette and Four By Two Films. Chasin is also behind other exciting Netflix projects, including *Lonely*



Plane starring Laura Dern and *The Life List* featuring Sofia Carson. Cohen, known for his acclaimed roles in *Borat* and *The Trial of the Chicago 7*, will soon appear in Apple TV+'s *Disclaimer* alongside Cate Blanchett and Kevin Kline. Pike, recognised for her performances in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Gone Girl*, made waves in the controversial psychological thriller *Saltburn* and is set to debut at the National Theater in Inter Alia by Suzie Miller, the writer of the award-winning *Prima Facie*. With its intriguing premise and talented cast, *Ladies First* promises to offer a unique blend of humour and social commentary that audiences won't want to miss!

Armaan Malik gets third MTV EMA nod for 'Best India Act'

Armaan Malik, the celebrated Indian singer-songwriter, has earned a nomination for the prestigious MTV Europe Music Awards (EMA) in the "Best India Act" category, marking his third nomination in just four years. Recognised as a leading voice in the Indian pop scene, Armaan's consistent international acclaim is a testament to his growing influence on the global stage.

This latest nod comes for his hit single, *Always*, featuring British singer-songwriter Calum Scott. The track, a smooth blend of pop melodies and heartfelt lyrics, has further elevated Armaan's profile, highlighting his ability to seamlessly bridge diverse musical influences. His previous wins in this category include the 2020 accolade for his debut English single, *Control*, and a 2022 win for *You*, both of which resonated with audiences worldwide. Reflecting on the honour, Armaan shared his excitement and gratitude: "It's an absolute joy to be nominated for the MTV EMAs 'Best India Act' once more. Winning this recognition twice before has been a surreal experience, and being in the running again feels incredibly special. To represent India on such a global platform is humbling, and I extend my best wishes to all the other talented artists in the category. Now, it's in the hands of the fans and the voters!"

Beyond this, Armaan has also set his sights on another milestone—Grammy recognition. His song *Always* has been officially submitted for consideration in three prestigious Grammy categories: Best Pop Duo/Group Performance, Song of the Year, and Record of the Year. With this submission, Armaan aims to continue his upward trajectory, bringing Indian artistry to the forefront of the global music scene. His continued success at the MTV EMAs and ambitious pursuit of Grammy nominations reflect a significant moment not only for Armaan but for Indian music's place on the world stage, inspiring countless fans and fellow artists alike.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



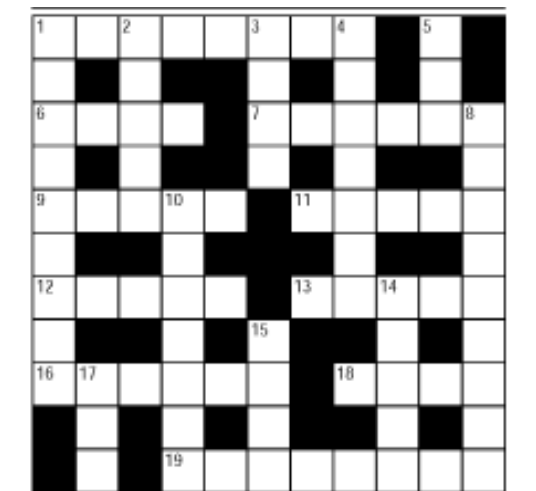
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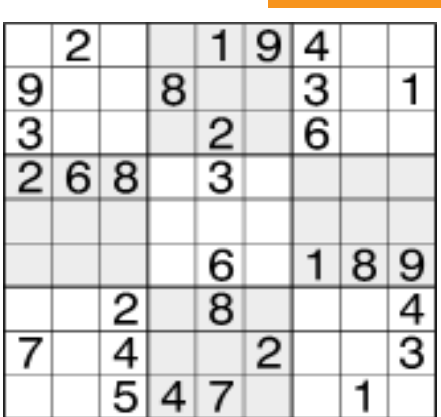
CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

- 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

- Easiest to do
- Soldiers belong to this
- Images in your mind while you are asleep
- Cairo is the capital of this country
- Postage sticker
- A house for a pet rabbit
- A unit of length
- Money made by selling something for more than it cost
- An arm or leg
- Round in shape

DOWN

- A vehicle for travelling to another planet
- A word for mother
- Finishes
- Watch plays in this building
- Spread this on toast
- A month
- World's largest ocean
- This is held in a courtroom
- A light in the night sky
- Uncooked



Vijayawada

the pioneer

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Friday
October 11, 2024

AARTI SREENATH
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The renowned singer and entrepreneur Jashan Bhumkar, who embarked on an adventurous trip to Europe, takes *The Pioneer* through his travel diaries of his latest trip

In the heart of Europe, where the azure Adriatic Sea kisses ancient stone, Jashan Bhumkar embarked on an adventure that would resonate long after he returned home. A renowned singer and entrepreneur, Jashan's travels are a harmonious blend of culture, creativity and personal reflection. His latest sojourn in Croatia unfolded like a beautifully composed symphony, each moment a note in a larger composition of experiences that sang to his soul.

As he stepped off the plane, the warm Croatian sun enveloped him like an embrace. His first stop was Dubrovnik, often dubbed the "Pearl of the Adriatic." Here, he was captivated by the ancient city walls that stood like sentinels over the bustling streets below. "Walking along those walls felt like stepping back in time. The limestone streets amplify the sounds of the sea, creating an acoustic experience that is nothing short of magical," he shared, his voice rich with enthusiasm in this chat with *The Pioneer*.

Each step he took on the weathered stones echoed the city's storied past and Jashan couldn't help but feel a deep connection to its rich history. With every corner he turned, he uncovered a new "note" of Dubrovnik's narrative, from tales of ancient battles to the whispers of love and loss carried by the winds.

As a true connoisseur of style, he approached his Croatian adventure with an eye for fashion. His outfits were not just clothes; they were a reflection of the landscapes around him. "I wanted to harmonise with my environment," he explained. He chose earthy tones—terracotta, sienna and soft sand—to blend in with the rustic charm of Dubrovnik's stone walls.

By the azure waters of Hvar Island, he donned vibrant green co-ord sets, reminiscent of the lush foliage that surrounded him. At the majestic Plitvice Lakes, his soothing greens and blues mirrored the breathtaking natural beauty of cascading waterfalls and serene lakes. "Dressing in harmony with my surroundings allowed me to feel fully immersed in the experience," he reflected, akin to a musician synchronising with the rhythm of a captivating piece.

His journey through Croatia was marked by serendipitous encounters that enriched his experience. He, however, found himself enchanted by traditional Dalmatian folk music and dance performances in the old town. The energetic

rhythms and vibrant costumes resonated deeply with his own roots in Indian classical music. "It was a beautiful reminder of how music transcends cultures," he said, swaying to the infectious beat as he joined the lively crowd. One unforgettable moment occurred in Rovinj, where he met a local artisan who passionately shared the stories behind her handmade ceramics. As they sat sipping coffee together, she introduced him to the hauntingly beautiful Croatian folk song, *Dalmatinska Sansa*. The melodies and lyrics echoed the themes of longing and love found in Indian classical ragas, forging a connection that spanned thousands of miles.

While the famous sights of Croatia dazzled him, it was the hidden gems that truly stole his heart. A detour to Kravice Waterfalls in Bosnia revealed a breathtaking paradise of turquoise pools and cascading water. "It felt like stepping into a painting. The beauty of this place was so profound that it left me spellbound," he described, the serene atmosphere resonating with his musical soul. In addition to natural wonders, he was captivated by the luxurious accommodations that complemented his journey. At Sun Gardens Dubrovnik, he reveled in the stunning views of the coastline, where the soothing sounds of the sea became the backdrop for his reflections. Similarly, Le Meridien Split offered him a taste of elegance, with breathtaking sunsets that turned the sky into a canvas of vibrant colors. "Both properties turned my stay into a mini-vacation," he remarked, his eyes twinkling with delight. As a self-proclaimed foodie, his palate was treated to the finest offerings of the Adriatic. From succulent grilled fish in Dubrovnik's old town to rich seafood risotto in Split's charming harbour, every meal was a celebration of local flavours. "I indulged in fresh oysters and I must say, they were the essence



TRAVELOGUE

CHORDS, COLOURS & CROATIAN CHARM

of the Adriatic," he exclaimed, recalling the experience with a twinkle in his eye.

Each dish was an invitation to love the stories of the land, prepared with love and tradition. "Dining here felt like partaking in a beautiful performance, where each course played its role in the overall experience," he mused. As his adventure came to a close, he took a moment to reflect on the experiences that had enriched his spirit. Croatia had gifted him serenity from its turquoise seas, inspiration from its ancient stones, and gratitude for

becomes a part of the journey, enriching every moment with its beauty.

While his recent escape to the enchanting landscapes of Croatia provided him with invaluable quality time with his family, he often finds solace in the vibrant chaos of city life when the demands of his multifaceted career weigh heavy. Quick city breaks to dynamic destinations like Dubai and London offer him a refreshing change of pace without disrupting his rhythm. Each of these bustling metropolises serves as a rejuvenating retreat, allowing him to return to his routine with renewed clarity and enthusiasm, striking a harmonious balance between his demanding schedule and personal well-being.

Reflecting on his most treasured travel memories, Jashan recalls the adventures shared with his grandfather, who ignited the spark of wanderlust in him. Together, they journeyed through Greece's ancient ruins, where history intertwined with the breathtaking turquoise isles. They strolled through the vibrant bazaars of Turkey, captivated by the rich tapestry of colours and the majestic mosques that rose against the sky. The mysteries of Egypt's pyramids stood tall as they navigated the timeless currents of the mystical Nile River, while the lush temples and pristine beaches of Bali beckoned them to explore paradise. With each journey, Jashan developed a love for collecting local art, capturing the essence of each destination in vibrant strokes and intricate designs. Initially, he would meticulously plan visits to galleries, eager to discover the creative expressions of the places he explored. Yet, he found that some of his most extraordinary finds came from serendipitous encounters—those hidden gems that caught his eye while wandering without an agenda. Each piece he brought home was not just a souvenir but a narrative, a slice of culture and creativity that resonated with his experiences, creating a personal gallery that celebrates the world's beauty.

In the end, Jashan Bhumkar's Croatian adventure was more than just a trip; it was a harmonious blend of culture, nature and self-discovery. As he continues to traverse the globe, he carries with him the echoes of Croatia—an unforgettable melody that will linger in his heart for years to come.



the warm hospitality of its people. "These emotions hum in my mind like a beautiful musical tune," he said, encapsulating the essence of his travels. Looking ahead, he dreams of traversing the landscapes of South America and the breathtaking vistas of Australia and New Zealand, eager to add new notes to his life's symphony. "Travel is a melody composed of experiences, and I can't wait to see what comes next," he declared, his eyes alight with excitement.

As a musician, he curates a unique soundtrack for his travels. "I often find myself spontaneously singing ghazals and other Indian melodies at scenic spots," he revealed, sharing a memorable moment where he serenaded his parents with *Dil Mein Ek Leher Si Uthi Hai Abhi* while on a boat in the middle of the sea. "Music

REVIEW

LIFE JUST GETS SO REAL WITH RAAT JAWAAN HAI

PLOT

When the responsibilities of being an adult collide with the challenges of parenthood, anything goes! Sony LIV's latest original show, *Raat Jawaan Hai*, delves into the exciting lives of three close friends—Radhika (played by Anjali Anand), Avinash (played by Barun Sobti) and Suman (played by Priya Bapat)—as they take on the thrilling challenge of parenting.

HIGHLIGHTS

The story kicks off with how Suman and her husband Sattu (played by Vikram Singh Chauhan) are having a conversation via texts to avoid their little one waking up from his sleep. A sound and boom the baby wakes up saying, 'Mumma...Milk'. Well, this is just the beginning of the parenthood chaos portrayed in *Raat Jawaan Hai*. As the story progresses, you are hooked on the relatability each character brings in. For all the new mummies and the dads, each event mirrors how you deal with things so well, of course for the love of your baby. The film's gradual shift from planning to watching an *Avenger* film to chilling out at your BFF's house and later their own struggles is so interesting to watch—a fun ride at its best. The story highlights some thought-provoking concepts that do not much go well with society.

DRAWBACKS

Beyond a doubt, the plot does feel relatable, but there are times when there are scenes that just make you feel, 'Why even?' *Raat Jawaan Hai* has its own flaws, particularly somewhat as the first half comes to an end.

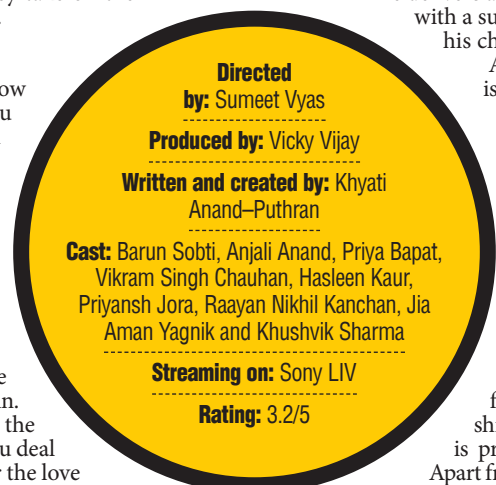
PERFORMANCES

Watching Barun is always a delight and so has it been in *Raat Jawaan Hai*. His character Avinash is such an understanding husband who chooses to take care of his baby and promptly be a house husband. He is this dashing hubby, who is a gem of a person and knows his priorities right. He delivers a compelling performance, layered with a subtle innocence that adds depth to his character.

Anjali Anand, as Radhika, aka Rads, is a cutie. She is a savage mom, but the cuteness she brings together is a cherry on the cake. She's the typical wife, who asks you to decide whether you want to enjoy yourself with your friends or stay with your wife. If you decide to go out with friends, then you know what's going to happen. Priya Bapat as Suman is this friend in the trio, who is always jokingly bullied but is the love of the group. The way she brings in her emotions, fear and a lot more other aspects shines in her character. Her character is pretty convincing and exhilarating. Apart from the trio, the supporting cast has done a great job in making *Raat Jawaan Hai* a fun-watch. They deliver strong performances that bolster the film's emotional and narrative core.

VERDICT

Raat Jawaan Hai is a blend of laughs and cries, fun banter and chaos, all of them together. Maybe not a binge-watch obsession, but it is certainly a series to watch every time your heart gets heavy with your life's chaos. The relatability aspect of the cast keeps you hooked throughout the 8 episodes. Well, if not anything else, it's a good watch for a chilling weekend.



Directed by: Sumeet Vyas

Produced by: Vicky Vijay

Written and created by: Khyati Anand-Puthran

Cast: Barun Sobti, Anjali Anand, Priya Bapat, Vikram Singh Chauhan, Hasleen Kaur, Priyansh Jora, Raayan Nikhil Kanchan, Jia Aman Yagnik and Khushvik Sharma

Streaming on: Sony LIV

Rating: 3.2/5



DITCH THE PILLS

Non-hormonal options for a healthier you

PNS|HYDERABAD

Diaphragm and Cervical Cup

The diaphragm is a dome-shaped latex barrier that is inserted vaginally to cover the cervix and prevent sperm from entering the uterus. Diaphragms come in different sizes. A diaphragm is inserted prior to intercourse and must be left in place for a minimum of six hours afterward. It can be left in place for a total of 24 hours. After use, the diaphragm should be removed, washed well, and stored for future use.

Contraceptive sponge

The contraceptive sponge is a small, pillow shaped polyurethane sponge containing a spermicide. It is moistened with water prior

na prior to ejaculation to prevent the deposit of sperm in or near the vagina. Fertility awareness methods, also called the "rhythm method," involve tracking a woman's menstrual cycle in order to predict her fertile period (around ovulation) when she is at a higher risk of getting pregnant, as well as the "safe period" when they can have unprotected sex.

Surgical sterilisation

For those who desire permanent contraception, surgery in the form of tubectomy in females or vasectomy in males can be performed. Lactational Amenorrhoea Nonpenetrative Sex and abstinence from sexual intercourse are some of the other methods used as non-hormonal contraception.

Approximately 1 billion individuals use some form of contraception. The right and ability to control one's reproductive health help individuals plan their lives. The growing use of contraceptive methods has also contributed to reducing infant and maternal mortality rates. By reducing rates of unintended pregnancies, it also reduces the need for unsafe abortion and benefits the higher education of girls; it creates opportunities for women, thus helping in economic prospects for users.

Dr. Rubby Das, Consultant, Gynecologist/Obstetrician at Parivar seva Sanstha and Max Super Specialty Hospital, Vaishali further highlights, "The choice of contraception method varies depending on the individual's need, preference, and duration for which they need protection. Some of the commonly used short-term contraceptive methods are condoms and pills. Although contraceptive pills are effective, many women are skeptical of using them as they experience side effects like weight gain, headaches, bloating, mood changes and menstrual changes. They also demand strict adherence to a daily regimen and may be inconvenient to many women. Long-acting reversible contraceptive (LARC) methods are an excellent strategy to avoid pregnancy, as they provide high contraceptive effectiveness with a single intervention and can be used for a long time. LARCs include various intrauterine devices (IUD), contraceptive injections and subdermal implants. Injectable last for three months, whereas IUDs can last three to five years, giving protection." Subdermal implants are 99% effective and protect for 3 years. With a fast return to fertility, implants are among the most preferred contraceptive methods in many countries. Unlike other methods, its effectiveness is not decreased by vomiting or forgetfulness and is safe during breastfeeding. Subdermal implants can be removed easily with the restoration of normal ovarian function once an implant is removed. These reasons make implants an attractive option for women who require a good, long-lasting form of contraception. Thus, easy access to these contraceptives can have a positive impact, leading to better maternal and child health outcomes.

Some people find it difficult to use hormonal birth control. They might seek a different choice to steer clear of hormones, desire to encounter side effects, have health worries, or are nursing. Certain forms of birth control have hormones like estrogen and progesterone. Although these forms of birth control are generally very successful, multiple factors may prevent or deter someone from using them.

Nonhormonal birth control options include barrier methods, sterilisation and natural family planning. The efficiency of these techniques varies depending on the technique and its application.

To prevent unwanted pregnancies, there are many options available for the couple, which can be divided into hormonal and non-hormonal methods of contraception. Dr. Ila Jalote, Consultant, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Manipal Hospital, shares, "A couple may opt for non-hormonal methods of contraception to avoid any hormone-related side effects or to avoid the regular intake of contraceptives. These non-hormonal methods of contraception can be temporary or permanent methods of contraception."

Meanwhile, Dr Nidhi Shah, Consultant, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Jaslok Hospital Mumbai shares that a non-hormonal method of birth control protects against pregnancy without influencing natural hormones.

You may wish to consider a non-hormonal method of birth control if you:

- ◆ Want to "back up" your hormonal method
- ◆ Experience undesirable side effects from, or have medical contraindications to, hormones
- ◆ Have infrequent intercourse and do not feel you need ongoing contraception
- ◆ Do not want to alter your body's natural rhythms (i.e., menstrual cycle) for religious or other reasons

Some of the available non-hormonal methods of contraception are:

Condoms

Condoms are one of the most popular nonhormonal methods of contraception because they are easily obtained and relatively easy to use. Apart from abstinence, condoms are the only other method to provide protection against STIs. There are two types of condoms: external (male) condoms worn over the penis and internal (female) condoms worn inside the vagina.



to use and then inserted far up into the vagina so that the concave side covers the cervix. It can be used only once but works for 24 hours and, hence, can be used during multiple episodes of sex within 24 hours.

Spermicides

Vaginal spermicides are widely available as gels, foams, jelly, vaginal contraceptive film (VCF), creams and suppositories. However, they are the least effective form of contraception available

Copper IUD

A non-hormonal copper intrauterine device (IUD) can be placed inside the uterus as an OPD procedure. It is one of the most effective contraceptive methods (99%) at preventing pregnancy and can be left in place for up to 5 years without affecting future fertility.

Contraceptive gel

It is used in the vagina before sex and works by lowering the vaginal pH and preventing the sperm from reaching the egg.

Other methods:

Withdrawal, or the "pulling out," method refers to removing the penis from the vagi-

NITISH KUMAR REDDY CREDITS GAUTAM GAMBHIR FOR ALL-ROUND SHOW IN 2ND T20I

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy said the idea was to take on the Bangladeshi spinners and credited head coach Gautam Gambhir for boosting his confidence after his all-round effort powered the hosts to an 86-run win in the second T20I here.

India, who had lost to Bangladesh the last time these two teams clashed here, landed in trouble with their top order blown away inside the powerplay but Reddy and Rinku Singh joined forces to turn the tables on Bangladesh. The pair put on 108 runs for the fourth wicket from 49 balls to take the game away from Bangladesh, with Reddy clobbering seven sixes and four fours to make 74 from a mere 34 balls.

"The conversation that we were having (was) a smooth conversation, we were not taking any pressure. We did not plan anything about the score. We saw the spinner coming on to bowl, and we thought that this was the main over and we should take him on," he said in a video shared by BCCI.

"To be honest, I should thank Gautam sir for this. He gave a lot of confidence in me. He told me to believe in my bowling."

"(He said) 'when you are bowling, you should think like a bowler and not as a batsman who can bowl'. That is what he kept telling me and that somehow boosted me," he added.

Reddy said he was grateful for being adjudged the Player of



the Match. "Playing for India is in itself a proud moment and getting the man of the match (award), I feel so grateful for this and I just want to live in this moment," he said. "Once I got to know that from here you should take on. I just knew that I will take on the bowlers. I was backing myself saying 'you can do this,' added Reddy, who returned 4-0-23-2.

"The conversation between us was like, he was telling me that maybe it is God's plan. We were just believing (in) it and we were just hitting the balls," Reddy said in a video shared by BCCI. Rinku, who scored 53 off 29 balls with five fours and three sixes, said the pair decided to take the attack to the opposition.

"We were enjoying our batting. I just said it is God's plan, just keep hitting and leave it to the one above. Nitesh bhai also batted well," said Rinku. "It was only his second international match and it felt really good watching him," he added. Rinku looked at his record with pride saying he has won each series that he has played

for India and expressed his wish to continue doing that. "This was my third century in T20Is and all three have come in situations where India have lost early wickets have been lost and I got the chance to bat and I made a fifty," he said. "I have won all the series with the Indian team since I started playing, so I would want to

remain with the team and the key keep winning," added Rinku, who also has 'God' plan tattooed on his arm. Rinku said India skipper Suryakumar Yadav urges his players to remain aggressive and play their natural game. "Surya bhai has asked us to be aggressive and play our natural game, just back our shots and show our energy," he said.



IAMGAME Conclave for the Future of Indian Sports

RISHABH MALIK ■ NEW DELHI

The IAMGAME Conclave took place on Wednesday to put together key leaders, athletes, and industry experts to share their valuable insights on the evolution and global potential of Indian sports.

The conclave addressed the most pressing challenges and opportunities within the Indian sports ecosystem, from infrastructure development and athlete nurturing to the growing influence of technology and the critical role of inclusivity and diversity.

The conclave was inaugurated by Mr Sudhanshu Mittal, President of Kho Kho federation. "This more than just an event; it is a call to action. By facilitating open dialogue and knowledge sharing, the conclave aims to empower participants to drive positive change in the sports sector. The conclave had prominent speakers such as Harmanpreet Singh, Ronjan Sodhi, Udit Sheth, Jaspal Rana, Nikhat Zareen, Namrata Parekh, Aparna Papat, and Rathindra Basu. Who shared their insights about how they can make the game better for athletes.

"The conclave was not just about conversations, but

about fostering collaboration and setting the foundation for action that will shape the future of sports in India," said Karan Chettri, IAMGAME Founder.

IAMGAME inspired innovation, tackled inclusivity, and empowered the next generation of athletes by fostering a collaborative environment for meaningful discussions. The insights generated at the event will serve as a roadmap for India's continued progress as a global sports powerhouse.

Mandeep Malhotra added, "Through IAMGAME, we have built a platform for collaboration and growth, positioning Indian sports for a brighter future."

The event concluded on a high note, with a renewed focus on empowering the next generation of athletes, promoting inclusivity, and fostering innovation. The insights and ideas generated at IAMGAME 2024 are expected to serve as a roadmap for India's continued progress as a global sports powerhouse.

As the momentum from the conclave carries forward, it is expected to drive meaningful changes within the Indian sports ecosystem, pushing it to new heights.

Iyer-Kishan on a "mission" as half of season to be held without top 60 players

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shreyas Iyer would like to sit back on a 'Time Machine' to revive his start-stop international career while Ishan Kishan would aim to clear the popular perception about his allegedly "misplaced priorities", when the 90th edition of Ranji Trophy starts across the country with hundreds of players ready to slog it out for different ambitions and varied goals.

The Indian cricket board's powerful rap on the knuckles to the 'IPL happy duo' was a message loud and clear to anyone who would care to listen - to earn mega bucks in IPL auction, learn to give respect to the foundation of country's cricket - India's very own national championship. Iyer wouldn't mind having a 1,321-run reason like he had in the 2015-16 Ranji edition which brought him into national reckoning. He is at the cross-roads where it may not take long to slip off the selector's radar as his favourite ODI format is slowly losing relevance. Similarly, Kishan, who has fallen off the pecking order among national 'keepers', has accepted the responsibility to captain Jharkhand which would also be a signal of his intent for Ajit Agarkar and his colleagues.

Like every edition, Ranji Trophy will be devoid of star power with none of country's top 17-18 players likely to be available throughout the season due to eight Test



matches scheduled between October 16 to January 7. The next 18 will only be available for a single round before they embark on India 'A' tour to Australia while another 15 among the younger crop of top T20 stars also unavailable for a couple of weeks owing to a four-match T20I series in South Africa. If that is not enough, another 15 will be in Muscat for the Emerging Asia Cup tournament, where BCCI wouldn't send its U-23 team like previous years as other Asian nations don't have robust age-group programme. Like every year, the national selectors would be out there to unearth hidden diamonds and give them wings to fly in coming years.

The Indian Test team's philosophy has undergone sea-change over the years and it will no longer just be about volume of runs scored and quantum of wickets. "If runs and wickets alone

would have been a marker then Milind Kumar or Jalaj Saxena would have played for India," a former national selector, who has a deep understanding of the process said.

"If a batter has scored only 500 runs in a season but there is hundred on a green-top against good domestic attack and 60-odd on a proverbial akhaada (rank turner), his name would find a place in selector's notebook for India A and pathways programme. "Similarly, if a fast bowler is running in and making things happen on a batting belt with sun beating down, he will automatically grab eyeballs. It is all about adaptability and challenging yourself to get out of your comfort zone. If it's a flat deck, then show your stamina and score a triple even when you are suffering from cramps."

"To play for India, show that you are different. All selectors have specific names in mind

when they go for an assignment. Yes, they look at all players but focus would be on what national team requirements are," the selector, a former India Test player said. Among the teams, Mumbai once again would be a team to beat with Ajinkya Rahane, Prithvi Shaw, Shreyas Iyer in its ranks although the Khan brothers — Sarfaraz and Musheer — will be missing; elder one due to national duty and younger one because of a recent road accident.

Rajat Patidar, who blew away his chances later grabbed by Sarfaraz, would like to show that he is still around even as Madhya Pradesh are likely to miss their star off-spinner all-rounder Saransh Jain after first round, since he might make it to India A for Australia tour. For Karnataka, Vidwath Kaverappa and Vyshak Vijaykumar would like to put their best foot forward to remain among the fringe pacers.

Mukesh Kumar might get to play a match for Bengal before he also leaves for India A tour while Yash Dhull, who has been panned by one and all for technique and temperament, would like to redeem himself. But in another corner of the country, one would like to see Cheteshwar Pujara quietly go about his day job of scoring runs, frustrating bowlers with dead defence while his one-time colleagues in the deepest core of their hearts knowing that they will miss him Down Under.

Not going in with pre-determined mindset has helped Smriti and me, says Shafali

PTI ■ DUBAI

Indian batter Shafali Verma said she and her opening partner Smriti Mandhana have moved away from the mindset of entering matches with "pre-determined" ideas about targeting any particular type of bowling, which has helped them achieve greater success.

The duo put up a 98-run opening stand to lay the foundation of India's emphatic 82-run win over Sri Lanka on Wednesday. In her 38-ball 50, Mandhana attacked the spinners, which is noteworthy since she typically relies on Shafali to handle tweakers.

"Yes, we have a very good combination now, as you said. That's because now we don't go being pre-determined. Whoever is connecting well with the bat and ball on that day, we try to give singles and let her play more balls," Shafali said at the post-match press conference.

"She's hitting the spinners very well. So, it's a good thing. And we both just try to give as good a start as we can then it'd be good for the team to build a good inning and hit



a good target," she added. Under the pump after the heavy loss to New Zealand and an underwhelming win over Pakistan, India's hammering of Sri Lanka massively boosted their net run rate, elevating them to the second spot in Group A. The Indian women have, however,

struggled to hit the maximums at the Dubai Cricket Stadium, where they have played all of their matches till now.

Shafali and Mandhana also copped criticism for their running between the wickets, which improved drastically against Sri Lanka.

"We missed a lot of runs in the starting. I know about that. I think we're used to the condition. Maybe because of that, we're running well in between wickets. But we're trying to get the first run fast. Because the ground is very big, 70 meters, if I'm not wrong."

"So, we try to take the first run fast. It's very difficult to hit the sixes but we're thinking of taking the first run fast," Shafali said.

India next take on group leaders Australia in Sharjah on Sunday. It will be a change of venue for Harmanpreet Kaur and Co.

"For Sharjah, we will have three days off. If I am not wrong. So, we will work on the process and we will focus on what we can do to be confident. And hopefully, if we give our 100% individually then of course, we will win."

India men's team settles for bronze in Asian Table Tennis C'ships

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian men's team bowed out in the semifinals and settled for the bronze medal following a 0-3 loss to Chinese Taipei in the semifinal of the Asian Table Tennis Championships in Kazakhstan's Astana, on Thursday.

Indian women's team had also won the bronze medal in the competition on Wednesday, which is the country's first medal in the category since the beginning of the event in 1972.

The legendary Achanta Sharath Kamal, world No 42, found the going tough against his world No 7 opponent Lin Yun-Ju, whose reflexes and precision made the contest tougher for the Indian to settle into his own game. Sharath Kamal lost the contest 11-7, 12-10, 11-9.

In the following contest, Manav Thakkar lost to world No 22 Kao Cheng-Jui in a hard-fought contest whose outcome was 11-9, 8-11, 11-3, 13-11 in the favour of the Chinese Taipei's player and a 2-0 lead. In the third game, Harmeet Desai also had

to deal with disappointment as the Indian paddler lost to Huang Yan-Cheng 6-11, 9-11, 7-11.

"Despite the loss, the Indian men's team has much to be proud of. A bronze medal at the prestigious Asian Championships is no small feat, especially in the elite continental championships," said the Table Tennis Federation of India in a release.

"The men's and women's squads showed incredible grit and determination, proving that India continues to rise in the ranks of international table tennis," it added.

Major Dhyan Chand Stadium gets a facelift to ahead of India-Germany hockey series

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Once it chronicled Mir Ranjan Negi's epic fall from grace, Dhanraj Pillay's artistic stick-work and Sandeep Singh's muscular drag-flicks but in the past decade or so, Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium seemed resigned to the fact that its glory days as epicentre of Indian hockey were a thing of past.

The two-match Test series against Germany on October 23 and 24 seems like the revival of Delhi's hockey spirit which has gone dormant in the past 10 years.

Odisha government's seminal decision to help Indian hockey find its home in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela was a major

factor in the shift of momentum, which can swing once again if the fans show up. Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey is hoping for a good turnout considering the growing popularity of hockey after two consecutive Olympic bronze medals.

"Earlier domestic tournaments used to be held in Delhi in a very spectacular manner. I too made my international debut in Delhi through Indira Gandhi Gold Cup 1995. A large number of spectators used to come here and we also want that the glory of hockey to return to Delhi," Tirkey told PTI Bhasha.

"After the Tokyo and Paris Olympics, the popularity of hockey has increased manifold and now the stadium will be

waiting for the spectators," said the legendary former defender. The last international match played here was the 2014 Hero World League Final. Inter-departmental hockey of institutions has also been held here occasionally.

"I was an official here during the 2010 World Cup and people from all over the country came here to watch the match. It was a different atmosphere," said Ajay Kumar Bansal, former coach of the Indian junior and women's hockey team and ex administrator of the National Stadium.

"Hockey was being played in Odisha for the last few years, due to which the graph of the game went up there and on the contrary, due to the absence of



hockey in Delhi, it went down. The youth did not see any big hockey tournament here, so automatically their interest decreased," he said. "Apart from this, due to lack of tournaments, the maintenance of the stadium is also affected. I want that from next time,

four or five more venues including Delhi, Punjab, Haryana should be included in the Hockey India League."

India's World Cup winning former captain Ajitpal Singh believes that matches with big teams should be played in all the pockets of hockey in India.

"An international match is happening in Delhi after many years. Earlier, many 'Test' matches used to be held at the Shivaji Stadium. I think it is important to have matches and tournaments across the country, rather centralising them," the former skipper said.

"There are many pockets of hockey in India, like many excellent players have emerged from Punjab, Haryana, UP, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu. Hockey is very popular in Odisha and Jharkhand, but it is important to organise big matches in other states as well," he added.

Giving details of the preparations, officials said the cleaning of astro turf on the main pitch and practice pitches was going on with

German machines for a week and the process has been completed. Every year Rs 30 lakh is spent on the maintenance of both turfs.

They said that the spectator galleries, change rooms, dressing rooms, and the entire complex have been cleaned. They also said that there is no need for an upgrade because this is a world-class stadium in which World Cup and Commonwealth Games have been organised.

The stadium also houses a Hockey Academy of the National Centre of Excellence of the Sports Authority of India in which regular practice takes place.

Apart from this, under the 'Come and Play' scheme of SAI, some children come and

play hockey, who are very excited about these matches. When India defeated arch-rivals Pakistan in the World Cup and the Commonwealth Games in 2010 year on this ground, a flood of emotions had overflowed in the packed stadium.

The National Stadium (formerly known as Irwin Amphitheatre), gifted to Delhi by the Maharaja of Bhavnagar, witnessed the first Asian Games in 1951 and the players shed tears after losing to Pakistan in the hockey final of the 1982 Asian Games.

On this same ground, Australia hammered the host India in the final of the 2010 Commonwealth Games by 8-0, one of the worst ever defeats.

Vettaiyan tackles tough issues but loses focus

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
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Superstar Rajinikanth teams up with T J Gnanavel of *Jai Bhim* fame for the film *Vettaiyan*. With Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan, Malayalam superstar Fahadh Faasil, Telugu actor Rana Daggubati, Manju Warrier and Ritika Singh in key roles, the movie has generated significant attention. Anirudh Ravichander composed the music and Lyca Productions produced it. Given Rajinikanth's massive global fanbase, his films always garner immense interest.

STORY

The plot takes place in Tamil Nadu, where Superintendent of Police Athiyan (played by Rajinikanth), an encounter specialist, eliminates criminals in shootouts. He is aided by a former thief-turned-police-informant, Patrick (played by Fahadh Faasil). Athiyan justifies these killings in court, arguing that the criminals tried to flee and posed a threat to the police. However, Satyadev (played by Amitabh Bachchan), a Human Rights Commission judge, opposes such extrajudicial killings, insisting on legal punishment for all. Saranya (played by Dushara Vijayan), a schoolteacher, informs SP Athiyan about illegal marijuana trafficking in her school. Acting on her tip, Athiyan catches the offenders in the act. However, days later, Saranya is found raped and murdered, sparking a sensational case. A special investigation team, led by Harish (played by Kishore) and Roopa (played by Ritika Singh), is formed, and they arrest a suspect whom Athiyan later kills in an encounter. Soon, Athiyan realises that the person he killed was innocent. Who is responsible for Saranya's murder? What was the motive? And how does Athiyan deal with the consequences of his mistake? The answers lie in watching the film.

ANALYSIS

Director T J Gnanavel, known for the socially conscious and critically acclaimed *Jai Bhim*, returns with *Vettaiyan*, tackling the issue of police encounters and the collateral damage of innocent lives lost. He also explores the impact of corporate education and how it corrupts the system. The film begins by portraying Rajinikanth's character, SP Athiyan, as an encounter specialist who quickly gains a heroic reputation. However, Satyadev, played by Amitabh Bachchan, stands



REVIEW

as a moral counterpoint, questioning the legality of Athiyan's actions. The story shifts focus to a schoolteacher who takes a stand against wrongdoing but tragically becomes a victim of a heinous crime. The first half of the film is engaging, with a compelling narrative centered on the police investigation and the consequences of encounters. Director Gnanavel stays true to the core story and maintains the audience's interest throughout the first half.

The second half, however, falters as the director shifts focus to corporate education malpractices, losing the tight grip established earlier. The introduction of Rana Daggubati's character is underdeveloped and the narrative struggles to balance both the encounter storyline and the education system angle. The result is a disjointed second half that feels like two different films. The climax, too, feels rushed and lacks the impact the story deserves. Despite these shortcomings,

Gnanavel's effort to address two significant social issues is commendable.

PERFORMANCE

Rajinikanth once again shines with his charisma as the encounter specialist Athiyan. Though the film avoids his usual mannerisms, his performance is still stellar and in some scenes, he is outstanding. Amitabh Bachchan's presence adds gravitas to the film and though his screen time is limited, he leaves a strong impression with his role as a human rights advocate. Fahadh Faasil provides comic relief, and his performance is designed to appeal to the Malayalam audience. Manju Warrier delivers a solid performance as Rajinikanth's wife. Ritika Singh and Kishore, playing police officers, do justice to their roles, while Rana Daggubati, though appearing only in the second half, is fitting for the role but could have been given more depth. Dushara Vijayan shines as the schoolteacher, delivering an emotional performance. Supporting actors like Rao Ramesh, Rohini and Abhirami also contribute effectively.

VERDICT

Vettaiyan addresses two critical social issues. The first half is engaging and gripping, but the second half loses its way due to inconsistent storytelling. Nevertheless, the film is worth watching, especially for Rajinikanth's superb performance as an encounter specialist. His screen presence and acting elevate the movie, making it a compelling watch.

Director and writer: T J Gnanavel

Producer: Subaskaran Allirajah

Cast: Rajinikanth, Amitabh Bachchan, Fahadh Faasil, Rana Daggubati, Ritika Singh, Manju Warrier, Kishore, Rao Ramesh, Dushara Vijayan, Abhirami and others

Music: Anirudh Ravichander

Cinematography: SR Kathir

Rating: 2.5/5



Thiruveer turns photographer for *The Great Pre Wedding Show*

Thiruveer, known for movies such as *Mallesham*, *Palasa*, *Masooda* and *Pareshan*, is set to release a new film called *The Great Pre Wedding Show*. The movie was officially released on Thursday at a private studio in Hyderabad. Thiruveer is starring as the main actor and Rahul Srinivas is directing the film. The producers are Sandeep Agaram and Ashmita Reddy. The first look poster of the film was released and Thiruveer will be seen playing the character

of a photographer in it. The story's backdrop is a village and the makers announced that the regular shooting of this film will start soon.

Teena Sravya will be seen playing the female lead.

Thiruveer acted as a character artist and also took on the role of the lead actor in *Masooda*, which was a major success. He later starred in the movie *Pareshan* and it was also a hit. Currently, the actor is being cast as the main actor in the upcoming film *The Great Pre-Wedding Show*.

STANDALONE

Actor Uday Rajveer Singh, along with actresses Aisha, Diwanishi and Shayana, director Manzoor and the team of *Daas*, released the trailer of this upcoming film on Thursday. The film centers around a young man, who is torn between true love and commercial relationship.



Rahul Vijay shifts his gear to comedy

Young actor Rahul Vijay is busy with regular films and also web series. He is now coming up with a different kind of film and the title is also a funny one, *Khel Khatam Darwajaa Bandh*. Neha Panday is playing the female lead. The first look was released on Thursday. The title *Khel Khatam Darwajaa Bandh* hints at a fun-filled comedy, with debut director Ashok Reddy Kadadori at the helm. This film is being produced by Arjan Dasyan. Rahul Vijay's previous movie *Vidya Vasula Aham* was directly released on Aha, earning him praise after his performance in *Kota Bommali PS*. The actor is hoping for a good break with his new project *Khel Khatam Darwajaa Bandh* now. In contrast to his previous movies, he has opted for a comedy setting this time.



PRASHANTH VARMA PRESENTS THE RISE OF MAHAKALI

Prashanth Varma, known for the hit film *HanuMan* released during this year's Sankranti festival, gained immense popularity post-release. The movie quickly became a buzz not just in Telugu but also in other languages, including Hindi. The filmmaker has since then been in demand. Following the massive success of the movie, he also initiated the

formation of Prashanth Varma's Cinematic Universe, known as PVCU. The director is currently overseeing the debut film of Nandamuri Mokshyagna.

Apart from that, he is also working on different stories and making films with different production companies. As a part of his next project, on Thursday, he announced a movie titled *Mahakali* which is helmed by Pooja Aparna Kolluru. Rivaz Ramesh Duggal serves as the producer. Prashanth Varma will be providing the story and screenplay.

The narrative takes place in Bengal, renowned for the well-known Mahankali temple. The people of Bengal celebrate the Dasara festival along with Navaratri days in grand style. Prashanth Varma is drawing inspiration from it and is currently capturing the age-old customs of this Bengal tradition in his narrative.

In this promotional poster, a girl is affectionately placing her head against a tiger's. A circus is also visible in the background and people are running away as the large wheel is lit on fire. Similar to the presence of a special object in the title logo of *HanuMan*, there is also one in the logo of *Mahakali*.

Announcing the film Prashanth Varma said, "Excited to join hands with @RKDStudios to bring a powerful new force to the universe. Presenting the rise of #MAHAKALI - an embodiment of Goddess Kali, the fiercest destroyer of evil. This Navratri, we're breaking the mold and redefining what a superhero can be."

Matka team recreates iconic Poorna Market

Within the realm of storytelling, the settings have the ability to enrich the emotional intensity and genuineness of a narrative. In Varun Tej's *Matka*, directed by Karuna Kumar, Poorna Market plays a key role by enhancing the narrative with its lively culture.

The production team built a striking set at RFC spanning 10 acres to represent Poorna Market, overseen by production designer Kiran Kumar Manne. The Poorna Market, with its 1500 shops bustling with activity, plays a crucial role in the movie. Every aspect, from classic cars to old-fashioned rickshaws, vintage photo studio and Poorna Theatre, is carefully crafted to take viewers back in time.

Varun Tej's evolution from a worker to a dominant force is connected to Poorna Market. *Matka* is scheduled to come out on November 14.