



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

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

QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer

The caste census is fake and allotting Rs 150 crore for that is a scam. The Congress is doing all this as it fears defeat in local body elections. The Congress Government is adopting delaying tactics citing caste census to avoid conducting local body elections as the people are now serious about its six guarantees and the farm loan waiver scheme

— Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Union Minister



P4

Poll setbacks made Congress ideologically bankrupt:

Nadda

5

TRANSFORMATIVE

INITIATIVE AIMED AT REVOLUTIONISING INFRA

8

Manchu Lakshmi on her fiery comeback in

ADIPARVAM

P12

DON'T MISS...

This Dasara, fewer sightings of...

The 'Palapitta', commonly known as the Indian Roller or Blue Jay, has long been seen as a symbol of good fortune during the Dasara festival. However, this year, the cherished bird was notably absent, leaving many devotees disappointed. Vijayadasami, celebrated on Saturday, was particularly disheartening for those in rural areas who had hoped to catch a glimpse of the Palapitta, only to find their wishes unfulfilled. Bird enthusiasts and conservationists expressed deep concern over the declining sightings of the 'Palapitta'...

-PAGE: 3

EC must clarify on questions raised...

Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Sunday said the Election Commission must clarify on the questions raised by the Congress about EVMS in the recently-concluded Haryana Assembly polls. Sibal asserted he is of the opinion that misuse of EVMS does take place in the elections. The Congress had on Friday submitted more complaints to the Election Commission alleging discrepancies in the electronic voting machines during counting of votes for the Haryana Assembly elections...

-PAGE: 5

ONGC looks at mini plants to evacuate...

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is looking to set up mini-LNG plants to evacuate natural gas from wells located in areas that are not connected with pipelines. The firm has identified five sites in Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and Gujarat for setting up mini plants at wellhead that will convert the gas pumped out from under the ground into liquefied natural gas (LNG) by supercooling it to minus 160 degrees Celsius. This LNG will be loaded on cryogenic trucks and transported to the nearest pipeline...

-PAGE: 8

Historic women's doubles bronze...

India wrapped up their campaign at the Asian Table Tennis Championships with three medals, including a historic bronze in the women's doubles, after Ayhika Mukherjee and Sutirtha Mukherjee's dream run ended in the semifinals here on Sunday. The world No. 15 pair, who stunned the reigning world champions from China en route to a bronze at the Asian Games last year, fell to Japan's Miwa Harimoto and Miyuu Kihara, 4-11 9-11 8-11 in under 30 minutes in their last-four clash. Prior to that, the...

-SPORTS

Control prices: CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has directed the Civil Supplies Department officials to take all necessary measures to control the prices of essential commodities. He held a detailed review meeting on civil supplies, agriculture, and marketing at his Vundavalli residence, attended by Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar and officials from all three departments.

The Chief Minister focused on demand and supply, instructing officials to ensure that the burden of rising prices does not fall on consumers. He emphasised the importance of preventing price hikes rather than merely trying to reduce them after they occur, calling for regular reviews by the three departments.

Nadendla Manohar and the officials briefed the Chief Minister on the measures already initiated to bring essential prices under control. Chandrababu Naidu directed them to consider importing essential commodities to meet growing demand and inquired about long-term strategies to address the issue.

Officials informed the Chief Minister about various essential items available at Rythu Bazars across the state at reasonable prices and the special counters established in different regions to meet demand. The Minister for Agriculture, Kinjerapu Atchennaidu, and Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad attended the meeting virtually.

The Chief Minister stated that the Vigilance wing should play a crucial role in controlling prices and that stringent

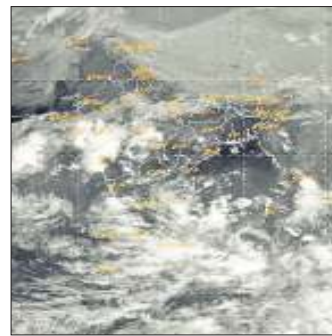
Directs officials to consider importing essential commodities to meet demand



- **REVIEW MEETING:** A review meeting was held at his residence, attended by Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar and officials from agriculture and marketing.
- **RYTHU BAZAARS:** Officials reported on the availability of essential items at Rythu bazars at reasonable prices and special counters set up across the State.
- **FOCUS ON DEMAND AND SUPPLY:** The CM stresses the importance of managing demand and supply to prevent price increases from burdening consumers.
- **PREVENTIVE STEPS:** He emphasises the need for regular reviews to prevent price hikes rather than addressing them after they occur.
- **VIGILANCE ROLE:** CM calls for the Vigilance wing to play a key role in controlling prices and tackling black marketing.
- **USE OF GODDOWNS:** He suggests that utilisation of godowns on a large scale could help provide relief to consumers and farmers from rising prices.

actions should be taken against those engaged in black marketing of essentials. He also noted that justice can be served to consumers and farmers by

utilising godowns on a large scale and urged officials to take necessary steps to provide relief to the public from rising prices.



Low pressure likely over Bay

Heavy rains forecast for coastal AP and Rayalaseema

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The cyclonic circulation over the southeast Bay of Bengal has moved west-northwest and now lies over the southeast Bay of Bengal. Under its influence, a low-pressure area is expected to form over the central parts of the south Bay of Bengal around October 14, according to the Meteorological Centre.

The daily weather report indicates that this low-pressure area is likely to become well-marked and move west-northwest towards the south Andhra Pradesh coast in the next 48 hours.

Heavy to very heavy rainfall is expected in isolated areas of Rayalaseema on October 15, 16, and 17, as well as in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh on October 15 and 16.

Continued on Page 2

Liquor shops allotment by draw of lots today

ALLOTTEES TO TAKE POSSESSION OF SHOPS TOMORROW
AP'S NEW EXCISE POLICY TO TAKE EFFECT ON OCT 16

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Excise Department has announced that it has received a total of 89,882 applications for licences to operate 3,396 liquor shops across the State's 26 districts. This process has generated Rs 1,797.64 crore in non-refundable application fees for the state government. On average, 26 applications were submitted per liquor shop.

In a statement on Sunday, the department confirmed that the allocation of liquor shops will be done through a district-wise lottery system, with the shops being handed over to successful applicants on October 15. The state's new liquor policy will come into effect on October 16.

NTR district saw the highest number of applications, with 5,764 bids submitted for just 113 available shops. However, in Anantapur, the response was much lower, with fewer than five applications per shop for 12 outlets. The department is expected to reassess the situation in Anantapur, and a decision on the allotment there may be delayed.

The lottery process for allotting the shops will be conducted on Monday, and applicants are eagerly awaiting the results to see if they have secured a licence.

Continued on Page 2



- **Excise Department applications:** The AP Excise Dept received 89,882 applications for licences to operate 3,396 liquor shops across 26 districts.
- **Revenue generated:** Rs 1,797.64 crore was generated through non-refundable application fees.
- **Average applications per shop:** On an average, 26 applications were submitted per shop.
- **Application distribution:** NTR district received the highest number of applications (5,764 for 113 shops), while Anantapur saw a significantly lower response (fewer than five applications per shop for 12 outlets).
- **Anantapur reassessment:** The allotment process in Anantapur may be delayed for reassessment due to the low response.
- **Privilege fee:** An additional privilege fee will be levied on the MRP of domestically manufactured foreign liquor.

Chiru donates Rs 1 cr for AP flood relief

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Prominent film star and megastar Chiranjeevi met Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu at his residence in Hyderabad. In a generous gesture to support the flood victims in Andhra Pradesh, Chiranjeevi donated Rs 50 lakh on his own behalf, along with another Rs 50 lakh on behalf of hero Ram Charan, bringing the total contribution to Rs 1 crore for the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

Chiranjeevi, who is known for his commitment to social service, received heartfelt gratitude from the Chief Minister for his contributions towards flood relief efforts. CM Chandrababu Naidu warmly welcomed Chiranjeevi and accepted the cheque during



their meeting. After the meeting, the Chief Minister personally escorted Chiranjeevi to his car, bidding him farewell.

CM Naidu remarked that this act of kindness exemplifies the film industry's dedication to social responsibility and its support for those in need during times of crisis.

ATTACK ON TDP HEADQUARTERS

All cases transferred to AP CID

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government has transferred the cases related to the attacks on the TDP central office in Mangalagiri and on Chandrababu Naidu's residence in Undavalli during the YSRCP regime to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). These cases were previously being investigated under the supervision of the Deputy Superintendent of Police within the jurisdictions of the Mangalagiri and Tadepalli Police Stations. The decision to hand over the cases to the CID was made to expedite the investigation, as it was felt that the civil police's progress was slow.

In connection with the attack on the TDP headquarters, former



The attack on the TDP headquarters in Mangalagiri involves several accused individuals, including Devineni Avinash, Lella Appireddy, Nandigam Suresh, Talasila Raghuram, and 14 others.

Bapatla MP Nandigam Suresh was arrested and sent to jail, though he has since been released on bail. Authorities are also planning to interrogate several other leaders. Additionally, in the case of the attack on Naidu's residence, former minister Jogi Ramesh has been summoned multiple times for questioning by the police. His lack of

cooperation prompted the government to transfer the case to the CID for a more thorough investigation. The attack on the TDP headquarters in Mangalagiri involves several accused individuals, including Devineni Avinash, Lella Appireddy, Nandigam Suresh, Talasila Raghuram, and 14 others.

Continued on Page 2

Bars exploit liquor shortage amid policy change

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As the State moves to a new liquor policy, bar organisers are taking advantage of a major shortage at government liquor stores. With limited stocks of liquor available at these outlets, customers are flocking to bars, where prices are reportedly soaring. "We are forced to pay high prices at bars because there are no options at government stores," said a frustrated customer. "It's unfair, but we have no choice."

The government plans to shut down all 132 government-run liquor stores and shift to a private liquor store model. A lottery for private liquor store licenses is set for the 14th of this month, with sales expected to start on the 16th. However, Excise officials are currently focused on making this transition smooth, which has led to a temporary neglect of regular duties like managing stock at government stores.

As a result, no new supplies have been sent to government stores, causing available brands to run out quickly. This has pushed customers to bars, where managers are taking advantage of the rising demand. Reports indicate that prices at bars have gone up significantly. A quarter bottle of a low-cost brand, usually sold for Rs 130, is now priced at Rs 200. High-end brands have also seen big price hikes.

Continued on Page 2

Ex-MLA Rapaka to quit YSRCP

PNS ■ AMALAPURAM

Former MLA and YSRCP leader Rapaka Varaprasad has announced his decision to quit the YSRCP. Speaking to the media here on Sunday, he expressed his intention to sever ties with the party.

Varaprasad alleged that the YSRCP had betrayed him by not granting him a ticket to contest for the Assembly from the Razole constituency.

Continued on Page 2

Centre releases 15th Finance panel grants for AP rural local bodies

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Union government has released the first instalment of grants from the 15th Finance Commission for the financial year 2024-25 to the Rural Local Bodies (RLBs) in Andhra Pradesh. The State has received Rs 395.51 crore in untied grants and Rs 593.26 crore in tied grants for its nine District Panchayats, 615 Block Panchayats, and 12,853 Gram Panchayats.

These untied grants will enable Panchayats to address local needs across 29 subjects, such as agriculture, education, and sanitation, but cannot be used for salaries. The tied grants will focus on essential services, including sanitation, ODF maintenance, and water management initiatives.

In accordance with Article 243G of the Constitution, these funds empower Panchayats to manage vital services and infra-



structure, aligning with Mahatma Gandhi's vision of 'Gram Swaraj'. This initiative supports the gov-

ernment's commitment to inclusive growth and sustainable rural development, resonating with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's principle of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas'.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj and the Ministry of Jal Shakti recommend and oversee the release of these grants, which are disbursed by the Ministry of Finance in two instalments throughout the financial year.

Ex-DU professor Saibaba's body to be donated to hospital, says family

PNS ■ HYDERABAD/NEW DELHI

The body of former Delhi University professor and rights activist GN Saibaba who passed away in Hyderabad, will be donated to a hospital as he wished, said a statement issued by his family on Sunday.

Saibaba, 58, was released from the Nagpur Central Jail after 10 years of incarceration after the Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court set aside the life sentence given to him by a trial court, in an alleged Maoist links case in which the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) was invoked.

Saibaba's body will be kept at his brother's house in Jawahar Nagar, Hyderabad, for his relatives, friends and well-wishers to pay homage, on Monday. Afterwards, his body will be donated to state-run Gandhi



Medical College. His eyes have already been donated to LV Prasad Eye Hospital, the family said in a statement.

The former professor who taught English at Ram Lal Anand College of Delhi University (DU) passed away on Saturday due to post-operative complications, seven months after he was acquitted.

Continued on Page 2

SpaceX arms catch Starship booster at launchpad

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

SpaceX pulled off the boldest test flight yet of its enormous Starship rocket on Sunday, catching the returning booster back at the launch pad with mechanical arms.

A jubilant Elon Musk called it "science fiction without the fiction part".

Towering almost 400 feet (121 metres), the empty Starship blasted off at sunrise from the southern tip of Texas near the Mexican border. It arced over the Gulf of Mexico like the four Starships before it that ended up being destroyed, either soon after liftoff or while ditching into the sea. The previous one in June had been the most successful until Sunday's demo, completing its flight without exploding.

This time, Musk, SpaceX's CEO and founder, upped the challenge for the rocket that he plans to use to



send people back to the moon and on to Mars.

At the flight director's command, the first-stage booster flew back to the launch pad where it had blasted off seven minutes earlier. The launch tower's monstrous metal arms, dubbed chopsticks, caught the descending 232-foot (71-metre) booster and gripped it tightly, dan-

gling it well above the ground. "The tower has caught the rocket!!!" Musk announced via X. "Big step towards making life multiplanetary was made today."

Company employees screamed in joy, jumping and pumping their fists into the air as the stainless steel booster slowly lowered itself into the launch tower's arms. NASA joined

This time, Musk, SpaceX's CEO and founder, upped the challenge for the rocket that he plans to use to send people back to the moon and on to Mars. "The tower has caught the rocket!!!" Musk announced via X.

in the celebration, with Administrator Bill Nelson sending congratulations.

"Even in this day and age, what we just saw is magic," SpaceX spokesman Dan Huot observed from near the launch site. "I am shaking right now."

"Folks, this is a day for the engineering history books," added engi-

neering manager Kate Tice from SpaceX headquarters in Hawthorne, California.

An hour later, the empty spacecraft that was launched atop the booster made a controlled landing in the Indian Ocean as planned, adding to the day's achievement.

It was up to the flight director to decide, in real time with a manual control, whether to attempt the landing. SpaceX said both the booster and launch tower had to be in good, stable condition. Otherwise, it was going to end up in the gulf like the previous ones. Everything was judged to be ready for the catch.

The retro-looking stainless steel spacecraft on top continued around the world once it was free of the booster. Cameras on a buoy in the Indian Ocean showed flames shooting up from the water as the booster impacted precisely at the targeted spot and sank, as planned.

Monday Mirchi

RESTIVE BABUS LEFT TO THEIR OWN DEVICES ON THE CENTRE'S FIAT

The other day, when the Union Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) asked restive babus to go to the respective Telugu states to which they had been initially allotted upon bifurcation; few would have thought that they would be left to their own devices with hardly any support from their current, or rather, preferred political masters. In Andhra Pradesh, Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu's silence on the cadre issue has irked bureaucrats who had counted on him to intervene and halt the cadre change orders. A little bird told us that the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister is not keen on entertaining the discussion. This being so, it seems Telangana cadre bureaucrats tried their luck with Union Ministers to stop DoPT in their tracks. But their efforts fell flat with no traction at the central level. The buzz is that, given larger bifurcation issues that are still lingering, Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy too may just follow DoPT orders so as to refrain from upsetting the apple-cart. Many politicians do feel that these bureaucrats should simply return to their allotted cadres and be done with it. Yet the whispers in the corridors of power suggest that, as things stand, some of the most efficient bureaucrats might find themselves back in Andhra Pradesh, with Telangana left holding the baby, instead of reciprocal cadre change. Amidst all this, some of these bureaucrats are determined to stay put where they are, particularly those in TG, and they might take the legal route to have their way, whether it means approaching the Supreme Court for a stay order or otherwise.

VOID IN LEADERSHIP ERODES CREDIBILITY IN MUSI PROJECT

The operations of HYDRRA (The Hyderabad Disaster Response & Asset Protection Agency) are hydra-headed considering the multiple wings involved in the Musi rejuvenation project, which has become a prestige issue for the Congress government. Despite facing severe backlash, the state government is professedly committed to take forward the project to its logical conclusion. However, the Musi River Development Corporation Limited (MRDCL), tasked with overseeing the ambitious project, does not have a full-time Managing Director to helm its affairs. Instead, Principal Secretary MAUD Dana Kishore, a seasoned officer from the 1996 batch, holds the full additional charge with P Gowthami from the 2021 batch serving as the Joint Secretary, leaving a yawning two-decade plus gap between the two. Given the scale and importance of the project, many are questioning why there is no other senior officer to act as a bridge between the two. Since such a crucial position has been left vacant, concerns are being raised over the project's execution and even credibility. The Opposition's critique

over manpower issues within MRDCL apart, it is amply clear that, for a project of this magnitude, a robust leadership team is non-negotiable to ensure smooth coordination and timely implementation. A full-time MD can and must do a lot more than one with FAC.

MORE THAN A CLICHÉ IN BABUDOM

Some phrases become predictable and sound déjà vu through overuse and fall by the wayside as clichés. But when administrative policies are wrapped with clichés, there is the larger threat of those policies becoming the butt of babus' jokes. In July, the Chief Secretary of Telangana issued a note to Collectors urging them to conduct field visits, with a rider that their performance would be evaluated using the 'carrot and stick' policy. Yes, you read that right—who would use 'carrot and stick' in an official note? Still, last week photos of Collectors out in the field were sent around like evidence of their new-found diligence. But in bureaucratic circles, the real gossip isn't about the fieldwork under close watch, but the age-beaten phrase! Those on field had a field day cracking jokes on the poor phrase that may never be discarded in official lingo. All told, those who appeared diligent on the field are awaiting results with bated breath.

KATA'S CUT SHORT TENURE SPARKS MEDIA BUZZ

Some people -- no-nonsense dudes and dames to be precise -- are known to carry a resignation letter in their pocket. Some others know in the heart of their hearts that they are not meant for the long haul, given their own abbreviated timelines for self-directed tasks against odds. At a press meet exactly a month ago, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Commissioner Amrapali Kata insinuated at the uncertainty of her tenure. When asked why GHMC was spending Rs 22 crore on a GIS survey amid the civic body's mounting debts, staff demands for higher salaries, and other growing expenses, she said matter-of-factly: "Yes, the survey was originally slated to be completed in eighteen months, but I'm not confident I'll still be in the department by then. Before I leave, I want to ensure the project is completed and deliver a never-before-seen initiative for the betterment of Hyderabad". To put things in perspective, she added that many initiatives had been left unfinished, with the GIS survey being one of them. She is perhaps destined to do other things in Andhra Pradesh. The strange coincidence is that Visakhapatnam is listed as her 'permanent address', as per her own entry in UPSC form, though for correspondence purposes. Although she had dug in her heels in Telangana, her plea to be allowed to remain in the state has just been rejected by DoPT. So, on hindsight, was her remark about her "uncertain future" in GHMC premonition or just wishful thinking?
--Yours truly

Two women gang-raped, 4 held

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

The police on Sunday arrested four persons in connection with the gang-rape of a woman and her daughter-in-law

at Nallabommanapalli village in Chilamatur village in Sri Satya Sai district. The incident took place in the wee hours of Saturday. According to the police, the miscreants went to the house after night on two motorcycles and threatened the two men at knife point. They barged into the house and gang-raped the two hapless women.

The victims lodged a complaint with the Chilamatur police station on Sunday. The family migrated to AP from Bellary in the neighbouring State of Karnataka in search of work.

SP Ratna and his team of officials visited the scene of offence. The SP directed the officials to collect clues. The police formed special teams to nab the perpetrators. The two women were sent to the Government hospital for medical examination. The gang-rape of a woman and her daughter-in-law created shockwaves not only across the district but across the State.

Taking the gang-rape incident seriously, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu directed the SSS District SP to arrest the offenders at the earliest.

PRIVATISATION OF VSP Workers restive, as AP govt remains inactive

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Amid growing concerns over the government's inaction on the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant's future, steel workers are intensifying their protests. The TDP alliance, which came to power on promises to safeguard the plant from privatisation, has been accused of failing to deliver on its commitments. "We trusted their promises, but now they seem to have forgotten us," lamented a steel worker. "Our families depend on this plant, and yet, nothing is being done." This sentiment resonates with many workers who feel abandoned by their elected representatives.

Steel associations have also been critical of the TDP alliance's leadership, accusing them of doing little more than submitting petitions in Delhi. "Is handing over petitions to ministers enough to save the plant?" questioned a spokesperson for the associa-



Visakhapatnam MP Sribharat's vague and inconsistent stance on the issue has further fuelled frustration among workers and associations. His recent suggestion that the plant could have been saved if the TDP had contested the elections independently has drawn sharp criticism.

tion. "We need concrete action, not empty gestures."

Former minister and YSRCP leader Gudivada Amarnath echoed these sentiments, questioning the timing and intent behind such statements. "The BJP government, supported by the TDP, left the steel plant's privatization unresolved. Why are they bringing up new excuses now, instead of fighting for the workers?" Amarnath said. He demanded that the state government take responsibility and act swiftly to protect the steel plant, which is crucial for both the local econ-

omy and the workers' survival.

The steel unions are also skeptical of the TDP-BJP alliance's ability to make progress on this issue. "If they couldn't stop privatization when they were in power together, how can we expect them to save the plant now?" questioned another union member. The workers and associations are calling for urgent action, fearing that continued delays will lead to irreversible damage to the plant and the livelihoods of thousands of families.

As the crisis deepens, the Visakhapatnam Steel workers' fight has become a symbol of the broader struggle for job security in an increasingly uncertain industrial landscape. The call for government accountability is growing louder, and with each passing day, the pressure on leaders to deliver meaningful results intensifies.

Home Minister coordinates storm preparations

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As a severe storm looms over the Bay of Bengal, Andhra Pradesh State Home Minister Anitha Vangalapati has intensified preparations to safeguard lives and property. In a teleconference with district collectors, the minister directed all relevant departments to be on high alert.

Following warnings from the weather department, the Home and Disaster Management Department is working tirelessly to ensure that all necessary precautions are in place. The minister emphasised the importance of coordinated efforts, stating, "We are leaving no stone unturned in preparing for this storm. Protecting lives and minimizing property damage is our top priority."

In districts expected to face heavy rains, including Bapatla, Prakasam, Nellore, Kurnool, and Nandyala, the Home

Visits Visakhapatnam Beach amid safety concerns



Minister has instructed collectors to maintain a high level of vigilance. "Moderate to heavy rainfall is predicted, and we are taking every necessary measure to avoid disruptions," she added. In addition, the Home Minister has ordered constant communication with the Disaster Department to monitor canals and waterways and prevent flooding. Authorities are also urging the public to avoid

areas prone to flooding and stay away from power poles, wires, trees, and hoardings.

In a separate development, Minister Anita made a surprise visit to Visakhapatnam beach to assess public safety measures. With the holiday crowds swelling due to the weekend and Dussehra festivities, she reviewed the arrangements made for the safety of tourists and locals. "I instructed the police to enhance surveillance with CCTV cameras to monitor any suspicious activity," she said, following her discussions with the police. The minister expressed confidence that the combined efforts of all key departments would ensure the public's safety during this critical period. "We are well-prepared, and I urge everyone to cooperate by following the guidelines issued by authorities," she concluded.

Jagan poster boy of bad governance, says BJP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Lanka Dinakar, Chairperson of the AP Twenty Points Programme, has labelled Chandrababu Naidu as the "Poster Boy of Good Governance" while asserting that YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has become the "Poster Boy of Bad Governance." In a statement released on Sunday, Dinakar stated that the "Red Book" was created under the YSRCP government led by YS Jagan, as they failed to govern according to established norms and instead acted in an illegitimate manner with an oppressive authoritarian approach towards the people. He further highlighted that financial and administrative irregularities have become commonplace in Andhra Pradesh from 2019 to 2024.

Dinakar remarked that when YS Jagan talks about writing a

"good book," it suggests he should document the chaotic experiences of his administration, illustrating how his governance negatively impacted the state and serving as a lesson on how not to govern in the future.

He emphasised that while politicians, whether in power or in opposition, typically focus on the development and welfare of the people, Jagan Mohan Reddy has spent more than a decade prioritising court adjournments in corruption cases. He has consistently divided the people along regional and religious lines during his tenure from 2019 to 2024, a trend that appears to continue in opposition. Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has been tirelessly working on the "Vision Document" aimed at the development of every district and mandal in the state, aspiring to trans-

form Andhra Pradesh into a part of "Viksit Bharat."

Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan has reviewed progress towards achieving 100% safe drinking water in all rural households under the Jal Jeevan Mission, a goal that has faltered under YS Jagan's leadership.

State Education and IT Minister Nara Lokesh is actively pursuing a "Skill Census" to enhance the skills of the youth, ensuring they are equipped for the right opportunities and attracting investments to create new employment avenues for the growth of the state's economy.

However, Dinakar concluded that YS Jagan Mohan Reddy appears primarily concerned with the welfare of himself and his family, engaging in corrupt practices and anarchy. As he put it, a "bad boy" cannot write a "good book."

Ex-MLA Rapaka...

Continued from Page 1

He mentioned that he had reluctantly contested for the Lok Sabha from the Amalapuram constituency in the last election. He claimed to have worked diligently for the YSRCP in the Razole constituency, yet the party chose to nominate Gollapalli Surya Rao instead. "I have severed ties with the YSRCP and will be leaving the party. However, I have not yet decided which party I will join next," he stated.

Rapaka Varaprasad was elected to the Legislative Assembly from the Razole constituency on a Jana Sena Party ticket in the 2019 elections but later joined the YSRCP.

Crackdown on private carriers for overcharging

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Transport Commissioner (DTC) A. Mohan announced that several private bus operators were penalised for overcharging passengers during the Dasara festival season. Following numerous complaints from passengers about inflated fares, the Transport Department conducted surprise inspections on contract carriage buses across the district from October 3 to 12.

DTC Mohan shared that six teams, comprising motor vehicle inspectors, were deployed for these inspections. The checks uncovered multiple violations, including the collection of excess fares, incomplete documentation, non-payment of taxes, and failure to maintain proper pas-

16 buses seized, cases filed against 151 operators; fines totalling Rs 28.24 lakh collected



senger records. As a result, 151 contract buses were found to be in violation of transport regulations, leading

to the imposition of fines amounting to Rs 28,24,645. Additionally, 16 buses were seized for severe infractions.

The DTC emphasised the department's commitment to ensuring that passengers are not exploited, especially during festive seasons.

"We will continue conducting surprise inspections to enforce compliance," said Mohan, urging private travel operators to follow legal guidelines and refrain from overcharging passengers.

The department also warned that repeated violations would attract stricter legal actions, as the authorities aim to protect passengers and ensure fair practices within the transportation sector.

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Ekadashi: Oct 13 09:09 AM to Oct 14 06:41 AM
Dwadashi: Oct 14 06:41 AM to Oct 15 03:42 AM
Nakshatram: Shatabhisha: Oct 14 02:51 AM to Oct 15 12:42 AM
Purva Bhadrpadapa: Oct 15 12:42 AM to Oct 15 10:08 PM
Rahukalam: 7:53 AM to 9:20 AM
Yamagandam: 10:46 AM to 12:12 PM
Varjyam: 08:25 AM to 10:08 AM
Gulika: 1:39 PM to 3:05 PM
Amritakalam: 06:08 PM to 07:36 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:49 AM to 12:35 PM
VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: Scattered Showers
Temp: 31°C
Humidity: 79%
Sunrise: 6:00 AM
Sunset: 5:54 PM
Updated: October 13 2024 5:00 PM

Low pressure likely...

Continued from Page 1

Heavy rains are predicted to continue in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the next 48 hours, in Rayalaseema on October 14, and in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam on October 17. Thunderstorms with lightning are expected in isolated places across North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema over the next five days.

Light to moderate rainfall or thundershowers are likely at most places, or one or two locations, in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema during the next week. Rainfall has already occurred in a few areas of Coastal Andhra Pradesh and one or two places in Rayalaseema over the last 24 hours. The upper air cyclonic circulation over the southwest Bay of Bengal now lies over north interior Tamil Nadu, extending up to 3.1 km above mean sea level and tilting southwest with height. A trough extends

from the centre of the well-marked low-pressure area over the east-central and adjoining west-central Arabian Sea to the Comorin area across south Kerala, along with a cyclonic circulation over Tamil Nadu between 3.1 km and 5.8 km above mean sea level.

Meanwhile, the Andhra Pradesh Disaster Management Authority (APDMA) has warned of heavy rains on Wednesday and Thursday in Bapatla, Nellore, Prakasam, Kurnool, and Nandyal districts due to the low pressure.

APDMA MD Ronanki Kurmanth stated that heavy rainfall is also expected in Nellore, YSR, Annamaya, Chittoor, and Tirupati districts. Fishermen are advised not to venture into the sea for fishing. Moderate rainfall is anticipated for Visakhapatnam, Anakapalli, Kakinada, and Konaseema districts. The DMA has cautioned the public to avoid standing under hoardings, trees, and electric poles during the rains, as lightning is also predicted.

All cases...

Continued from Page 1

They are alleged to have created chaos during the attack, abusing their power and causing significant damage at the TDP headquarters. After the YSRCP lost power, the accused sought anticipatory bail from the High Court, which denied their plea, stating that anticipatory bail would not be granted.

In the case involving the attack on Naidu's residence, former minister Jogi Ramesh has been named a prime suspect. The Supreme Court recently heard his anticipatory bail petition and ordered him to cooperate with the investigation. While the court has adjourned further hearings, it has instructed that no harsh action be taken against Ramesh until a final decision is reached. Additionally, Ramesh has been directed to surrender his passport, cooperate with the investigations, and appear whenever summoned.

Ex-DU professor Saibaba's...

Continued from Page 1

Saibaba was suffering from gall bladder infection and was operated on two weeks ago in Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS), but developed complications subsequently. His daughter Manjeera told PTI Videos that he had COVID twice, his health was in abysmal condition while he was in jail and he recovered every time. Hence, she said that family was hoping that he would come back this time too. Neither Saibaba nor family members expected this death, she said adding, that he expressed hope during the last conversation she had with him.

Expressing sadness for what he went through in his life, Manjeera said, "His body had borne too much all these years." "I miss him. I still cannot believe he is not with us. I still feel that I will go and open the door and he will be there sitting on his wheelchair telling me to do this and that. I still feel that way. I still feel that he is still with us," she said.

She said they were aware that his condition was severe since Saturday afternoon, but at around 8 PM, doctors told the family that his heart had stopped beating and they were trying to perform CPR on him. They pronounced him dead at 8.30 last night, Saibaba's daughter added. Saibaba was terminated from service by the DU and his official accommodation was taken away after he was arrested in 2014. Saibaba's death will continue to weigh heavily on public conscience, said Prof Saikat Ghosh, one of the few DU teachers who raised his voice against his imprisonment and the way he was treated in the jail.

Bars exploit...

Continued from Page 1

"We understand the public's frustration, but we have to adjust our prices based on demand," said a bar manager. "The demand is high, and we can't miss this chance." Despite rules against selling liquor over the counter in bars, the increased demand has led to more such sales, with local authorities seemingly ignoring the issue due to their busy schedules with the lottery process.

"We have received complaints about high prices and unauthorised sales in bars," said an Excise Department official. "However, our main focus is on ensuring a smooth transition to private liquor stores." Customers remain unhappy, feeling taken advantage of by the rising prices at bars. Many hope that the shift to private liquor stores will lead to better competition and a wider range of brands.

10-day Dasara festivities end

'Teppotsavam' adapted due to inflow of floodwaters

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The 10-day Dasara festivities concluded at the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamyvarla Devasthanam in Vijayawada on Saturday. Usually, the celebrations conclude with the 'Teppotsavam', the celestial boat ride, of goddess Kanaka Durga and her consort Malleswara Swamy, on Vijayadashami. However, the Kanaka Durga temple administration could not conduct 'Teppotsavam' this time as floodwaters reached the Prakasam Barrage constructed across River Krishna. However, the swan boat was stationed at Durga ghat to complete the ritual. Around 50,000 cusecs of flood water have reached the Prakasam Barrage from upstream. The Irrigation Department officials urged the temple authorities to make alternative arrangements for conducting the 'Teppotsavam' one day in advance.

The temple authorities could not complete at least three rounds of the boat ride in Krishna River. The temple priests merely placed the processional deities on the well illuminating the boat anchored near the Durga Ghat. Amidst the recitation of Vedic hymns by the priests, the One Town police, in tune with the age-old tradition, brought the processional deities to the riverbank. The deities were brought in a palanquin from the hillock to the Durga ghat. A sea of humanity witnessed the 'Teppotsavam' and the environs of Durga Ghat and Prakasam Barrage reverberated with the chanting of 'Bhavani Mata Ki Jai'. A razzmatazz of colour and pageantry of firecrackers added spiritual fervour, and it was the ultimate event of the celebrations.

As the sky turned darker, firecrackers exploded presenting a splendid view, and its reflections in Krishna presented a splendid view. The event rang the cur-



tains down on the Dasara. On the day, a huge number of devotees thronged Vijayawada to watch the festival's concluding celebrations. On the other hand, NTR District Police Commissioner SV Rajasekhar Babu made elaborate security arrangements to prevent any untoward incidents.

The Dasara festivities were a smooth affair. The officials ensured a hassle-free darshan for common devotees through-

out the festival, including on the Moola Nakshatram day, as VIP darshans were not allowed on the day. The devotee turnout on Moola Nakshatram was less compared to previous years. About 1.5 lakh devotees thronged the hill on the day. The rush, usually, was around 1.80 lakh to two lakh.

The rush, however, peaked on Vijayadashami day with over 1.7 lakh devotees visiting the temple. The rush could be

witnessed in all nooks and corners of Indrakeeladri. The queue lines were filled with devotees and it took more than four to five hours for them to have darshan. The rush of Bhavani devotees also increased at Kanaka Durga Temple. Hundreds of devotees, mainly from North Coastal Andhra, were seen visiting the temple to relinquish their deeksha.

However, the police stopped the devotees' vehicles on the city

outskirts in view of traffic congestion. As a result, the Bhavani Devotees had difficulty reaching Krishna to take the holy bath before the relinquishment of the Deeksha. Some of them chose padayatra to offer special prayers on Dasara day. Though temple authorities did not provide any special arrangements for relinquishment, the devotees offered Irumudi (a two-pocket sack filled with rice etc.) on the temple premises.

This Dasara, fewer sightings of 'Palapitta' upsets revellers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The 'Palapitta', commonly known as the Indian Roller or Blue Jay, has long been seen as a symbol of good fortune during the Dasara festival. However, this year, the cherished bird was notably absent, leaving many devotees disappointed. Vijayadasami, celebrated on Saturday, was particularly disheartening for those in rural areas who had hoped to catch a glimpse of the Palapitta, only to find their wishes unfulfilled.

Bird enthusiasts and conservationists expressed deep concern over the declining sightings of the 'Palapitta', attributing the drop to increased poaching during the festival season. As the state bird of Telangana, Karnataka, and Odisha, the 'Palapitta' image has instead circulated widely on mobile platforms, with people sharing well-wishes in place of actual sightings.

Temple priest Marayana Murthy highlighted the bird's cultural and spiritual significance in Hinduism. He recounted how, in the Treta Yuga, Lord Rama saw the



Palapitta before embarking on his mission to defeat Ravana, and the Pandavas encountered the bird upon their return from exile. The priest emphasised the bird's embodiment of Lord Shiva, underscoring its sacred status.

Experts point to rapid urbanisation and deforestation as key factors in the Palapitta's

declining population. As cities expand and natural habitats shrink, the bird's presence during festivals like Dasara has become increasingly rare. With its absence keenly felt this year, many hope that renewed conservation efforts will restore the Palapitta to its rightful place in the celebration of tradition and spirituality.

One killed as tipper lorry collides with car

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

One person was killed when the car in which he was travelling collided with a tipper lorry at Itavaram village in Nandigama mandal on NH 65 on Sunday.

Police said that the car was going to Hyderabad from Vijayawada. The tipper lorry came in the wrong direction and collided with the car killing Koganti Vishnuvardhan. The deceased killed instantaneously and the police and locals extricated the body from the ill-fated hard by breaking the door.

The deceased was said to be the activist of TDP. Meanwhile, following the accident on the Vijayawada-Hyderabad highway, vehicles were stranded either side of the road for a few kilometers. The police cleared the traffic after removing the vehicles from the road.

Naidu govt doubled sand prices: Jagan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP Chief and former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has harshly criticised Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, accusing him of indulging in massive sand loot in Andhra Pradesh, which has crippled the State's revenue and led to rising costs for the people.

In a post on social media platform 'X', YS Jagan stated that Naidu's government, instead of delivering on promises of free sand and transparency, has actually doubled sand prices compared to the YSRCP regime, causing further hardship for citizens. He likened Naidu to a thief who distracts the public while looting from behind. Jagan noted that during his tenure, the state earned revenue from sand sales, but that income has vanished under Naidu's leadership. He challenged Naidu to show any instance of free sand in the state, accusing him of establishing a sand mafia that exploits ordi-



nary people while his associates profit.

YS Jagan revealed that, following the election results, TDP leaders quickly targeted the state's sand supplies, with almost half of the 80 lakh tonnes stored by the YSRCP government disappearing within a month of Naidu taking office. He stressed that this organised looting was reminiscent of the corruption seen during Naidu's earlier tenure. Jagan highlighted the transparent sand policy of the YSRCP government, which kept prices affordable while generating significant revenue for the state.

Shoppers throng market on Vijayadasami

Goat and mutton sales were at an all-time high

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Vijayadasami celebrations in Visakhapatnam were marked by unprecedented enthusiasm and a surge in market activity. The festival's coincidence with a Saturday, a day traditionally associated with abstinence from non-vegetarian food, led to a significant increase in demand for meat and other festive items on Sunday.

"The markets were overflowing with people. We could barely keep up with the demand for chicken," said Ramesh, a vendor at one of the city's busiest chicken stalls. For the less privileged, chicken was the preferred choice, while wealthier families headed straight for the mutton shops. The city's streets were packed with sheep and goats, filling every nook and corner, particularly near major markets.

"I've never seen such a rush before," said Rajesh, a local meat trader. "Goat and mutton sales were at an all-time high, and the demand was almost overwhelming." Liquor shops also witnessed a huge influx of customers, with serpentine queues forming as early as morning. "We were surprised by the sheer number of customers waiting even before we opened," said a liquor store owner in Daba Gardens.

The festive mood also boosted sales for sweet shops.

"The markets were overflowing with people. We could barely keep up with the demand for chicken," said Ramesh, a vendor at one of the city's busiest chicken stalls. For the less privileged, chicken was the preferred choice, while wealthier families headed straight for the mutton shops.

"Festivals are always good for us, but this year's Vijayadashami exceeded expectations," said Venkatesh, owner of a popular sweet shop. "People were in a celebratory mood, buying sweets in bulk for family gatherings and festive gifting." Grocery stores, cooking oil traders, and catering services also benefited from the festive atmosphere, with many reporting a significant increase in sales.

"Customers were lining up even before dawn to buy cooking essentials," noted Ravi, a local kirana shop owner. "Our sales saw a 20 per cent increase over the previous year's festive season," said Vinod, a cooking oil distributor. With the city's festive spirit soaring, businesses across Visakhapatnam benefited from the vibrant celebrations.

IMA office-bearers elected



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Elections were held for the India Medical Association (IMA), Vijayawada branch, on Sunday. Dr B Hanumaiah was unanimously elected as the president of the branch. Dr V Suresh Kumar was elected as the secretary and Dr MV Subba Rao, as the treasurer.

Speaking on the occasion, the newly elected president of IMA Dr Hanumaiah said that he will work to uplift the glory of IMA, Vijayawada branch. He said that IMA will conduct medical camps on a regular basis to create awareness to the public on various diseases. He said that the IMA will strengthen to fight bad elements in society that are creating distress to the doctors discharging their duties time and again by attacking them. He said that these issues will be taken to the notice of the government heads and ensure security to the doctors.

The election process was carried out under the supervision of election officers Dr PSN Murthy, Dr PMC Naidu and Dr S Keshava Rao Babu.

CPM to organise door-to-door campaign 'Praja Horu'

Dharnas planned at all collectorates and mandal headquarters on November 8

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

CPM State secretary V. Srinivasa Rao has announced a door-to-door campaign named 'Praja Horu,' which will take place from November 1 to 7. The campaign will focus on key issues such as high prices, unemployment, and atrocities against women, children, Dalits and others.

Besides, it will be against the proposal for Jamili (simultaneous) elections and the privatisation of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. Following the campaign, the CPM plans to organise protests (dharnas) at all mandal and district headquarters on November 8, aiming to draw attention to these issues and rally public support.

A meeting of CPM State secretariat members was held for two days in the chair of senior leader and former MLA MA Gafoor on October 10 and 11. Srinivasa Rao

and State secretariat member Ch Babu Rao released the resolutions to the media here on Sunday.

Srinivasa Rao said that essential goods' prices have been rising in the past one month. Prices of all goods including vegetables have touched the sky.

The CPM has decided to conduct a door-to-door campaign from November 1 to 7 to explain the current situation in the State and how the TDP-led NDA government failed to implement its election promises, he added.

Further, Rao said that the two-day meeting discussed various issues, such as the postponement of the DSC, the appointment of the APPSC Chairman, True-up Charges and others. The party decided to hold dharnas at electricity offices demanding withdrawal of true-up charges on November 18, he explained.

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A team of young innovators at Andhra University is making significant strides in space technology with their revolutionary project, 'Taramandal'. The initiative aims to develop the world's first reusable orbital vehicle re-entry technology.

Led by Prof P Mallikarjuna Rao, the Taramandal project focuses on addressing two critical challenges in the space industry: the growing problem of space debris and the non-

reusability of satellites. By developing a flexible, modular space lab capable of in-space manufacturing, re-entry, and controlled landing operations, the team is offering a cost-effective and sustainable solution.

"Our technology not only enables safe re-entry, but also allows satellites to be reused or retrieved, marking a significant breakthrough in the space sector," said Prof. Rao. "There are approximately 11,000 tonnes of debris in Earth's orbit, posing



a serious threat to space missions."

Taramandal's innovative re-entry mechanism and deorbiting technology offer a game-changing solution. "Our system is engineered to withstand the extreme temperatures experienced during re-entry, enabling satellites to safely return to Earth and be reused," said Prof. Rao.

A key element of Taramandal's innovation is the development of an advanced heat shield using nano-com-

posites. This shield significantly enhances thermal resistance while reducing weight and cost. "The heat shield sets a new standard in space re-entry technology."

Currently in the testing phase, Taramandal aims to bring the first satellite from lower orbit back to Earth by the last quarter of 2026. "We are confident that our re-entry system will revolutionise the space industry by making satellites reusable," noted Prof. Rao.



Enrol graduates in voters' list: Minister

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Minister for Water Resources Management Nimmala Ramanaidu called upon the NDA leaders of JSP and BJP to take the responsibility of enrolling all graduates into the voters list to cast their vote in the ensuing graduates constituency elections for Legislative Council.

The Minister participated in a seminar held here on Sunday on the enrollment of voters in the electoral roll for the graduate constituency elections, held in the cloth merchant association hall in Palakollu.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Ramanaidu asked the leaders of the NDA to take the responsibility of enrolling the names of all graduates into the electoral roll for the ensuing election for the graduates constituency for West Godavari and East Godavari district constituency. He also called upon the leader to strive hard to win the election.

Since the time for the election is less, the leaders should expedite the efforts to make all graduates in the two districts voters in the electoral roll for the MLC election. The Minister clarified that even



Speaking on the occasion, Minister Ramanaidu asked the leaders of the NDA to take the responsibility of enrolling the names of all graduates into the electoral roll for the ensuing election for the graduates constituency for West Godavari and East Godavari district constituency. He also called upon the leader to strive hard to win the election.

though the graduates enrolled their names during the previous elections and cast their vote, they should enroll their

names afresh again into the electoral roll to cast their vote in the graduates constituency MLC elections. The Minister asked the leaders to conduct house to house visit and inquire about the graduates and take steps to enroll their names in the electoral roll. "Enrolling the names of all graduates into the electoral roll is important but casting votes on the polling day is equally important," he told them.

Though the Chandrababu Naidu head government

inherited Rs 14 lakh crore debts, the government is balancing the implementation of welfare schemes and carryout development works, he acknowledged.

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan with the support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi are leading the State towards development.

The government has fulfilled some of the promises and is taking steps to fulfill some others soon. The government has proposed to organise the Palle Panduga programme on October 14 across the state and take steps to complete the pending development works in the rural areas.

APIIC chairman Mantena Rama Raju said that if all NDA leader work in a coordinated manner to win the graduate constituency elections, MLC Vepada Chiranjeevi Rao asked the NDA leaders and activists to visit all government and private offices, coaching centres to explain the graduates on how to enroll their names in the voters list. Former MLA Angara Rammohan, TDP and JSP leaders were among those who attended the meeting.



All arrangements in place for liquor shop draw of lots

PNS ■ ONGOLE

The Prakasam district administration has made all necessary arrangements to conduct the lottery process for the allocation of liquor shops as per the state's liquor policy.

District Collector A. Thameem Ansariya inspected the preparations at Ambedkar Bhavan on Sunday, where the lottery will be held. She instructed officials to ensure that screens and sound systems are properly set up to guarantee transparency and smooth

execution of the process. Additionally, she directed the installation of rainproof tents in the premises and provided suggestions to the police on crowd management outside the venue.

Speaking to the media, District Excise Superintendent Khaja Mohiddin informed that 3,466 applications had been received for the 171 liquor shops in the district. He confirmed that all arrangements for the lottery have been finalised and assured the process would be conducted in a transparent and error-free manner.

Two counters will be set up at Ambedkar Bhavan: one will be overseen by the District Collector, while the other will be monitored by the Joint Collector.

Applicants are required to be present at Ambedkar Bhavan by 7:30 am on Monday, as the lottery process is scheduled to begin at 8:00 am. Excise Deputy Commissioner K. Hemanth Nagaraju, Assistant Commissioner K. Vijaya, and RDO Lakshmi Prasanna were also present during the preparations.

Minister Savitha visits gang rape victims in GGH

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

Minister for BC welfare S Savitha visited the two gang rape victims in Government General Hospital in Hindupur on Sunday.

She infused the women with courage and assured them of extending all help. Later talking to the media, she said that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Home Minister V Anitha and MLA N Balakrishna had taken the heinous crime incident very seriously.

Describing the gang rape of a woman and her daughter-in-law as heinous and reprehensible, the Minister said that such crime is committed by people under to influence of ganja



intoxication. During the five years of the YSRCP regime, ganja sale and cultivation were encouraged and everyone knew who did it. The ganja is showing adverse influence on the youth and driving them in a wrong direction, she lamented.

The Naidu headed government has taken steps to oppress the ganja cultivation, sale and transportation in the state, she claimed.

The police arrested the perpetrators within 24 hours of the heinous crime, she said adding that six persons were involved in the gang rape incident and they addicted to consuming of ganja. All the accused were involved in various criminal cases and were sent to jail in some cases, she informed.

She assured of take steps to punish the gang rape accused rigorously in the court. "There is no need to use it to answer the questions of opposition YSRCP leaders on the incident," she made it clear.

Brain dead Odisha man's organs save five lives

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The organs of a 32-year-old man from Odisha's Paralakhemundi district were donated, giving a new lease of life to five individuals. Naresh Patnaik, who lost consciousness at his home on October 11 due to severe brain hemorrhaging, was rushed to a nearby hospital by his family. Despite the best efforts of the medical team, he was declared brain dead on Saturday.

Naresh's family, with the guidance of the hospital's medical team, made the selfless decision to donate his organs.

Chakrasnanam performed to Chakradhari

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The holy Chakrasnanam was performed in a grand manner to Sri Sudarshana Chakratlalwar in Swamy Pushkarini on Saturday morning.

On the Sunny Saturday, the last day of the Srivari annual Brahmotsavam, holy bath was rendered to the anthropomorphic form of Srivaru. A number of devotees came and took holy bath in the Pushkarini.

Earlier, from 3 am to 6 am, Pallaki Utsavam was held at the Mukha Mandapam of Sri Varaha Swami Temple. Later, Snapana Thirumanjanam was held for Sri Malayappa Swamy, Sridevi and Bhudevi along with Sri Sudarshana Chakratlalwar.

The archakas performed Vishvakshen Aradhana, Punyahavachanam, Mukha Prakshalanam (face cleansing),



Dhoopa Nivedana (incense offering), Chhatra Chamara Vyajana Darpanadi offerings (services with umbrella and mirror) and Rajopacharam. As a part of Arghyapada

Nivedana, a bath was performed with milk, honey, coconut water, turmeric and sandalwood. TTD Veda Parayanadars recited Upanishad Mantras,

Dashashanti Mantras, Panchasukta Mantras such as Purusha Suktam, Sri Suktam, Bhu Suktam, Neela Suktam, Vishnu Suktam and Vedas related to Divya Prabandham during Abhishekam.

After the Abhishekam, various Pasuras were chanted in the presence of Tirumala pontiffs Sri Sri Pedda Jeeyar Swami and Sri Sri Chinna Jeeyar Swami. After the completion of all rituals to keep the world safe and happy, Chakra Snanam was performed.

Since Utsavam is a Yajna - Avabhrida Sanam was performed in the Yajna. Avabhrida is the Deekshantha Snanam which is performed at the last to get rid of the bad results caused by minor mistakes while performing the Yajna to attain the good virtues.

TTD EO J Syamala Rao, Additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chowdary, JEOs Gowthami, Veerabrahmam, CVSO Sridhar, other dignitaries and a large number of devotees were present.

Durgesh opens filling station

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Minister for Tourism and Cinematography Kandula Durgesh participated in many programmes in Nidadavolu along with the TDP leaders on Sunday.

The Minister on Sunday inaugurated a petrol filling station, established at Pittala Vemavaram village in Peravali mandal. The petrol filling station was established with the association of Hindustan Petroleum and Chemicals limited. The Minister conveyed his wishes to the owners of the filling station.

The minister took part in the



Chaitramas deeksha programme of Jains in Nidadavole town. He took the blessing of Jain swamiji on the occasion. The Tourism Minister also inaugurated an ice-cream parlour and attended a marriage function hall at Kanuru village in Peravali mandal and blessed the newly married couple.

Former MLA and TDP Nidadavolu town in-charge Burugupalli Sessa Rao and TDP town president Kommina Venateswara Rao and Jana Sena town president Ranga Ramesh and Judge Surribabu were among those who attended the programme.



Vizianagaram festival celebrates city's rich cultural legacy

Cultural programmes and entertainment events take place across 12 venues

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

The 24th annual Vijayanagaram Utsav kicked off with great fanfare on Sunday, celebrating the city's historical and cultural significance. Speaker Chintakayala Ayyanna Patrudu inaugurated the festival at Ayodhya Maidan, highlighting Vizianagaram's importance as the "City of Education".

"It is a matter of immense pride to participate in this grand celebration," Ayyanna Patrudu said. "The sacrifices of the Maharajas of Vizianagaram, who gave away their wealth for the advancement of education and culture, are an inspiration. Their contributions should serve as a beacon for future generations." He also emphasised the need to educate the youth about the region's rich heritage. "The glorious history of Vizianagaram must be passed on to the present generation so they understand the roots of our culture and tradition."

State Minister for Tribal and Women & Child Welfare Gummaadi Sandhyarani expressed gratitude to the government for recognising Sri



Pydithalli Ammavari festival as a State festival. "I thank the government for bestowing State recognition upon this sacred festival. Uttarandhra Kalpavalli Pydimamba's blessings are with us, and under the leadership of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, we are ensuring the happiness of our

people." The festival featured a range of cultural programmes and entertainment events across 12 venues. A laser show was arranged to portray the history and grandeur of Vizianagaram. "We have organised cultural programmes across the town to

enrich this festive atmosphere," said Minister for MSME, SERP, and NRI Affairs Kondapally Srinivas.

The opening rally was a vibrant display of traditional art forms, with 55 teams performing folk dances like Kolattam and Tappeta Gullu. Thousands of participants took part in the

rally, which commenced at the Pydithalli Ammavari temple and concluded at Ayodhya Maidan.

Marked Chairman Karrothu Bangaraju, Mansas Chairman Pusapati Ashok Gajapathiraju, and former MLA RP Bhanjdev were present.

Publish KCR's Samagra Kutumba Survey report: Sanjay

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Alleging that the Congress has no sincerity regarding caste census, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar said that it is part of the Congress's diversion politics. Congress thoughts are wicked regarding caste census and it is not putting in any effort regarding that, he said and added that the Congress is trying to delay local body elections.

Sanjay asked the Congress whether it had forgotten KCR's Samagra Kutumba Survey (Comprehensive Family Survey). Where are KCR's survey reports? KCR

had not published those survey reports and the Congress government is also not making it public, Sanjay said. He demanded that the Congress government should make the KCR's Comprehensive Family Survey details public if it had any sincerity. Sanjay said the Congress and the BRS have a secret deal and there is a need to expose it.

What did the people gain from KCR's survey and why did the Congress government allot Rs 150 crore for the caste census, he asked, adding whether the castes of the people had changed or whether their family members had

changed. Speaking to the media after attending Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya's Alai-Balai program on Sunday, Sanjay demanded that the Congress government should reveal the objective behind conducting the caste census. "The caste census is fake and allotting Rs 150 crore is another scam. The Congress is doing all this fearing defeat in local elections. The Congress government is adopting delaying tactics in the name of caste census to avoid conducting local body elections as people are serious about the six guarantees and the farm loan waiver scheme," he said.

ACROSS THE STATES



Professor duped of Rs 75 L in 'digital arrest' fraud

A retired Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) professor was allegedly duped of more than Rs 75 lakhs by fraudsters posing as Enforcement Directorate (ED) and putting her under 'digital arrest' for 10 days, police said on Sunday. An FIR was lodged on Friday by Qamar Jahan and the police immediately issued an alert to the banks concerned. Police found that the money had been routed through 21 different bank accounts, they said. Transactions worth Rs 13 lakh were blocked due to police intervention, they said. Cyber police station inspector VD Panday, who is investigating the case told PTI that the victim was kept under 'digital arrest' for more than 10 days during which the accused pressured Jahan to pay money to avoid arrest. 'Digital arrest' is a new cyber fraud, where the accused poses as law enforcement agency officials, like CBI or customs officials or ED, and threatens people of arrest by making video calls in the name of fake international parcels of banned drugs or money laundering cases.



Report of Puri temple's Ratna Bhandar likely soon

The technical survey report of the Ratna Bhandar in Puri's Jagannath temple is likely to be released soon, Odisha Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan said on Sunday. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) had in September conducted the exercise, including the Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey of the Ratna Bhandar (chambers of Lord Jagannath's treasury). "The state government will get the GPR survey report in the next three to four days... If any hidden storage of some valuables is found, we will take necessary action. Otherwise, the ASI will start the repair and restoration work of the Ratna Bhandar," he told reporters here. The Ratna Bhandar was opened after a gap of 46 years in July to take stock of the inventory of valuables and repair of the structure. Ornaments and other valuable items from the inner and outer chambers of the treasury have been stored in a temporary strongroom inside the temple for the repair work.



Kullu Dussehra festival starts with 'Shobha Yatra'

Week-long international Kullu Dussehra festival began on Sunday with traditional 'Shobha Yatra' of presiding deity Lord Raghunath, who was brought from the Sultanpur temple to the Dhalpur Maidan in Kullu in a chariot. Thousands of devotees joined the 'yatra' and vied for pulling the ropes, which is considered auspicious. Himachal Pradesh Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla, who inaugurated the festival, also participated in the 'yatra'. Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri and Supreme Court Judge Justice Sanjay Karol were also present on the occasion, a statement issued here said. "It is the good fortune of the people of the state that Lord Raghunath ji resides in Kullu. May his blessings remain on us and we continue to carry forward our 'dev' culture in this manner," the governor said and stressed on making Himachal a drug-free state. Later, the governor inaugurated the exhibitions put up by various government departments, boards, corporations and other non-government organisations. Kullu Dussehra is unique as there is no Ramleela or burning of the effigies of Ravan, Kumbhakaran and Meghnath and concludes with 'Lanka Dahan' on the last day.

Poll setbacks made Congress ideologically bankrupt: Nadda

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Continuous electoral setbacks for the Congress have left its chief Mallikarjun Kharge ideologically bankrupt, BJP President J P Nadda said on Sunday, claiming that the opposition party's "terrorists" barb at the ruling dispensation was born out of its desperation to protect its "failed product", a jibe at Rahul Gandhi.

India's oldest party has come to such a sorry state that one feels pained, Nadda said in a statement, adding that Kharge should rather introspect people's falling trust in the Congress and why it loses (polls) so frequently.

People know which party supports anti-national forces, urban Naxals and those trying to defame the country, Nadda said.

The BJP president's rebuttal came a day after Kharge called it a "party of terrorists" in an apparent counter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent characterisation of the Congress as an organisation run by "urban Naxals".

"The Congress is unable to pose a ground challenge to Modi's pro-people and pro-poor policies which put the



"The Congress is unable to pose a ground challenge to Modi's pro-people and pro-poor policies which put the nation first. Its entire leadership has instead turned to abusing the BJP and Modi and defaming the country," Nadda said

nation first. Its entire leadership has instead turned to abusing the BJP and Modi and defaming the country," Nadda said.

Kharge's comments reflect frustration and ideological bankruptcy, he added.

The BJP and the Congress have been engaged in a war of words after the former surprised the opposition by pulling

off a stunning victory in the Haryana Assembly polls, a prospect deemed unlikely by most political experts and exit poll projections.

Nadda said the Congress leadership was in extreme shock following the poll defeat and that Kharge's comments were not only ridiculous but also exposed his party's charac-

ter. Firing a volley of questions at the Congress, Nadda asked who all were involved in moving the Supreme Court at midnight to stay the conviction of Parliament attack convict Afzal Guru and who cried profusely at the Batla House encounter in which Indian Mujahideen operatives were killed while a police officer also lost his life.

"Who extended support to those raising slogans in favour of Guru in JNU? Which government used the term saffron terror," the BJP chief asked. Nadda also took a swipe at the Congress over its MoU with the Chinese Communist Party when it was in power at the Centre, and Rahul Gandhi's meeting with US Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, who drew flak in India for her criticism of the government's handling of Jammu and Kashmir, and her visit to PoK, among other issues.

Public-spirited youth welcome to join AAP: Kejriwal

PNS ■ DODA (J&K)

AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said the public-spirited youth should come forward to join his party, asserting the people of the country had given a clear message to the BJP during the Lok Sabha polls that "your way of functioning is not acceptable to us".

The former Delhi chief minister accused the BJP of making every attempt to destabilize his government, which worked for the betterment of people for the past 10 years.

"I will go around the country to invite the public-spirited youth to join the party for the betterment of the country. We have to give answers to the rulers that government does not mean hooliganism and corruption but service to the people to improve their lives," Kejriwal said addressing a public rally in this hilly district of Jammu and Kashmir.

Accompanied by Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant



I will go around the country to invite the public-spirited youth to join the party for the betterment of the country. We have to give answers to the rulers that government does not mean hooliganism and corruption but service to the people to improve their lives

Mann and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener was in Doda to thank people for electing his party leader Mehraj Malik as a member of the legislative assembly.

Kejriwal said every election is a message to the political leadership in the country.

"During parliamentary elections, the people gave the BJP 240 seats despite (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi's 400 seat target. The message to

the BJP was that your way of governance is not acceptable to us and change your way otherwise get ready to see your seats coming down to 140 next time," he said.

Kejriwal said the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is the only political outfit in the country which is seeking votes from people on the assurance of providing their children better education, employment opportunities, free treatment to patients and free electricity.

EC must clarify on questions raised by Cong about EVMs: Sibal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Sunday said the Election Commission must clarify on the questions raised by the Congress about EVMs in the recently-concluded Haryana Assembly polls.

Sibal asserted he is of the opinion that misuse of EVMs does take place in the elections. The Congress had on Friday submitted more complaints to the Election Commission alleging discrepancies in the electronic voting machines during counting of votes for the Haryana Assembly elections.

The Congress candidates from 20 assembly constituencies, in their written complaints to the Election Commission (EC), have alleged that the batteries in some of the EVMs were charged at 99 per cent during counting on October 8.

The complaints follow the Congress' shock defeat in the assembly elections after the party failed to win a simple majority even after 10 years of the BJP rule in Haryana.

Asked about the allegations, Sibal said, "The questions that the Congress has raised about EVMs, it is providing proof to the Election Commission on it. So, I do not know much about it but the EC must give a clarification on it. I think misuse



of EVMs does happen, to what extent it happens, I cannot say." "From the beginning I am against this. I have given many statements in the past. What is opaque must not be accepted," the former Congress leader and Independent Rajya Sabha MP added. The Congress has said the assembly polls results were "unexpected" and have alleged discrepancies in the EVMs in some seats.

"In furtherance of the issues raised and the representation submitted to the Election Commission of India on 9th October, we have now submitted an updated memo highlighting serious and glaring irregularities in the election process in 20 assembly constituencies in Haryana. We hope that the Election Commission will take notice and issue the appropriate directives," AICC general secretary, communications, Jairam Ramesh, had said in a post on X on Friday.

TAMIL NADU TRAIN COLLISION

Three-member technical team suspects sabotage

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A three-member technical team of senior railway officials from the Signal & Telecom, Engineering and Operations department raised serious apprehension of sabotage after inspecting the accident site at Kavarippettai Railway Station in Tamil Nadu, railway sources said.

On October 11, train No12578 Mysuru - Darbhanga Bagmati Express collided with a stationary goods train at around 8.30 pm at Kavarippettai Railway Station in Chennai Rail Division, Tamil Nadu, causing injuries to nine passengers.

"The team of senior officials have found that the mechanical parts of the interlocking system were opened. Normally, these parts get broken after an accident due to the heavy impact of the locomotive and coaches," a source, close to the inspection team, said.

"It looks like the miscreants,



who interfered with the interlocking system, gained knowledge from some well-trained person and tried doing it elsewhere earlier for experience," he added.

The Railway officials said that some cases were reported earlier from different places near Kavarippettai Railway Station where the miscreants tried to subvert the interlocking safety system but couldn't do it.

"Perhaps they gained experience by doing that elsewhere and finally implemented their

plan successfully in Kavarippettai. The interlocking system was subverted within a few minutes as the previous train which crossed the said interlocking point was few minutes before the Mysuru-Darbhanga Express," the source said.

The Railway officials said that after examining the condition of the site, it seemed that there was no defect in the signalling system or any error on the part of the signalling department.

Kerala CM accuses Governor Khan of vilification campaign against state

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The ongoing row between the Kerala Governor and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan escalated further with the Marxist veteran on Sunday accusing Arif Mohammed Khan of unleashing "intentional personal attacks" on him and carrying out a "vilification campaign" against the state.

The CM also took a dig at Khan, who had accused him of 27-days delay in responding to his letter, by saying that the Supreme Court has frowned upon the "habit" of sitting on bills passed by the legislature.

Vijayan, in a strongly-worded letter to the Governor,



said that he has never mentioned anywhere about any anti-national activities happening in Kerala. Therefore, "misconceived versions" about the same being repeatedly made in public were "part of a sustained vilification campaign to malign the state and

its residents," he said. "I am sorry to state that your goodness (Governor) repeatedly misplaced reliance on unsubstantiated media reports is solely with an intention to find support, somehow or other, for wholly unwarranted imputations," the CM added.

Indicating a strong protest and disagreement "on the insinuations and remarks which are an intentional personal attack" on him, Vijayan said there was nothing to hide on the government's side.

"I am now compelled to infer that there is, in fact, definitely something hidden behind this deliberate personal insult," the CM said.

He further said that he had mentioned that gold smuggling was a crime against the nation based on the facts that it jeopardises the economy of the country through illicit currency flows and deprives the Union and the state of its legitimate tax revenue.



No spot booking at Sabarimala: Minister

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Devaswom Minister V N Vasavan on Sunday made it clear that there will be no spot booking at Sabarimala, but assured that no devotee who comes to the Lord Ayyappa temple during the annual Mandalam-Makaravilakku pilgrimage season will miss out on 'darshan'.

The assurance came a day after the BJP threatened to carry out agitations if the government goes ahead with its plan to not allow spot booking and permit darshan only through the virtual queue system.

In the virtual queue system, pilgrims can book their darshan tickets and prasadam online through the official website of the Sabarimala temple.

In spot booking, pilgrims can book slots for their darshan at designated centres identified by the Devaswom Board.

The opposition Congress-led UDF too has been urging the government to retain spot

booking along with the virtual queue booking as it cannot expect all the devotees to be familiar with the technology.

Vasavan said that the president of the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB), the apex body that manages the Sabarimala Temple, had recently assured that all pilgrims who come to the temple will get 'darshan' of Lord Ayyappa.

The minister also said that while spot booking at Sabarimala was not going to be allowed, Akshaya centres will be set up at 'edathavalams' (rest or waiting areas on the route to the temple), for booking slots for the pilgrims.

"So, no one who comes for the pilgrimage after following all the rituals will be denied the opportunity of darshan," Vasavan said.

Akshaya centres are Common Service Centers (CSC) envisioned to deliver government to citizen, government to business as well as business to citizen services to the public under a single roof.

Karnataka BJP MPs betrayed people of the state: CM

PNS ■ MYSURE (KARNATAKA)

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday hit out at the BJP MPs from Karnataka for not raising their voice against the injustice to the state in tax devolution.

He appealed to people to rise against the 'injustice' to the state.

Addressing reporters, Siddaramaiah said the state has received Rs 6,498 crore while Uttar Pradesh got Rs 31,987 crore, marking a huge difference in the tax devolution between the two states. "People need to raise their

voice against the injustice to Karnataka. The BJP leaders supporting the Centre are betraying the people of the state, be it Pralhad Joshi or anyone else," he said.

"So many MPs have gone from Karnataka. They need to raise their voice, which they have not done."

According to the CM, the state has incurred a loss of Rs 60,000 crore in tax devolution in five years.

Asked about the next move of the government on this, Siddaramaiah said he would discuss it with his cabinet colleagues.



In a statement on this issue on Saturday, Siddaramaiah questioned, "Uttar Pradesh, infamous for its poor governance, has been allocated Rs 31,962 crore; Bihar, Rs 17,921 crore; Madhya Pradesh, Rs 13,987 crore; and Rajasthan, Rs 10,737 crore. Why should the sweat and toil of Karnataka fuel the growth of states that have lagged behind due to maladministration?"

On the cabinet's decision to grant clemency to Hubballi rioters belonging to minority community, Siddaramaiah said several

RSS leaders were also released when the BJP was in power.

The Congress government in Karnataka on Thursday decided to withdraw a criminal case registered against a mob which had attacked policemen with stones on April 16, 2022 in Hubballi town.

This is one of the 43 cases the state Cabinet decided to withdraw at its meeting on Thursday following a petition by the Anjuman-e-Islam to the Home Minister G Parameshwara, official sources said.



www.dailypioneer.com

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

PAPER WITH PASSION

Peacekeepers' peril

India joins 34 other countries contributing troops to the UNIFIL in condemning Israeli military actions that threaten peacekeepers

The ongoing hostilities in the West Asia have drawn global concern, with recent escalations along the Israel-Lebanon border highlighting the risks faced by United Nations peacekeepers. As Israeli airstrikes target Gaza and tensions spill over to southern Lebanon, the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) finds itself in the line of fire. India, along with 34 other countries that contribute troops to UNIFIL, has endorsed a joint statement condemning actions that jeopardise the safety of peacekeepers and calling for the protection of UN personnel as per existing United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. The situation along the Israel-Lebanon border has become increasingly volatile, with Israeli military operations intensifying in Lebanon. On October 11, two Sri Lankan UN peacekeepers were wounded in an Israeli airstrike near their watchtower in Naqoura, south Lebanon. This was second attack in 48 hours where UNIFIL's main base in the region was subjected to blasts amid the cross-border conflict. UNIFIL is a peacekeeping mission established in 1978 to monitor the cessation of hostilities in the area. It is the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.



In the wake of the attack, India has condemned the threat to peacekeepers' safety. The Indian Permanent Mission to the United Nations reaffirmed that the "safety and security of peacekeepers are of paramount importance and must be ensured in accordance with extant UNSC Resolutions." India's stance underscores its long-standing commitment to UN peacekeeping operations, where it has historically been one of the largest contributors of troops. Of the 9532 troops deployed, 895 happen to be Indian. In fact, India happens to be the second largest contributor to the peacekeeping mission next to Indonesia. So far UNIFIL has endured 334 casualties. The UN's efforts aim to bring a halt to hostilities that have resulted in significant casualties and infrastructure damage, exacerbating an already dire situation in the region. The UN Security Council has called for restraint from all parties involved and emphasised the importance of allowing humanitarian aid to reach civilians in Gaza. However, the complexity of the conflict, with multiple factions and external players influencing the dynamics, has made the path to a ceasefire fraught with obstacles. India's response to the recent escalation along the Israel-Lebanon border reflects a pragmatic approach. While it has avoided direct condemnation of either side in the broader conflict, its alignment with the UNIFIL countries signals support for international peacekeeping standards. By calling for the protection of peacekeepers and adherence to UNSC resolutions, India is positioning itself as a responsible stakeholder in upholding international law and maintaining regional stability. The path to a sustainable ceasefire remains uncertain, but with global powers like India endorsing diplomatic initiatives and supporting the UN's peacekeeping mandate, there is a stronger impetus for pursuing non-violent solutions to the ongoing crisis.

peacekeepers' safety. The Indian Permanent Mission to the United Nations reaffirmed that the "safety and security of peacekeepers are of paramount importance and must be ensured in accordance with extant UNSC Resolutions." India's stance underscores its long-standing commitment to UN peacekeeping operations, where it has historically been one of the largest contributors of troops. Of the 9532 troops deployed, 895 happen to be Indian. In fact, India happens to be the second largest contributor to the peacekeeping mission next to Indonesia. So far UNIFIL has endured 334 casualties. The UN's efforts aim to bring a halt to hostilities that have resulted in significant casualties and infrastructure damage, exacerbating an already dire situation in the region. The UN Security Council has called for restraint from all parties involved and emphasised the importance of allowing humanitarian aid to reach civilians in Gaza. However, the complexity of the conflict, with multiple factions and external players influencing the dynamics, has made the path to a ceasefire fraught with obstacles. India's response to the recent escalation along the Israel-Lebanon border reflects a pragmatic approach. While it has avoided direct condemnation of either side in the broader conflict, its alignment with the UNIFIL countries signals support for international peacekeeping standards. By calling for the protection of peacekeepers and adherence to UNSC resolutions, India is positioning itself as a responsible stakeholder in upholding international law and maintaining regional stability. The path to a sustainable ceasefire remains uncertain, but with global powers like India endorsing diplomatic initiatives and supporting the UN's peacekeeping mandate, there is a stronger impetus for pursuing non-violent solutions to the ongoing crisis.

PICTALK



Devotees immerse an idol of Goddess Durga, in Nadia

The steadfast diplomat who crafted India's foreign policy



SANTOSH MATHEW

As India marks the 50th anniversary of V K Krishna Menon's passing, it is a fitting moment to remember a man whose brilliance shaped the nation's global diplomacy

Fifty years since Vengalil Krishnan Krishna Menon's passing, the significance of his contributions to Indian diplomacy and global politics remains evident. Hailed as one of India's most brilliant yet controversial statesmen, Menon's legacy is inextricably linked with the evolution of the country's foreign policy. Born in Kozhikode, Kerala, his journey from a young boy in South India to a pivotal figure on the world stage was marked by intellectual rigor, steadfastness, and an unyielding commitment to India's sovereignty and values. When he passed away on October 6, 1974, then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi described his departure as "a volcano has been extinguished," aptly capturing the intensity he brought to every role he undertook. His contributions, despite the passage of time, continue to influence India's diplomatic posture.

Menon's early life in Kerala and subsequent education in the United Kingdom set the stage for his distinguished career. His association with Jawaharlal Nehru, whom he befriended while in London, was instrumental in shaping his path. Quickly emerging as a prominent voice in the Indian independence movement abroad, Menon's articulate speeches and sharp intellect earned him recognition. During his time in the UK, he co-founded Penguin Books, which revolutionised the publishing industry by making literature affordable and accessible. However, his foray into publishing was merely the precursor to his true calling: crafting India's foreign policy. It was Menon who proposed the term "Non-Aligned Movement" (NAM), a cornerstone of India's Cold War-era diplomatic stance. He championed neutrality, ensuring that India, as a newly independent nation, did not align itself with either the United States or the Soviet Union. For Menon, non-alignment was more than just a diplomatic position; it was an assertion of India's sovereignty and self-respect. He fiercely defended this stance on various international platforms, particularly at the United Nations, where his eloquence and conviction



made him a formidable figure. As India's representative at the UN, Menon achieved global recognition, notably delivering the longest speech in the forum's history—a marathon eight-hour defence of India's position on Kashmir during the 1957 General Assembly. His unwavering defence of India's claim to Kashmir earned him the title "Hero of Kashmir." Yet, his confrontational style also attracted criticism, especially from Western media, which often portrayed him as the "Indian Rasputin," suggesting he exerted undue influence over Nehru's policies. Menon's relationship with Nehru was undoubtedly significant, with the Prime Minister recognising his brilliance and appointing him to government roles, first as a minister without portfolio and later, in 1957, as Defence Minister. Together, they steered India's post-independence strategies in both foreign relations and defence. The 1962 Sino-Indian War marked a turning point for Menon. As Defence Minister, he was widely blamed for India's crushing defeat by China, with critics accusing him of failing to adequately prepare the military. Western media, particularly "Time" magazine, infamously depicted him on its cover as a "snake charmer," manipulating Nehru into a disastrous conflict. While Menon's detractors held him



MENON'S EARLY LIFE IN KERALA AND SUBSEQUENT EDUCATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM SET THE STAGE FOR HIS DISTINGUISHED CAREER. HIS ASSOCIATION WITH JAWAHARLAL NEHRU, WHOM HE BEFRIENDED WHILE IN LONDON, WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN SHAPING HIS PATH

largely responsible for the debacle, such an assessment does not acknowledge his broader contributions to defence and foreign policy. Menon was a proponent of self-reliance in defence, laying the groundwork for indigenising military production—a policy India pursues to this day. Furthermore, his role in the Goa Liberation movement of 1961, which ended Portuguese colonial rule, reinforced his image as a dedicated patriot.

Despite the setback after the Sino-Indian War, Menon's career was not over. In 1971, supported by the left-leaning EMS Nambudiripad, Menon made a comeback to Parliament, representing Thiruvananthapuram. His return was a testament to the enduring respect he commanded among certain segments of Indian society. Even in his later years, Menon remained a formidable presence in politics, unafraid to challenge prevailing norms. Menon's personal life remained relatively private, though his wit and often abrasive style earned him both admirers and detractors. He was viewed by contemporaries such as Bertrand Russell as a man of profound intellect and integrity. Yet, his sharp tongue and uncompromising nature also alienated many, leading to well-publicised rivalries, including with fellow Malayali

diplomats like VP Menon and KPS Menon. These tensions added an element of intrigue to his already controversial career. Reflecting on the 50th anniversary of Menon's passing invites a reevaluation of his towering legacy. His contributions to Indian foreign policy, particularly his advocacy for non-alignment and his defence of India's stance on Kashmir, remain integral to the country's diplomatic strategies. The fact that his UN speech still holds the record as the longest ever delivered underscores his place in the annals of global diplomacy. Menon's influence extended beyond India's borders; his advocacy for global disarmament and his warning, "Either man will abolish war, or war will abolish man," still resonates in international forums. At a time when diplomacy often takes place behind closed doors, Menon's readiness to speak truth to power, regardless of personal cost, set him apart. His passing marked the end of an era, but his ideas—particularly his fierce commitment to Indian sovereignty and global justice—continue to shape the country's foreign policy. The "volcano" that Indira Gandhi referred to still casts a long shadow over Indian diplomacy—a shadow that endures.

(The writer is an associate professor; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BABA SIDDIQUE ASSASSINATED

Madam — The city of Mumbai has recorded another high-profile targeted killing of NCP leader Baba Siddique. The assassination of Siddique by two shooters at the time he is leaving his son's office and sitting in the car is purely calibrated killing attempts. Despite the fact that his son Zeeshan was an elected MLA from Bandra, Mumbai, it is a bit surprising that killing took place in the same areas. However, it's too early to claim the killing was politically motivated before a proper investigation is to be done by the Mumbai police. He is known in the entire of India for the glam glitz Iftar Parties, which attract Bollywood celebrities every year. The investigation will shed light on the actual motive of the killer for his targeted killing. Meanwhile, it is extremely sad to note that killing is such an easy task in our country. If politicians and renowned personalities like Baba Siddique are not safe in our country, how could we expect the safety of the locals?

The policing mechanism has to be active all the time to avoid such uncertainties. Also, there must be a rigorous punishment mechanism for the shooters, and harsh penalties to be put in place so that no such miscreants will dare to take such actions on the charm of few money from the actual culprits.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

TACKLE HUNGER CRISIS

Madam — This refers to the article on the paradox of nutritional status. Though the contour of nutritional status has too many curves based on too many factors like urban, rural, poor, rich, middle class, gender and so on, the overall condition is definitely not encouraging. The rank given by the Global Hunger Index needs no suspicion. The country's nutrition-related programmes organised by the Union and State governments need an uprisal to review the improvement or the otherwise. A national programme with area-specific contents needs to be taken up, involving the youth who can contribute nutrition-

Tennis legend retires



Tennis legend and one of the all-time greatest tennis players, Rafael Nadal, has announced his retirement as a professional tennis player. Nadal remains one of the most decorated sportspersons of all time of the 22 Grand Slam titles he has won, the Spaniard clinched a record 14 French Opens. Nadal also has 36 masters titles as well as an Olympic gold medal. Beyond his clay

court mastery, Nadal has won US Open titles four times and the Australian Open two times. On the grass of Wimbledon, a surface considered challenging for him, he secured two championships. Who could forget the 2008 Wimbledon final between Nadal and Federer? Or 2013 Australian Open final between Nadal and Djokovic?

Surely Nadal should have inspired millions of children to start playing tennis across the globe. Nadal remained the world's top player for 209 weeks during his peak years, 2005-2023. After Nadal's retirement, will men's tennis ever have another trio, "Federer, Nadal and Djokovic," who dominated tennis for 20 years? Certainly Nadal's retirement from tennis is the end of an era.

P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

related knowledge and implement the program with periodical study on the study. There was news in the media about the lack of quality of the distributed stuff also. In slums, poor eating and non-access to nutritional items are issues, and among the rich, overeating of avoidable items is the issue. Unless nutrition is taken up as a priority to implement with all seriousness and with adequate allocation of funds, there may not be a tangible improvement in the status. Expenditure on improving nutritional status is a productive investment as it helps improve the productivity of the individuals as well as the nation, which is imminent.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

MASTERING POLITICAL GAMES

Madam — There is no specific Noble Prize for politics. However, many politicians received the Noble Peace Prize for their efforts in promoting peace, resolving conflicts and advancing human rights; examples are Nelson Mandela, Barack Obama, and Mikhail Gorbachev. Political manoeuvring and politics are relat-

ed but distinct. The former involves a variety of tactics aimed at maintaining or gaining power such as politicians changing parties (turn coats), building pre or post poll alliances with other political parties, contesting elections as independent candidate if ticket is denied and after winning getting favours by supporting government forming party or parties, using the fundamental right of freedom of speech to the fullest extent in criticizing the opponents at will, turning from foes to friends and vice versa with ease by being immune to guilt or shame, directing resources for garnering and maintaining vote banks through freebies & unproductive welfare schemes, toppling governments, poaching elected members from opposition parties and defaming own country's government & its policies abroad etc. Indian politicians are 'Mahirs' in the above activities. So, if a Noble Prize is instituted for "political maneuvering," India will always get it.

O Prasada Rao | Hyderabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Gandhi's philosophy in the age of AI

As we forge ahead into this digital age, embracing Gandhi's philosophy could pave the way for a more humane and equitable future

Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly shaping our world, making the relevance of many ancient philosophies seem distant. People may find it difficult to comprehend the hardships our predecessors endured during their lifetimes. Even people may find it difficult to believe that great philosophers, who have provided us with a wealth of knowledge, once lived on this planet. We will accept only those incidents and individuals whose photographs or videos are accessible. As of now, we are fortunate to have documentary evidence of our nation's father, Mahatma Gandhi. Otherwise, people would have forgotten him. But even in this digital world where AI rules humanity, Gandhiji's philosophy remains profoundly relevant.



interpret non-violence (Ahimsa) in this digital era as ensuring the ethical and responsible use of AI technologies. Gandhian principles have high relevance today as we start integrating AI into aspects of human life, be it healthcare, economy, agriculture, or warehousing. As we indulge in digital warfare Gandhi's non-violence principle prompts us to develop technologies that prioritise human welfare and minimise harm. Cyberbullying is on the rise, and many people are falling victim. Cyberbullying fundamentally involves the use of words, images, or exclusion on the internet as a means of violence. Unfortunately, even political parties sometimes encourage such behaviour for gain, which

fosters enmity between communities—a divide that can be challenging to bridge. By embracing ahimsa, individuals can practice empathy and kindness online, refraining from harmful or derogatory comments. Promoting non-violence in digital spaces could lead to reduced aggression and a more supportive online environment. Gandhi's emphasis on truth serves as a powerful antidote to the deceit and falsehoods that often fuel cyberbullying. Many online bullies hide behind anonymous profiles, spreading rumours, lies, or misinformation. Truthfulness can also empower victims to speak out against bullying, creating a culture of transparency and accountability. In the digital age, where people can react instantly and sometimes impulsively, applying self-discipline is crucial. In a world where major tech companies dominate AI development, Gandhi's philosophy of self-reliance (swadeshi) is highly applicable. It encourages nations, especially third-

world countries, to build their own AI capabilities and not rely solely on foreign technology. Fostering digital independence and ensuring the use of AI in ways that benefit local economies and cultures is crucial. One of Gandhi's most enduring legacies was his advocacy for the marginalised. In the AI-dominated world, we must ensure that these technologies do not exacerbate inequalities. We should use AI to promote inclusivity, reduce the digital divide, and provide technology access for all, which is in line with Gandhi's vision of social justice. In essence, Gandhian philosophy, with its moral clarity and human-centred approach, serves as a vital guide for shaping the AI-driven future. Even in a world where technology seems to dominate, Gandhi's philosophy has high relevance for building peace and happiness in the world.

(The author is a Dean at Garden City University and an adjunct faculty member at NIAS, Bangalore; views are personal)

are personal)



BIJU DHARAMAPALAN



FIRST COLUMN

EMOJIS SPEAK WHERE TEXTING FALLS SHORT

Emojis transform otherwise bland exchanges into vibrant and meaningful interactions



ASHA IYER KUMAR

I am a huge fan of emoticons, or emojis, as I prefer to call them. In a new, technically robust world that chooses to conduct most of its private and professional business digitally, the existence of emojis is a lot more valuable than what they seem primary. Emojis fill the gap between one's feelings [thoughts] and words; they arch over the space where misunderstandings breed unintentionally. The trouble with texting is it, more often than not, conveys meanings not meant. The true import of the statements is often dispensed with an unsavoury blandness. Words, for all the power they have, are restricted in their ability to convey true emotions. There is no tone or tenor in a conversation that happens over a typed chat. It is here that the emojis take charge to let people know the precise sentiment behind the words. It's fascinating how something as simple as a tiny, colourful image can carry the weight of an entire conversation.

Emojis have become the silent saviours of our digital dialogues, transforming what could be a dry exchange into something vibrant, relatable and meaningful. I have always believed that words, despite their richness, sometimes falter in delivering the exact shade of sentiment we wish to express. How many times have we sent a message and then wondered; Will they get what I mean? Will they feel my warmth, my concern, or my light-heartedness? Emojis step in at this point, like little emotional cue cards, guiding the recipient towards the intended feeling behind our words.

A simple smiley can transform a blunt response into a kind reassurance. It acts as a gentle nudge, hinting to the reader, "Take it easy; this is friendly." Emojis allow us to soften the blows of formality, sprinkle humour on otherwise serious subjects, or underline the gravity of



what would otherwise seem trivial. Consider this: You've sent a message that says, "Let's talk later." Now, depending on the mood of the person on the other side, it could be read as indifferent, abrupt, or even ominous. But if you add a little smiley at the end, the vibe changes entirely. Suddenly, it sounds casual, almost warm. This is the magic of emojis — they are the unseen bridges in our communication, preventing misunderstandings. They fill in the emotional blanks that text leaves behind. In this world where we don't always get the luxury of hearing someone's voice or seeing their expressions, emojis have quietly become the body language of our conversations. They provide a way to infuse our cold, typed words with a cozy connection. That's where their real value lies, and why I, as someone deeply in love with words and their power, have come to appreciate the humble emoji. Moreover, in a globally connected world where language barriers can stand between intent and interpretation, emojis offer a universal code. A thumbs-up or a heart means the same whether you're in Dubai or Delhi, making them incredibly effective in fostering inclusivity and understanding.

As I continue my writing journey, both in traditional and digital spaces, I find myself more often turning to emojis to complement my words, especially when texting or communicating over social media. They are the small, unspoken allies in my digital interactions, helping me stay connected, relatable, and, most importantly, understood. In a time when misunderstandings are as quick as a keystroke, I've come to appreciate emojis as more than just playful symbols. They are, in many ways, the unsung heroes of modern communication, making sure that what we feel and what we say are in sync. And that's a role too important to ignore.

(The author is a columnist and writing coach based in Dubai; Views are personal)

The booklet that redefines Mayawati



BISWAJEET BANERJEE

Mayawati is launching a revival effort to reclaim lost ground; she released a 59-page booklet outlining the party's roadmap, while emphasising her 'Iron Lady' image

Facing a steep decline in electoral performance, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), under the leadership of Mayawati, is now pivoting with a new strategy aimed at regaining its lost political ground. The once-formidable party, which made significant strides in the late 1990s and early 2000s by mobilising Dalit and marginalised communities, has been on the back foot in recent elections. With an eye on the upcoming assembly by-elections and the 2027 general elections, the BSP has taken an important step by releasing a 59-page booklet, designed not only to recount its past achievements but also to chart a new course for the future. The release of this booklet is a key part of the BSP's revitalisation plan. It features several statements from Mayawati, emphasising her leadership and vision for the party's future. One of the key aspects of the booklet is Mayawati's self-identification as the "Iron Lady," a term that echoes the strong and uncompromising leadership style often associated with female leaders in global politics, such as former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

By using this title, Mayawati seeks to project an image of resilience, firmness and determination, drawing on her previous tenure as the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, where she exercised considerable political influence. Mayawati's attempt to invoke historical symbolism is another notable feature of the booklet. She compares herself to Emperor Ashoka, an ancient Indian ruler known for his governance and promotion of social justice. The parallel is clear: like Ashoka, Mayawati aspires to usher in a new era of social welfare and justice for the marginalised sections of society, particularly Dalits. Through this comparison, she hopes to solidify her image as a leader capable of bringing about meaningful social change, positioning herself as a saviour of the oppressed and aligning her leadership with India's rich historical tradition of justice. The use of such symbolic language is not merely rhetorical; it is a calculated effort to energise the party's traditional voter base, which largely consists of Dalits, while also appealing to other communities. The invocation of Emperor Ashoka, a figure revered for his contributions to governance, inclusiveness and justice, allows Mayawati to appeal to a wider electorate that values strong leadership based on social equity and welfare.

By aligning her vision with that of Ashoka, she is reminding voters that her leadership stands for inclusiveness, fair governance and social justice—values that resonate deeply with her core constituency. One of the most significant components of Mayawati's new political strategy is a renewed focus on social engineering, an electoral strategy that had previously yielded considerable success for the BSP. This approach, which played a crucial role in Mayawati's rise to power in 2007, involves forging electoral alliances across caste lines—specifically between Dalits and Brahmins. By uniting these groups, the BSP was able to create a winning formula that resulted in sweeping electoral victories in the mid-2000s. The booklet highlights the party's intention to revive this strategy, indicating that the BSP aims to once again bring together a broad-based coalition to strengthen its political position. In the booklet, Mayawati makes a strong appeal to Brahmin voters, asserting that their economic and social upliftment can only be achieved under BSP rule. She takes the opportunity to criticise



ONE OF THE PRIMARY OBSTACLES IS THE EROSION OF ITS TRADITIONAL VOTE BANK. THE BSP, WHICH ONCE COMMANDED A SUBSTANTIAL BASE AMONG DALIT VOTERS, HAS SEEN A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THESE VOTES SHIFT TOWARD THE BJP IN RECENT ELECTIONS

rival political parties, including the Samajwadi Party (SP), Congress, and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), for neglecting the Brahmin community and failing to address their concerns. By making this overture to Brahmins, Mayawati hopes to recreate the Brahmin-Dalit electoral coalition that had been so successful in the past, particularly in 2007, when this formula helped her ascend to the Chief Minister's office in Uttar Pradesh. This strategy signals that Mayawati is determined to reconstruct a broad-based support structure, aiming to gain a foothold among both upper and lower castes. The outreach to Brahmins is not an entirely new tactic for the BSP. The party had previously established strong support among Brahmin voters, particularly in the mid-2000s, by emphasising the importance of social cohesion and inclusive governance. In many ways, Mayawati's return to this formula reflects her understanding of the changing political dynamics in Uttar Pradesh. She recognises the importance of rebuilding alliances that cross caste lines, particularly as the political landscape in the state continues to evolve. However, the new strategy does not stop with Brahmins. The booklet also directs sharp critiques at Mayawati's political rivals, particularly Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. She targets Gandhi's recent visit to a shoe repair shop, characterising it as "symbolic politics" that does little to address the real issues faced by marginalised communities. In her view, this gesture perpetuates caste-based stereotypes, reinforcing the notion that certain communities, such as Dalits, should be associated with manual labour, including shoe-making. This critique is

aimed at resonating with her core voter base—Dalits—by emphasising her stance against caste-based occupations and promoting a broader vision of social justice. Mayawati also uses the booklet to revisit past political alliances, notably the failed partnership between the BSP and the Samajwadi Party (SP) ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. The alliance, once seen as a formidable force capable of challenging the BJP in Uttar Pradesh, ultimately fell apart. In the booklet, Mayawati attributes the breakdown to a lack of communication from Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, who, according to her, stopped answering her calls. This communication breakdown, she claims, forced the BSP to withdraw from the alliance—a move she frames as one made out of self-respect. By bringing up the collapse of the alliance, Mayawati seeks to remind voters of her independence and self-reliance as a leader, further distinguishing herself from her political rivals. Despite Mayawati's efforts to reposition the BSP, the party faces significant challenges. One of the primary obstacles is the erosion of its traditional vote bank. The BSP, which once commanded a substantial base among Dalit voters, has seen a significant portion of these votes shift toward the BJP in recent elections. In a notable shift in strategy, Mayawati has announced that the BSP will contest the upcoming by-elections. Historically, the party has refrained from participating in by-polls, preferring to focus its resources on general elections. However, the recent electoral setbacks and the changing political landscape in

Uttar Pradesh have prompted a reassessment of this approach. By contesting the by-elections, Mayawati hopes to reenergise the party's cadre and send a message to her supporters that the BSP is still in the fight. The by-elections offer the BSP an opportunity to test its new strategies and alliances in a smaller electoral context before the next general elections. By doing so, the party can identify its strengths and weaknesses, allowing it to adjust its tactics in preparation for larger electoral battles. Additionally, Mayawati's decision to contest the by-elections is about more than just winning seats—it's also about reinvigorating the party's organisational strength. In recent years, the BSP's grassroots machinery has weakened, with many party workers becoming disillusioned after a series of electoral defeats. By throwing the party into the by-election fray, Mayawati aims to revive its organisational structure and prepare it for future contests. Mayawati's messaging, as outlined in the newly released booklet, signals her determination to reclaim the BSP's former electoral strength.

Through a combination of symbolic language, critiques of her rivals, and a recalibrated strategy, she hopes to reposition the BSP as a force to be reckoned with in Uttar Pradesh politics. The upcoming by-elections will serve as a crucial test for the party's new approach and could determine whether Mayawati is successful in her efforts to revitalise her support base and counter growing competition from both established and emerging political players. (The writer is an Associate Editor, of The Pioneer; views are personal)

Haryana's election lesson: Why Tejashwi and Akhilesh must shun caste politics

To secure long-term success, they must cater to broader social sentiments as voters increasingly reject traditional caste-based power structures

The recent election results in Haryana have overturned pre-poll predictions and ground reports by YouTubers, sending a clear message for future elections, particularly in key states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. For leaders such as Tejashwi Yadav and Akhilesh Yadav, who belong to the dominant Yadav caste, the outcome holds lessons. Their political scenario mirrors the situation of the Jats in Haryana, where social dynamics are shifting away from dominant caste politics. In this evolving landscape, they face the challenge of addressing broader social sentiments and responding to the concerns of marginalised groups who feel overlooked or disadvantaged in the traditional caste power structures.



AKHILESH SUMAN

In Haryana, the Jats, a politically influential community, faced a consolidation of other social groups against them, as seen in the election results. This trend is significant for Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, where the dominant OBC groups, particularly the Yadavs, have held power for decades but are now struggling to maintain their influence. The once-powerful Yadav-led governments lost their grip on

power partly because of growing resentment from other communities who felt sidelined. The political history of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh is marked by the rise of leaders like Lalu Prasad Yadav and Mulayam Singh Yadav, who gained initial popularity by championing anti-Congress sentiment and social justice. Their "M-Y equation" (Muslim-Yadav alliance) was a powerful electoral strategy that secured their dominance, but it also instilled fear in other communities. The consolidation of their caste base came at the cost of alienating non-Yadav OBCs, Dalits, and upper castes, creating a sense of marginalisation. Over time, their politics of exclusion backfired, as disillusioned voters began to

seek alternatives, leading to the emergence of leaders like Nitish Kumar in Bihar and the BJP in Uttar Pradesh, who promised clean governance and development for all. The memories of the 1990s and early 2000s, when the Yadav-led administrations were perceived as using caste power to consolidate authority, still linger. While the Yadavs continue to be an important electoral bloc, the rest of society—especially the non-Yadav OBCs, Dalits, and upper castes—often recalls those years as an era of exclusion. The BJP, with its "subaltern Hindutva" narrative, has effectively capitalised on this sentiment, attracting marginalised groups by offering a sense of inclusion and an alternative to Yadav-centric



politics. Akhilesh Yadav, upon coming to power, made efforts to bridge the gap between his caste and others. He distanced himself from the old guard, symbolised by his uncle Shivpal Yadav, who represented the traditional power dynamics of the Samajwadi Party. However, incidents involving unruly behaviour

by some of his caste members toward other communities made it difficult for him to secure a second term. His attempts to modernise and adapt the party's image were undermined by persistent social tensions. Similarly, Tejashwi Yadav faces challenges in Bihar, where his efforts to step out of his father Lalu's shadow have been hampered by his own caste groups' oppressive behaviour toward Dalits and upper castes. His political journey involves grappling with the legacy of Yadav dominance, which is often perceived as being dismissive of other communities' aspirations. To succeed in the future, Tejashwi must navigate these entrenched social dynamics with greater inclusivity. The lesson from Haryana is

clear: caste dominance can become a liability if it alienates other social groups. The Jat experience shows that when other communities consolidate against a dominant caste, it can significantly alter the political landscape. For Akhilesh and Tejashwi, this means urging their caste members to adopt a more accommodative stance, rather than projecting dominance. Effective leadership in this context involves advocating for social harmony and cooperation across different segments. Both Tejashwi and Akhilesh must understand that lasting political success cannot be achieved by relying solely on their traditional caste bases. They need to expand their appeal beyond the Yadavs and reach out to other communi-

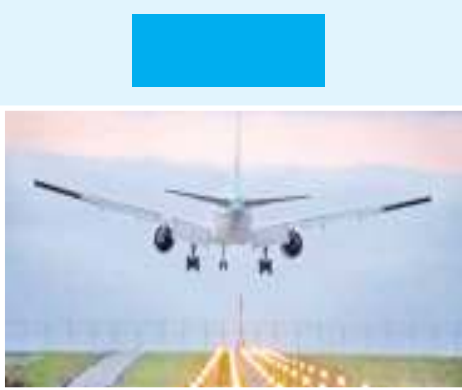
ties that have felt marginalised. Their strategy should involve building broader alliances that include marginalised communities, addressing their socio-economic needs, and promoting an inclusive vision of governance. The political landscape in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh is undergoing a shift. The BJP's ability to attract non-Yadav OBCs and other marginalised groups has weakened the impact of traditional Yadav-centric politics. Leaders like Tejashwi and Akhilesh must shed the image of their parties as "Yadav-centric" and instead emphasise inclusive governance that addresses the aspirations of all communities. (The writer is a senior journalist; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



'Will explore electric vehicle export opportunities'

PO-bound Hyundai Motor India Ltd will explore opportunities for exporting its upcoming electric vehicles from the country to other similar markets to enhance its position as a production hub for emerging markets, according to a senior company official. The company is lining up four electric vehicles to be launched in future, including the electric version of its popular SUV Creta by Q4 FY25, in the mass and 'mass premium' segments. "We are a very strong production hub for emerging markets. We are exporting to 80 plus countries. As far as EVs are concerned, it will, of course, depend on the demand but we are always open to look at any product, which we introduce in India, for exporting it to the other market as well," Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HML) COO Tarun Garg said.



Average airfares around Diwali drop 20-25%

Air passengers might have a reason to smile this Diwali season as average airfares on many domestic routes have dropped 20-25 per cent compared to the year-ago period, according to an analysis. Increased capacity and the recent fall in oil prices are considered to be among the factors for the fall in air ticket prices. The analysis by travel portal ixigo showed that average airfare on the domestic routes have declined in the range of 20-25 per cent. The prices are for one-way average fare on a 30 days APD (advanced purchase date) basis. For 2023, the time period considered is November 10-16 while it is October 28-November 3 for this year. This is the time around Diwali. The maximum decline of average airfare is 38 per cent for a Bengaluru-Kolkata flight to Rs 6,319 this year from Rs 10,195 last year, as per the analysis.



IOB opens Retail Loan Processing Centres

Public sector Indian Overseas Bank has unveiled retail loan processing centres in multiple cities aimed at streamlining the loan approval processes and reduce turn around time, a top official said. A Retail Loan Processing Centre was inaugurated in physical mode in Chennai while seven others were launched in virtual mode across cities, the bank's Managing Director and CEO Ajay Kumar Srivastava said. "Our new Retail Loan Processing Centres are not just about convenience. It is about building a smarter, more resilient banking framework. By harnessing digital tools and advanced analytics, we are ensuring stronger risk management while significantly reducing loan processing times," he said. The Retail Loan Processing Centre is designed to streamline the loan approval process, reduce turnaround time and provide faster and more efficient services to retail customers, he said in a statement on Sunday. Indian Overseas Bank has set up the RLPs in Bengaluru, Coimbatore, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Lucknow and Mumbai.

Mcap of seven of top-10 firms erode by Rs 1.22 lakh cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The combined market valuation of seven of the top-10 most valued firms eroded by Rs 1,22,107.11 crore last week, with Tata Consultancy Services and Reliance Industries emerging as the biggest laggards, in line with weak trend in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark fell 307.09 points, or 0.37 per cent, to 81,381.36. The market valuation of country's largest IT firm Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) tumbled Rs 35,638.16 crore to Rs 15,01,723.41 crore.

The valuation of Reliance Industries slumped Rs 21,351.71 crore to Rs 18,55,366.53 crore.

TCS's valuation dropped Rs 18,761.4 crore to Rs 6,10,933.66 crore, while that of Hindustan Unilever Ltd's mcap was down Rs 16,047.71 crore to Rs 6,53,315.60 crore.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) tanked Rs 13,946.62 crore to Rs 6,00,179.03 crore and that of ICICI Bank eroded Rs 11,363.35 crore to Rs 8,61,696.24 crore.

Also, HDFC Bank's mcap declined Rs 4,998.16 crore to Rs 12,59,269.19 crore.

Transformative initiative aimed at revolutionising infra

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan has emerged as a transformative initiative aimed at revolutionising India's infrastructure and is driving faster and more efficient development across sectors.

PM GatiShakti National Master Plan (PMGS-NMP) was launched on October 13, 2021 for providing multimodal connectivity infrastructure to various economic zones.

PM GatiShakti is a transformative approach for economic growth and sustainable development which is driven by seven engines - railway, roads, ports, waterways, airports, mass transport and logistics infrastructure.

In a post on X, Modi said, "PM GatiShakti National Master Plan has emerged as a transformative initiative aimed at revolutionising India's infrastructure. It has significantly enhanced multimodal connectivity, driving faster and more efficient development across sectors."

The seamless integration of various stakeholders has led



to boosting logistics, reducing delays and creating new opportunities for several people, Modi said.

"Thanks to GatiShakti, India is adding speed to fulfil our vision of a Viksit Bharat. It will encourage progress, entrepreneurship and innovation," the prime minister said. Modi tagged Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal's post in which he had lauded the GatiShakti initiative on completion of three years.

"Today marks 3 years since the launch of the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan for Multimodal Connectivity by PM Narendra Modi ji. By streamlining logistics and advancing connectivity, this path-breaking initiative ensures faster and more efficient project implementation," Goyal said. It continues to play a pivotal role in developing a modern, interconnected infrastructure network, strengthening the vision of building a Viksit Bharat, he said.

Ensure level-playing field in rules on satcom spectrum: Jio Seeks minister's intervention

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom operator Reliance Jio has sought Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia's intervention to get regulator Trai issue a revised consultation paper on a proposed spectrum allocation rule to ensure a level-playing field between terrestrial and satellite players.

Reliance Jio, in its letter to telecom minister Scindia, referred to the Supreme Court's judgement in 2G case and indicated that Trai's failure to incorporate questions on level-playing field may lead to legal tussles.

The letter came after Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) rejected Jio's request for incorporating questions around the level-playing field between terrestrial network players that provide mobile phone services using towers installed on ground and those seeking to offer satellite-based communication services.

On September 27, 2024, Trai floated a consultation process to explore methodology and price for assigning spectrum to satellite companies to provide calling, messaging, broadband and other services in the country.

Reliance Jio, in the letter dated October 10, mentioned



that satellite communication companies such as Elon Musk's Starlink, Amazon's Kuiper, Bharti Group-backed OneWeb Eutelsat, and SES-Jio joint venture have expressed interest to provide their services in India, which will directly compete with land based mobile networks, and therefore a fair and transparent auction system for satellite services is essential to ensure level competition.

"While the DoT correctly recognised the need for a level-playing field in its reference to Trai, the consultation paper issued by TRAI appears to overlook this critical issue.

"It seems Trai has pre-emptively closed the matter without soliciting the views of stakeholders," Jio said.

LOAN SCHEME FOR MSME SECTOR SBI plans to enhance threshold limit

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To ensure easy and adequate credit availability to the MSME sector, the State Bank of India (SBI) is planning to enhance the threshold under the instant loan scheme from the existing Rs 5 crore.

M S M E Sahaj - End to End Digital Invoice Financing, provides solutions ranging from the applying for the loan, documentation and disbursement of the sanctioned loan within 15 minutes, without any manual intervention. "We have, last year, introduced a business rule engine based, data based assessment of the credit limits up to Rs 5 crore. Anybody walking into our MSME branch has to give only their PAN and approval for sourcing GST data, we can

give approval in 15-45 minutes," SBI Chairman C S Setty told PTI in an interview.

Simplification of the MSME credit is something that the bank is emphasising on and making lending cash flow based backed by the CGTMSE guarantee, he said.

This reduces the need for collateral, which would enable a lot of people to come into the formal MSME borrowing system, he said.

"We still have a large number of MSME customers accessing the informal credit. We would like to bring them to the banking fold," he said.

As far as network expansion is concerned, Setty said SBI is planning to open 600 branches across the country in the current financial year.

Wipro to consider issuing bonus shares ahead of Q2 results

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IT firm Wipro on Sunday said its board of directors will consider the issue of bonus shares at a meeting scheduled to be held on October 16-17, 2024.

Wipro is set to announce its Q2 FY25 results on October 17, 2024.

"The board of directors of the company will be considering a proposal for the issue of bonus shares, in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 (including the rules and regulations framed thereunder), the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Issue of Capital and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2018, at its meeting scheduled to be held over October 16-17, 2024," a regulatory filing said.

Geopolitical events, inflation data to drive markets: Analysts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Quarterly earnings of corporates, trading activity of foreign investors and inflation data are the key factors that are expected to drive the momentum in the equity markets this week, analysts said.

Moreover, markets would also focus on movement in crude oil prices amid geopolitical tensions, experts added.

"In the coming week, the market's direction will largely hinge on corporate earnings, with major companies like Reliance Industries, Infosys, HDFC Bank, Axis Bank, and HCL Technologies set to release their results, among others," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

From the macroeconomic front, investors will keep an eye on the CPI (consumer price index-based inflation) and WPI (wholesale price index-



based) inflation data for September, scheduled to be announced on Monday.

Investors will also closely track updates on geopolitical tensions, particularly their impact on crude oil prices, and foreign fund flows. Key domestic economic data, including CPI and WPI inflation, are also scheduled for release, which could influence market sentiment, Mishra added.

Last week, the BSE bench-

mark fell 307.09 points, or 0.37 per cent to close at 81,381.36, while NSE Nifty slipped 50.35 points or 0.20 per cent to settle at 24,964.25.

The markets ended the week marginally lower, marking a pause after a sharp decline. The week started on a downbeat note due to continued selling pressure from foreign investors, but selective strength in heavyweight stocks helped limit the losses in the later sessions, he said.

Govt imposes import curbs to reduce dependence on China

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Sunday imposed import curbs on parts of pocket lighters with immediate effect, a move which would help encourage domestic manufacturing and cut dependence on their inbound shipments from China.

"Import of parts of pocket lighters, gas fuelled, non-refillable or refillable lighters (cigarette lighters)... is restricted with immediate effect," the directorate general of foreign trade (DGFT) said in a notification.

Imports of cigarette lighters, priced less than Rs 20, are already prohibited. The import ban is also there on pocket



lighters, gas-fuelled, non-refillable or refillable.

Items under the quality control orders (QCO), cannot be produced, sold/traded, imported and stocked unless they bear the BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards) mark.

During April-July this fiscal, import of lighter parts stood at USD 3.8 million. It was USD

4.86 million in 2023-24. The parts are mainly imported from China.

Other sources of lighter imports include Spain, Turkey and the UAE.

In September 2022, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin had urged the Centre to ban single use plastic cigarette lighters to help the domestic matchbox industry.

These plastic cigarette lighters, which are legally and illegally imported from countries like China, are available for Rs 10 and can substitute 20 matchboxes. Further, these non-refillable lighters result in immense plastic waste, damaging the environment and also impacting health, he had said.

ONGC looks at mini plants to evacuate gas from isolated fields

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is looking to set up mini-LNG plants to evacuate natural gas from wells located in areas that are not connected with pipelines.

The firm has identified five sites in Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and Gujarat for setting up mini plants at well-head that will convert the gas pumped out from under the ground into liquefied natural gas (LNG) by supercooling it to minus 160 degrees celsius.

This LNG will be loaded on cryogenic trucks and transported to the nearest pipeline where it will be reconverted into its gaseous state and pumped into the network for



supply to users like power plants, fertilizer units or city gas retailers.

ONGC has floated a tender seeking manufacturers/service providers to tap stranded natural gas, according to the tender.

The locations identified for setting up mini-LNG plants in the tender are two sites at Rajahmundry in Andhra Pradesh and one each at Ankleshwar in Gujarat, Bokaro in Jharkhand and Cambay in Gujarat.

ONGC in the tender document said while the country has an extensive network of pipelines that connect supply and demand centres, there remains a substantial volume of stranded gas (non-connected) that is required to be

tapped for enhancing domestic supplies and meeting the needs of nearby demand centres.

The stranded volumes, it said, range from 5,000 to 50,000 standard cubic meters per day that can be produced for up to 5 years.

The tender called for bids from manufacturers and service providers to "set up a small scale LNG plant on BOO (build, own and operate) basis to produce LNG, transport the produced LNG by cascades / tankers to consumption sites located within a distance of around 250 kilometers, depressurize / re-gasify the LNG

and then inject the gas into existing gas distribution grids or supply directly to bulk consumers." India produces over 90 million standard cubic meters per day of natural gas that is used to generate electricity, produce fertilisers or turned into CNG to run automobiles and piped into household kitchens for cooking purposes. But domestic production meets roughly half of the demand.

ONGC is India's largest crude oil and natural gas producer and has been investing billions of dollars to boost production to cut India's reliance on imports.

Prior to floating of this tender, it had entered into a partnership with nation's largest fuel retailer Indian Oil

CCPA orders Ola to offer refund choices, provide auto ride receipts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has directed ride-hailing platform Ola to implement consumer-friendly changes, including offering refund options and providing receipts for auto rides, the regulator said on Sunday.

The CCPA, led by Chief Commissioner Nidhi Khare, observed that Ola's no-questions-asked refund policy only provided coupon codes for future rides, without giving consumers a choice for bank account refunds.

"This (practice) violates consumer rights," the CCPA said in a statement. "The no-questions-asked refund policy cannot mean that the company incentivises people to simply use this facility for taking another ride."

The regulator also mandated Ola to issue bills or invoices for all auto rides booked through its platform, citing the absence of such documentation as an "unfair trade practice" under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

Following the CCPA's inter-

vention, Ola has implemented several changes, including displaying contact details of grievance and nodal officers on its website, clearly mentioning cancellation policies and fees at the time of booking, adding more options for ride cancellation reasons, and publicizing fare component breakdowns.

The other changes implemented were showing address of both pickup and drop locations to drivers and revised payment cycles for drivers for swift payment.

The CCPA reported 2,061 complaints against Ola from January to October 2024, with top issues including overcharging, refund delays and driver-related problems.

"Through its regulatory intervention, the CCPA has been steadfast in ensuring that Ola adheres to the legal framework established to secure the rights of consumers," the regulator stated.

The move comes as the CCPA increases scrutiny of digital platforms to protect consumer interests in the rapidly growing e-commerce and ride-hailing sectors





Baba Siddiqui's demise leaves industry in shock

NCP leader and ex-Maharashtra minister Baba Siddique was killed on Saturday, October 12th. Following his passing, numerous stars such as Riteish Deshmukh, Saqib Saleem, Mahi Vij, Raj Kundra, Arjun Bijlani, Shamita Shetty and more expressed their sympathies on social platforms. Riteish Deshmukh condoled the former minister's death and wrote, "Extremely saddened and shocked beyond words to learn about the tragic demise of Shri #BabaSiddique ji - My heart goes out to @zeeshan_yc and the entire family-May god give them strength to brave this difficult time. The perpetrators of this horrific crime must be brought to justice (sic)." Meanwhile, Saqeeb Salim, mourning the death of Baba Siddique expressed, "Heartbreaking to read about Baba Siddique's demise. My interactions with him were always filled with warmth and love. May his soul rest in peace. Strength and prayers to the whole family in these tough times. Praying for justice. The people who were behind this should not be spared (sic)." Raj Kundra, businessman and husband of Shilpa Shetty, expressed his deep sorrow over the unexpected passing of Baba Siddique Bhai. He shared a heartfelt message on Instagram, stating, "A man who embodied kindness, bringing people together wherever he went. My partner has only lost a brother-in-law, but a guiding light, someone she saw as a second father. Baba, your loss is unbearable, but those responsible will answer for it (sic)." After Siddique passed away from his injuries at Lilavati Hospital, numerous political leaders and members of the film industry came to offer their condolences to his family. Sanjay Dutt, Shilpa Shetty and Salman Khan were included in the group. Videos taken by Paparazzi show Salman being seen at Lilavati Hospital late on Saturday night. According to reports, the actor was present in Film City when Siddique was killed and was filming for the upcoming episode of *Bigg Boss Weekend Ka Vaar* on Sunday. Sources familiar with the situation say Salman called off the rest of the filming and hurried to the hospital upon learning of Siddique's passing!

H'wood Star Joseph Gordon-Levitt raves about *Gangubai Kathiawadi*

Sanjay Leela Bhansali is renowned for his ability to create cinematic masterpieces that blend grandeur with poignant storytelling. His 2022 release, *Gangubai Kathiawadi*, starring Alia Bhatt, has not only won critical acclaim but has also garnered heaps of praise globally. Now, joining the spree of praising the film is the international star Joseph Gordon-Levitt, who found the film very unique and different from anything ever seen. Reflecting on his experience watching the film, Gordon-Levitt at a recent fest remarked, "I was just watching that movie and just found it so beautiful and so unique. And it's completely different from anything I've seen. Because it's this very heavy and distinguished drama that looks like a Scorsese movie at times. It's gorgeous. It made me want to learn



more and more about Indian cinema." In *Gangubai Kathiawadi*, Bhansali explores the life of a resilient woman navigating the complexities of power and survival in Mumbai's underworld. Bhansali's films often reflect his passion for storytelling and artistry, qualities that Gordon-Levitt notes as inspiring. "I love what I'm feeling from the culture here and there's genuine love for movies and artistry," he shared. The cultural exchange in Bhansali has piqued the interest of filmmakers worldwide, with Gordon-Levitt expressing a desire to come to India to create his own film. The film, which was released amidst the challenging backdrop of a global lockdown, faced unique hurdles. Yet, against all odds, the film not only won the audiences hearts but also emerged as a blockbuster.

Jeremy Renner's intense training to become 'Hawkeye'

The worlds of real archery and superhero archery are quite distinct. Although Jeremy Renner was skilled with the bow, he had to rely on more than just his accuracy when executing Hawkeye's moves. What truly aided him in filling his shoes? The art of sound! Renner disclosed that he makes a playlist for each character he portrays and Hawkeye was no different. Although he didn't reveal which songs were chosen, it wouldn't be unexpected if the playlist incorporated some alternative rock music—Renner is known to have a musical side, having even produced his own album.



"Music can transport you into a mood or place of mind," Renner said and it seems it worked like a charm for his Hawkeye transformation. "Real archery is not superhero Hawkeye archery," Renner admitted during a *Comic Con Q&A*. The actor mastered the art of shooting arrows professionally, but his character focuses on style, such as twirling the bow like a baton or using it for physical attacks. Nevertheless, Renner was able to benefit from the Olympic-level training, despite not always being suitable for the high-speed action scenes.

UORFI JAVED'S PAPARAZZI FALLOUT REACHES BOILING POINT!



A few weeks ago, during the promotions of her new series *Follow Kar Lo Yaar* Uorfi Javed was spotted in a striking outfit that featured a moving lizard. The spotting made headlines not just for her bold fashion choice or for being papped alongside Ananya Panday, but raised serious questions about the conduct of the paparazzi. During her routine interaction with the paparazzi, Uorfi found herself at the center of controversy when an inappropriate comment came from the crowd. But who exactly made the remark? Whether it was a spectator or one of the paparazzi is still unclear. Uorfi didn't respond at the moment, but a few days later, she took to social media to express the emotional toll the incident had taken. In a heartfelt post, she questioned whether such treatment was justified and revealed a more vulnerable side, expressing that behind her bold fashion choices, she too feels hurt by disrespectful comments. What followed was a rapid escalation. Rumours spread that the paps had become upset with the Uorfi over the post, leading to some tension. There are even claims that the paparazzi have decided to boycott her, insisting that the inappropriate comment came from a spectator, not from them, demanding an apology from Uorfi for the incorrect allegations. But the question remains: who is really to blame?

Source reveals JLo's reluctance: Didn't want to divorce Ben

The divorce controversy between Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck shows no signs of fading away. The actor pair has been in the midst of a highly publicized divorce since August. Although they have been seen together in public, reports suggest that the divorce is imminent. As per a recent reports, it is stated that Jennifer felt pressured to file for divorce, despite not wanting to.

An insider says that a close source to the actor-singer stated that this year has been extremely challenging for her. "She didn't want to file for divorce. She just felt like she had no choice. Nothing was gonna change with Ben," the report quotes the source as saying. The source adds that Jennifer was upset about it but has decided to move on with the situation. "She was very upset about it. But true to her positive outlook on life, she's moving forward with optimism. Instead of feeling like she's fallen flat on her face, she sees it was meant to be. She's taking time for herself right now," the source added. Jennifer submitted a divorce petition on August 20, stating



TEARS OF JOY AS KAPOOR FAMILY UNVEILS ICONIC 'SRIDEVI CHOWK'

The late iconic actress Sridevi was recently commemorated in Mumbai when a chowk in Lokhandwala was dedicated to her. During the significant event of Dussehra, Boney Kapoor and his daughter, Khushi Kapoor, emotionally inaugurated the landmark. Veteran actor Shabana Azmi joined them for the event. The chowk sits close to Green Acres Tower, the residential building where Sridevi resided for numerous years prior to her death in 2018. In a video from the event, Khushi looks serious and clearly moved, almost crying. Boney appeared equally emotional as he revealed the new monument showcasing pictures of Sridevi. As a gesture of respect, Boney softly touched the picture of his deceased wife. Shabana remained by Khushi's side during the entire ceremony. Nevertheless, Janhvi Kapoor, the older daughter of Sridevi, was absent from the event. Sridevi sadly died in Dubai on February 24, 2018, from accidentally drowning in a hotel bathtub during a family wedding. During a previous conversation, Boney Kapoor discussed her death and disclosed that Sridevi frequently adhered to extremely strict diets without salt, resulting in occasional fainting spells.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



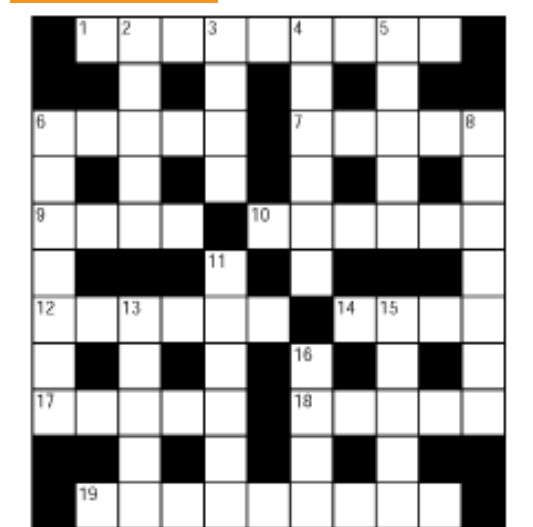
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1 All people
 - 6 Fixes
 - 7 On the way out
 - 9 Too
 - 10 An underground room
 - 12 Class
 - 14 A long seat for several people
 - 17 Tiny
 - 18 Unlocks
 - 19 Replying
- DOWN**
- 2 A planet
 - 3 A prickly flower bush
 - 4 Pleased
 - 5 A dentist's machine
 - 6 A disease with spots
 - 8 People from Germany
 - 11 Come next
 - 13 Madrid is the capital of this country
 - 15 Sea
 - 16 Having very little money



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

'Cringe Binge? We'll take it!' remarks Neelam Kothari

SHIKHA DUGGAL
 shikhaduggalwork@gmail.com

The latest season of *Fabulous Lives vs Bollywood Wives*, with its Delhi vs. Mumbai theme, is expected to generate new excitement among viewers. Right now, the well-known actress Neelam Kothari was the one causing all of us to get excited. Undergone a fascinating transformation during the third season, *Ilzaam* fame unloads the gossip exclusively with us!

For instance, when she said—which astounded us, "Although it has been a constant struggle, reinventing myself has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my journey. I had to deal with the highs and lows of the movie business as an actress in the 1980s and 1990s. However, transitioning from Bollywood to the jewellery industry required a significant learning curve. Given that our family has been in the jewellery industry for four generations, it seemed like a logical next step for me. However, managing a company differs greatly from being in the spotlight. All of a sudden, you are in charge of not only the artistic aspects of things but also the technical and administrative ones, such as finding the best stones and making sure every piece satisfies the strictest quality requirements." For Neelam, therefore, breaking into reality TV was a whole new experience. She had to be herself on camera for *Fabulous Lives*, which isn't as easy as playing a character. You reveal aspects of your life that you normally wouldn't, making you more open and vulnerable. She was intimidated by this kind of exposure, but it also made her realise how important sincerity is. If anything, maintaining her identity while juggling this many responsibilities has been the most difficult aspect.

The Hong Kong born goes on, "I believe *Fabulous Lives* portrays a fairly true representation of who I am in real life. My natural tendency has always been to keep to myself, which is why I often come across as reticent on the show. I think you should always observe a situation before you react, but when something is important to me or involves my family, I can be quite direct and assertive. It's that harmony between being easygoing and, when necessary, being forceful, which reflects my true self. I don't hesitate to voice my opinions, but I also pick my battles wisely."

In fact, Neelam Kothari's internal conflict came to the fore in Season 2. Particularly when it comes to intimacy on-screen, she has always been somewhat at ease with her boundaries. When she first started shooting movies, she didn't have to think about it. However, as the entertainment industry developed, authenticity and pushing limits became more important! Her decision to change her mind was ultimately influenced by the encouragement she received from her friends, family and colleagues. They pushed her to venture into new areas while still staying loyal to herself. This was one of those situations when she had to step outside her comfort zone in order to progress. "To put it mildly, it's been a really intriguing experience! Giving away so much of your private life on such a public forum is daunting and exhilarating at the same time. *Fabulous Lives* includes parts of my life that, not even during my Bollywood years, I've actually never discussed before. Though there have been times when I've felt a little vulnerable, I also believe that it's critical for

people to realise that we're all human and that we have the same joys and challenges as everyone else. I definitely make an effort to strike a balance between my personal and professional lives. All in all, though, it's been really fulfilling since it makes it possible for me to interact with others in a manner that I couldn't previously," explains the incredibly elegant woman.

She has also, as everyone knows, been involved in the industry since the 1980s and has seen it change first-hand. Letting us know about some of her biggest changes, *Khudgarz* fame extricates, "Over time, the way that people view Bollywood spouses has drastically changed. There was a notion in the 1980s and 90s that if you were married to someone in the business, you had to step down. However, things are very different now. Women are viewed as strong people in their own right, particularly those in the industry! They each run their own companies, careers and public personas. The popularity of reality TV and social media has also provided us a platform to show off our identities outside of the "wives" category. Respect for women who manage their public lives, careers and families has recently grown. People, in my opinion, are now more open to the notion that you may be a strong, supporting partner in addition to being an independent figure." However, there is also the flip side of it, which says that "signing up for reality TV comes with scrutiny. It is unavoidable. However, I've come to realise not to take things personally. Opinions will always exist and TV portrayals of our lives are frequently overly dramatic. I believe it's critical to maintain perspective and to constantly remind yourself that what you see on television does not always accurately represent who you are. My robust support network keeps me grounded and I can laugh off a lot of the chaos. In the end, all that matters is that you feel at ease in your own skin."

The saga went on when "Addressing topics like menopause and botox on *Fabulous Lives* was a conscious decision because these are conversations many women, especially in our age group, are either hesitant to talk about or feel judged for discussing. Menopause, in particular, is something every woman goes through, yet it's surrounded by this unnecessary stigma as if it's something to be hidden or ashamed of. For me, the motivation to bring these topics to light came from a desire to normalise them and make women feel less alone in their experiences. We are in a society where talking about aging, botox, or menopause is often frowned upon, especially for women in the public eye. But the truth is, these are natural parts of life, and there's no reason why we can't have frank conversations about them. It was crucial to address it on the show with tact and the candour it required. I believe it empowers more women to take charge of their decisions, whether they decide to go with cosmetic treatments or to embrace aging naturally. In any case, it's a private choice that ought to be honoured."

In an amusing note, she also mentioned that she found it interesting that people called the show a "cringe binge" because, at the end of the day, they were still watching it! "The intended tone of *Fabulous Lives* is lighthearted, enjoyable and amusing. It doesn't aspire to be anything different. I recognise that some



WITH HER HONEST REPRESENTATION ON *FABULOUS LIVES VS BOLLYWOOD WIVES*, NEELAM KOTHARI, THE ACCOMPLISHED ACTRESS WHO IS NOW AN ENTREPRENEUR, IS BREAKING BOUNDARIES AND SMASHING STEREOTYPES. IN AN EXCLUSIVE CONVERSATION WITH *THE PIONEER*, SHE TALKS ABOUT HER EXPERIENCE, HOW BOLLYWOOD HAS CHANGED HOW PEOPLE REGARD WOMEN AND WHY SHE THINKS THIS SEASON OF THE SHOW WILL BE HER MOST MEMORABLE TO YET!

instances may seem excessive to some, but that's what makes them so endearing. We're offering fans a behind-the-scenes peek at our lives, complete with all the glamour, drama and occasionally ridiculous moments. I don't mind labels like "cringe binge" because they typically stem from inquisitiveness or even fondness. We've done our job if viewers are interested in the show, whether it's because they're drawn to the drama or the way of life. It's not supposed to be taken too seriously. Many people find it to be a guilty pleasure and I believe that's part of its appeal!

The actress' candid discussion of the difficulties of going back in front of the camera later in life has sparked candid remarks. Based on the similar first-hand accounts that she gave us, "Taking up coming on-screen again later in life has been thrilling and difficult at the same time. When it comes to age, the entertainment industry can be particularly cruel, especially to women. Actresses had a defined shelf life in the '80s, when I started out. Opportunities would dry up and you were expected to fade into the background beyond a certain age. Fortunately, things are now changing and I'm happy to be a part of it. My personal experiences have given me a fresh outlook, especially giving up acting and concentrating on my jewellery business for a long time. I've come to understand that your career and potential shouldn't be limited by your age. Although there is still a long way to go before the business treats older actresses with respect, I find it encouraging that more and more women are making a comeback to the screen later in life and still attracting notice. My confidence has increased as a result of my personal progress, which has enhanced the satisfaction I get from returning to the screen."

Introducing new characters, particularly those from diverse backgrounds and cities, inevitably brings a refreshing wave of change to the reality TV landscape. This infusion of novelty is precisely what makes reality television so captivating! Neelam Kothari acknowledges that the arrival of fresh faces will undoubtedly disrupt the existing group dynamics, but she also recognises that challenges can be beneficial. And, undoubtedly, being featured on *Fabulous Lives* has increased the visibility of her brand, Neelam Jewels. People are now more interested in learning about her creative process and the backstory of the designs! She has also recently dabbled in more approachable, younger-targeted pret designs that draw inspiration from nature and feature elements like flowers and butterflies. She can now highlight the more whimsical, wearable side of her line while maintaining the timeless elegance for which she is renowned thanks to her appearance on the show. In the end, the show has made it possible for her to relate to new gen of jewellery lovers! She concludes by saying, "I adore *Fabulous Lives* because it tackles real problems that a lot of people can identify with and isn't just about glitter and bling. Divorce, child-rearing difficulties and personal development are all common experiences and I believe it's critical for viewers to understand that life is constantly changing no matter where you are in life. Season 3 will be unlike any other season—I don't want to give anything away just yet. There will be many shocks and it will not be like seasons one and two. It's full of action, dhamaka, soul, tears, laughter and everything you could ever want."

Spices, story & soul

AARTI SREENATH
 aarti.sreenath9@gmail.com

Walking into Anthe Kitchen felt like a beautiful step back in time. The moment I entered, I was embraced by an ambience that radiated warmth and nostalgia. It was as if I'd been transported to my grandparents' home, where everything had a story and a sense of belonging. The earthy, retro decor, complete with bronze utensils and vintage wooden chairs reminiscent of the 90s, set the perfect tone for what would be an unforgettable culinary experience. The cozy, rustic charm of the place paired harmoniously with the soul of its cuisine, Andhra food served with pride, authenticity and flair.

The menu was vast and tempting, but a few standout dishes really captured my attention and taste buds. I started with the *Miryala Mamsam Vepudu*, a mutton dish infused with black pepper, which was a sensory delight. The meat was cooked to perfection, juicy, tender and coated in a fiery peppery masala that left a lingering heat. The balance between the bold spiciness and the natural flavour of the mutton was flawless. Every bite was a hit of robust flavours that felt like a celebration of Andhra's spice-heavy tradition. For anyone who loves their meat with a punch, this is a must-try.

Next, the *Miryala Kodi Chauru*—a pepper chicken soup—provided a perfect counterbalance. It was warming and full-bodied, with just the right amount of heat. The pepper didn't overpower the dish but rather enhanced the overall depth of the broth, making it comforting yet flavourful. The chicken pieces were tender and the broth was richly seasoned with coriander and black pepper, creating a perfect harmony of flavours that left me craving more.

Under appetizers, I was enchanted by the *Raagi Sangati*, a traditional dish made from finger millet. This dense, earthy dish had a chewy texture and paired beautifully with the tangy and spicy *Natu Kodi Pulusu*, a country chicken curry. The pulusu had a bold, tangy tamarind base, its sharpness cutting through the richness of the raagi, making for a combination that sang of rustic Andhra flavours. The curry, cooked with bone-in chicken, was succulent and packed with robust flavours, making it an absolute star in the lineup of appetizers.

The vegetarian dishes didn't disappoint either. The *Gutti Vankaya Masala* was a revelation. Tiny eggplants stuffed with a spiced peanut filling were



cooked until tender in a luscious gravy. The eggplants absorbed the flavours of the spices beautifully, while the nutty richness of the filling made every bite a delight. This dish is a must for any vegetarian food lover—it stands tall next to the meaty heavyweights of the menu.

For mains, the *Konaseema Kodi Pulao* was a treat. The aroma of the fragrant rice, mixed with tender pieces of chicken and an array of spices, filled the air before it even reached the table. The pulao was rich and flavourful without being overly spicy, making it a perfect accompaniment to the intense flavours of the other dishes. Each grain of rice was cooked to perfection and the chicken pieces were soft, succulent, and well-infused with the spices.

To finish off this indulgent feast, I opted for the *Shadud Malai* for dessert. This dessert was an absolute star, stealing the limelight from the savory dishes that preceded it. Creamy, luscious and lightly sweetened, the *Shadud Malai* was the perfect end to a spicy and flavourful meal. The soft, pillowy texture of the malai, with its rich milkiness, was incredibly satisfying, offering a delightful contrast to the boldness of the previous courses.

Beyond the food, the overall dining experience at Anthe Kitchen was fantastic. The restaurant's emphasis on using traditional cooking methods and serving authentic Andhra flavours is commendable. It's a place that clearly takes pride in its culinary heritage, offering a refined yet homey dining experience.

It was more than just a place to eat; it's an experience steeped in nostalgia and flavours that are as bold as they are comforting. If you're looking for an authentic taste of Andhra Pradesh with a side of retro charm, this is the place to be. Whether you're dining with family or simply looking to savour some unforgettable dishes, this restaurant will leave you longing to return.



FOOD TO TRY

Miryala Mamsam Vepudu



DECOR

Earthy 90's retro vibe



PRICE

₹1500 for two



VERDICT

★★★★★

Feed your follicles with right nutritions

In the world of beauty and wellness, the significance of nutrition often gets overshadowed by the latest hair care products and styling techniques. However, as experts emphasize, nutrition plays a vital role in the health and appearance of your hair.

Connection between nutrition and hair health

"What you eat comes to your hair." This statement reflects the idea that the nutrients we consume significantly affect the strength, shine and overall health of our hair. A well-balanced diet provides the essential vitamins and minerals necessary for hair growth and vitality.

To cultivate healthy hair, Twinkle Deol, the Head of Training and Development, at Cut and Style emphasises the importance of incorporating a variety of foods into one's diet. "I make sure to eat a balanced diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains. I also drink plenty of water to keep my hair hydrated and my scalp healthy," she advises.

Key nutrients for hair growth

1. AMINO ACIDS
 Amino acids are the building blocks of protein, which is essential for hair structure. Hair is primarily made of a protein called keratin, making amino acids crucial for hair health. Foods rich in amino acids include:

- **Fish:** Salmon and mackerel are excellent sources of omega-3 fatty acids, promoting scalp health.
- **Meat:** Chicken and beef provide high-quality protein and essential amino acids.
- **Eggs:** A complete protein source, eggs also contain biotin, which is vital for hair growth.
- **Dairy products:** Yogurt and cheese provide calcium and protein,



contributing to stronger hair.

- **Nuts and seeds:** Almonds, walnuts and pumpkin seeds are packed with essential fatty acids and protein.

2. PROTEIN

A diet high in protein is critical for maintaining hair strength and preventing breakage. Good protein sources include:

- **Beans and lentils:** These plant-based proteins are excellent for vegans and vegetarians.
- **Dairy products:** Milk, cheese, and yogurt are rich in protein and calcium.
- **Meat:** Lean cuts of chicken, turkey, and red meat are beneficial for hair health.

3. CALCIUM

Calcium is not only essential for bone health but also plays a role in hair growth. It helps in the proper functioning of hair follicles. Foods rich in calcium include:

- **Dairy products:** Milk, cheese, and yogurt are excellent sources.

- **Dark leafy greens:** Spinach and kale are packed with calcium and other essential nutrients.
- **Fortified foods:** Many plant-based milks and cereals are fortified with calcium.

4. IRON

Iron is crucial for delivering oxygen to hair follicles, promoting healthy hair growth. An iron deficiency can lead to hair thinning and loss. Foods high in iron include:

- **Meat:** Red meat and poultry are rich sources of heme iron, which is easily absorbed by the body.
- **Fish:** Salmon and tuna also provide significant iron content.
- **Legumes:** Lentils and chickpeas are great plant-based sources of iron.
- **Fortified foods:** Many cereals and bread are fortified with iron.

Role of hydration

While nutrition plays a critical role in hair health, hydration is equally important. Drinking plenty of water is essential for maintaining healthy hair and scalp. Dehydration can lead to

dry, brittle hair that is more prone to breakage. She recommends keeping a water bottle handy and ensuring adequate hydration throughout the day.

Importance of exercise

In addition to a balanced diet and proper hydration, regular exercise can significantly benefit hair health. Exercise promotes blood circulation to the scalp, ensuring that hair follicles receive the nutrients and oxygen they need to thrive. Furthermore, physical activity helps to reduce stress, which can negatively impact hair growth. Twinkle notes, "When you exercise, you also release endorphins, which can help to reduce stress. Stress can damage hair, so it's important to find ways to manage it."

Supplements for healthy hair

For those who may struggle to meet their nutritional needs through diet alone, she suggests considering supplements. She personally takes amino acids, protein, calcium and iron to support her hair health. Supplements can help fill in nutritional gaps and ensure that your body has the necessary building blocks for optimal hair growth.

Creating a balanced diet

To help readers incorporate these essential nutrients into their diets, here's a sample list of foods to include for healthy hair growth:

- **Breakfast:** Greek yogurt topped with mixed berries and a sprinkle of chia seeds.
- **Lunch:** Grilled chicken salad with mixed greens, cherry tomatoes, avocado, and a lemon-olive oil dressing.
- **Snack:** A handful of almonds or a banana with almond butter.
- **Dinner:** Baked salmon served with quinoa and steamed broccoli.
- **Hydration:** Aim to drink at least 8 glasses of water a day, and consider herbal teas for variety.

After Paris high, India look to continue momentum at home

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The absence of the Paris Olympic medallists notwithstanding, hosts India will not be short on firepower when they compete in the season-ending World Cup Final, starting here from Tuesday, with Rhythm Sangwan headlining a 23-member squad. The Paris Olympics medallists automatically qualify for the tournament, but Manu Bhaker, Sarabjot Singh and Swapnil Kusale, who won the bronze, have opted to skip the event to be staged at the Dr. Karni Singh Range. Besides Rhythm, rising stars such as Ganemat Sekhon (women's skeet) and Sonam Maskar (women's 10m air rifle) will look to excel in the tournament, having earned their spots based on world rankings. The Indian squad features nine athletes from the 2024 Paris Olympics, including Arjun Babuta (men's 10m air rifle), Anish Bhanwala (men's 25m rapid fire pistol).

Rhythm will compete in both the women's 10m air pistol and 25m pistol events. The other Olympians in the squad include Mairaj Ahmad Khan (men's skeet), Divyansh Singh Panwar (men's 10m air rifle), and Chain Singh (men's 50m rifle 3 positions). Also ready to shoot in the World Cup Final are Arjun Singh Cheema (men's 10m air pistol), Vijayveer Sidhu (men's 25m rapid fire pistol), Anantjeet Singh Narukha (men's skeet), Maheshwari Chauhan (women's skeet), Rajeshwari Kumari (women's trap) and Shreyasi Singh (women's trap). All these shooters competed in the Paris Games. There are four finals lined up on each of the three competition days in this traditional ISSF season-ending showdown between the best in the world. Due to host country norms, a minimum of two Indian shooters will be in action in each of the 12 individual Olympic events on the roster. Action begins on Tuesday with the 10m air rifle women being the first final on the schedule, followed by



the men's final. The 10m air pistol men and women's finals are also lined up on day one. All the finals will be preceded by qualification rounds. 131 of the world's top shooters from 37 countries including multiple reigning Olympic champions participate in the competition which will determine the year's best performers in each of the 12 individual Olympic events. The world's top six athletes of the combined six ISSF World Cup stages held throughout year, along with Paris Olympic medallists, defending ISSF World Cup Final champions and reigning world champions have achieved direct qualification in each of the 12 events. Three events men's 10m air pistol, men's trap and women's 25m pistol will see all three Paris Olympic medallists compete for the top prize of 5000 euros. All reigning champions from the previous year in Doha will also be there to defend their titles. President of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF),

Luciano Rossi, who is in the capital to attend the tournament, hailed India's role in the growth of the sport. "We're excited to be in India for the ISSF World Cup Final, one of the most dedicated shooting sport nations in the world," said Rossi. "After a successful season for our athletes and a wonderful Olympic Games in Paris, this is the perfect opportunity for all to finish the season on a high," he added. National Rifle Association of India's (NRAI) secretary general K Sultan Singh said, "Shooting sport has been witnessing huge rise in popularity and passion amongst the youth, women and specially abled athletes in the country which can be gauged by the laurels which has been achieved at the Olympics, Paralympics and continental championships." "We wish all the participants the very best and immensely thank the ISSF and the government of India for all their support in hosting and organising the ISSF World Cup Final in New Delhi."



Historic women's doubles bronze at Asian TT Championships

India clinches three medals

PTI ■ ASTANA (KAZAKHSTAN)

India wrapped up their campaign at the Asian Table Tennis Championships with three medals, including a historic bronze in the women's doubles, after Ayhika Mukherjee and Sutirtha Mukherjee's dream run ended in the semifinals here on Sunday. The world No. 15 pair, who stunned the reigning world champions from China en route to a bronze at the Asian Games last year, fell to Japan's Miwa Harimoto and Miyuu Kihara, 4-11 9-11 8-11 in under 30 minutes in their last-four clash.

Prior to that, the Indian duo had defeated South Korea's Kim Nayeong and Lee Eunhye in the quarterfinals to secure India's first-ever women's doubles medal at the Asian meet. The Indian women's team had earlier clinched a historic bronze in the team event. The trio of Manika Batra, Ayhika Mukherjee, and Sutirtha Mukherjee secured the country's first-ever medal in the women's team category since the competition began in 1972, though they eventually lost 1-3 to Japan in the semifinals. In the men's category, India secured another bronze, their

third straight in the tournament, after the team of Achanta Sharath Kamal, Manav Thakkar, and Harmeet Desai fell 0-3 to Chinese Taipei in the semifinals. In men's singles, Manav Thakkar and Manush Shah bowed out in the pre-quarterfinals. World No. 60 Thakkar, who had earlier shocked world No. 14 Jang Wooin of South Korea, was defeated by Hong Kong's Baldwin Chan, 4-11 4-11 8-11. Meanwhile, Manush put up a tough fight against Lin Yun-Ju of Chinese Taipei and took two games before narrowly losing 8-11 5-11 11-7 11-6 12-14.

We could have scored more: Farukh Choudhary

PTI ■ NAM DINH (VIETNAM)

Returning to action after three years, midfielder Farukh Choudhary feels they could have scored another goal as India had to settle for a 1-1 draw against hosts Vietnam in an international friendly here. Manolo Marquez's selection of Farukh had raised eyebrows but the midfielder, who was sidelined for three years, struck a second-half goal to level things for India after Vi Hao Bui had given the hosts a 38th minute lead. "Personally, I feel great. I've not been a part of the national team for a long time, but this is where I wanted to be. I worked hard at my clubs and I knew in my heart that I deserved to be here," Farukh said. The last time Farukh turned out for India, he created an assist against



Nepal, in October 2021, in a 1-0 victory in Male. But an unfortunate knee injury meant that he had to start from square one on his way back to the national team.

"I'm glad that I could make a difference for the team, but I feel that we could have scored another," he said. "But everyone played well together as a team. Gurpreet (Singh Saandhu) and

Anwar (Ali) also had exceptional games in defence, which is why we got this score." In what was a game of two halves, India heaved an almighty effort for most parts of the second half, and perhaps were a bit disappointed that they could not find the winning goal. However, the head coach remains positive about his side's display as his search of a first win in charge of India continues. "In the first half, it was practically all Vietnam. Then we discussed at half time how we have enough quality to play, and finally, we started executing our plans in the second," said Marquez. "Sure, Vietnam could have scored in the last minutes when we were tired, but we could have scored too with our chance. But overall, I am satisfied with this. It was a friendly game, after all."

Djokovic, Sinner reach Shanghai Masters final, Sabalenka rallies over Gauff at Wuhan

AP ■ SHANGHAI

Novak Djokovic overcame physical discomfort to beat Taylor Fritz 6-4 7-6 (6) and move closer to a 100th career title and a record-extending fifth at the Shanghai Masters. By also reaching the final on Saturday night, top-ranked Jannik Sinner ensured he will be the ATP year-end No. 1 and the first Italian to achieve that feat. "I've won many titles, had great battles and great performances," the 37-year-old Djokovic said. "I did come here definitely with a vision and a desire to get to the final and fight for a 100th title. I get that chance against the best player in the world, and let's see what happens." Fellow great Roger Federer has 103 titles and Jimmy Connors leads men with 109 in the Open era. Top-ranked Jannik Sinner will chase his seventh ATP title of the year after beating Tomas Machac 6-4 7-5. Djokovic improved to 10-0 in career matches against Fritz, who blew a 5-3 lead in the

second-set tiebreaker and a set point at 6-5 up. Djokovic was clearly struggling for mobility and balance with his left knee heavily strapped. "It always takes it out of me, these kinds of battles, but particularly towards the end of the tournament," Djokovic said. "At this stage of my career, I'm doing my best to recover and I had some issues here and there on the court, physically." But US Open runner-up Fritz could not take advantage. He lost a long rally at 6-6 and succumbed on the first match point when Djokovic stabbed a volley at the net and the American flicked it just long at full stretch. Djokovic leads 4-3 overall against Sinner, who has won the last two - including in the Australian Open semifinals. Earlier, Sinner weathered a nearly two-hour baseline storm from No. 33-ranked Machac, who beat No. 2 Carlos Alcaraz in the quarterfinals. The Italian has a shot at his third Masters title in 2024 following victories in Miami and Cincinnati, to go with his



wins at the Australian Open and U.S. Open. "I just tried to stay there every point, to see what was going to happen," Sinner said. "Just playing every point with the maximum intensity I could, so I'm very happy about that. I'm happy to be back in a final again. "I'm just looking forward to (the final), to try to find a solution somehow ... And hopefully it's going to win the match." Sinner fired 10 aces

and 28 winners, against only seven unforced errors, in a characteristically efficient performance for his 64th match win this year. WUHAN OPEN: Second-ranked Aryna Sabalenka rallied from a slow start to beat an in-form Coco Gauff 1-6 6-4 6-4 in the semifinals to advance to her third straight Wuhan final and preserve her perfect record at the tournament. Sabalenka will face seventh-

ranked Zheng Qinwen in the final. The Paris Olympics champion beat No. 51-ranked Wang Xinyu 6-3 6-4. Sabalenka will be bidding for her fourth title of the season, which includes the Australian Open and US Open. The Belarusian's 16th straight victory at Wuhan ended Gauff's own recent win streak at nine, including the China Open title last week. But it looked anything but certain for Sabalenka as she crashed 6-1 in the opening set. "In the first set she was just crushing it," Sabalenka said. "Whatever she was doing, everything was flying in. Everything was so aggressive. I didn't have much opportunities." In a fight between the last two US Open champions, Gauff led by a break early in the second but Sabalenka responded to pull level at 4-4 and saved a break point on serve to take a 5-4 lead. Serving to stay in the set, Gauff was broken as Sabalenka hit a lunging forehand volley to force a deciding set.

Ronaldo scores again in Nations League win for Perfect Portugal

AP ■ BARCELONA

Cristiano Ronaldo scored his record-extending 133rd international goal to keep Portugal perfect in the Nations League with a 3-1 win over Poland, and Spain struck late to edge Denmark 1-0. The 39-year-old superstar was there to put in the rebound after Rafael Leão's shot hit the post in the 37th minute on Saturday. That made it 2-0 following Bernardo Silva's opener in Warsaw in the 26th. After failing to find the net in his five appearances at this summer's European Championship - with Portugal exiting in the quarterfinals - Ronaldo has scored in three straight Nations League matches, including in wins over Croatia - his 900th career goal - and Scotland last month. Portugal coach Roberto Martinez replaced Ronaldo with Diogo Jota with just under half an hour to play. Midfielder Piotr Zielinski halved the deficit in the 78th

for the hosts, only for Southampton defender Jan Bednarek to score an own-goal with two minutes left. Barcelona striker Robert Lewandowski started alongside Karol Swiderski but the Polish attacking pair couldn't find their way past the Portuguese defense. "We worked very hard the last few days, preparing various solutions for this game, and we were able to show it on the pitch. I am really satisfied because we controlled this game," Martinez said. "Also, I am satisfied how Renato Veiga and Rúben Dias performed against one of the best in the world (in Lewandowski)." Portugal leads Group A1 with nine points from three games. Second-place Croatia has six points after it came back to beat Scotland 2-1 in Zagreb with the visitors having an equalizer deep into second-half stoppage time ruled out by VAR. Poland has three points, and Scotland zero. Scotland's Ryan Christie opened for the Scots and their under-fire manager Steve Clarke in the 33rd. Igor



Matanovic leveled three minutes later and Andrej Kramaric completed the fightback in the 70th. Scotland had the ball in the net right at the end with substitute Che Adams involved but VAR confirmed it was offside. Zubimendi shines in Rodri's spot. Martín Zubimendi helped Spain crack Denmark's defense as the holding midfielder starred in the place of injured Rodri. The Real Sociedad player unleashed a powerful volley in the 79th to smash a rebound from outside the area past Kasper Schmeichel, who got his hand on the ball but couldn't keep it out. Zubimendi had impressed in the final of Euro 2024 when he replaced Rodri for the second half of Spain's 2-1 win over England. Rodri seriously injured his right knee and required surgery on his ACL while playing for Manchester City last month. "Martín is a treasure" Spain coach Luis de la Fuente said. "I suppose with his goal he

will get more attention, but his play, the fact that he's got a computer in his brain, means we are privileged to have him at a time when Rodri will be out for a while." Spain was also missing Nico Williams and Dani Olmo, two more players who excelled at the Euros, who are sidelined with minor injuries. Spain, the defending Nations League champion, has seven points in Group A4 after three games. Denmark has six points, and Serbia has four after beating the pointless Switzerland 2-0. The Swiss didn't help their cause with an own-goal by Nico Elvedi right before the interval. Aleksandar Mitrovic doubled the lead for Serbia with a solo effort in the 61st, and Serbia goalkeeper Predrag Rajkovic saved a penalty taken by Brel Embolo. Wins for Kosovo, Romania Kosovo won 2-1 at Lithuania in League C, while Romania thumped Cyprus 3-0, Northern Ireland drew 0-0 at Belarus, and Bulgaria was held 0-0 at home by Luxembourg.



I'M NEVER GOING TO LET SOMEBODY DIM MY LIGHT BECAUSE THAT'S THE FIGHT I'VE TAKEN UP ON THIS LIFE. I THINK IN THE TELUGU FILM INDUSTRY, A LOT OF WOMEN HAVE COME TOGETHER TO REALLY HOLD THE SPACE FOR OTHER WOMEN AND WE HAVE BEEN ADDRESSING EVERYTHING THAT COMES TO THE PRODUCER COUNCIL.

MANCHU LAKSHMI ON HER FIERY COMEBACK IN ADIPARVAM

Manchu Lakshmi, a name synonymous with talent, determination and compassion, bares her heart in an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*. As *Adiparvam* prepares to hit theatres, she discusses her journey, creative choices and unwavering commitment to empowering women

TEJAL SINHA
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

Fierce and powerful aptly describes Manchu Lakshmi's upcoming character in her much-anticipated *Adiparvam*. Well, her birthday this year had gotten much better and special with the release of her poster, making fans wait with bated breath.

As you look back at her journey, she has had an extensive career in the film industry. She believes it too because she loves it when people believe she's had a big career. "Although I feel like I have a very niche career in ways that I still feel every movie that I do feels like the first time," affirms the *Kadal* fame in an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*. "I would say my journey has just begun."

With every project, she's always on the go to bring out something new and diverse with her characters; yet again, it is with *Adiparvam* that she's looking forward to. Though this film marks her return to the silver screens after a hiatus of two years, the *Lakshmi Bomb* star believes, "I really don't look at myself as taking a hiatus because I'm on television; I'm doing OTT. I'm doing other things. So, movies are just incidental if they happen. It's not like I want to stop or start or do anything like that."

Now that her li'l one is 10 years old, she's

kept on starting to work on and on. Getting back to *Adiparvam*, she brings in a revelation to us: "I have 7 different looks and 7 different get-ups in *Adiparvam*." This was something she felt was challenging to take it up, where she looks young and old at the same time. "My character starts from a young age," she tells about her character in the upcoming film, which is a revenge mystical drama. As the story progresses, so does her character. "Then it gets into her character getting older and will she avenge her revenge?" the *Pitta Kathalu* star says, intriguing us to know in detail and head towards the theatre to get to know it.

"You have to really sit with the director when you prepare for any role; how are they seeing you?" says the *Anaganaga O Dheerudu* fame. Reason being: "I am from the interior parts of Rayalaseema, so there is a different kind of slang, language and that is very pertaining to that particular area."

Thus, understanding the process by working extensively with the director, the different looks for her to deliver, looking young to old, or the kind of clothes she wears. "Everything goes into playing in preparing that I have prepared for this role. I hope I have delivered."

Also a producer, the *Dongaata* lead com producer believes, "When stories come to you and you feel like nobody else can tell these stories other than you, that motivates me to be a pro-

ducer. I love the stories I put together."

Not only has she been into the filmy world, but she has also put in her human side with her philanthropic efforts for the betterment of society. With great regards and love, she tells us, "I believe that if in this human life, God has given you, it is your prerogative to make sure one other person has the same."

Diverging a little towards the happenings in the industry, the Hema Committee for that matter, or in the dance choreographers case, lifestyle has just not been fair for women and several actresses coming up and speaking out. Opining on this, she points out, "Why, just during the Hema Committee, we are talking about life not being fair for women? Period. I hope we continue to find the voice and continue to speak up about things that are not right; keep the dialogue going and not shut it down. At least the women who lent their voices are not silenced. It is the job of a man to hit on you. It is also your job to know if that is coming from the right place or wrong. It takes two hands to clap, but when a person is in position and power, you can easily use that to suppress the other. You always have to know how to navigate yourself through life. There is no one right or wrong way. I think every workspace has to put stricter rules so women can speak up if a rule is not being followed. I'm never going to let somebody dim my light because that's the fight I've taken up

on this life. I think in the Telugu film industry, a lot of women have come together to really hold the space for other women and we have been addressing everything that comes to the producer council. There are strong women who are leading the women's wing of the Telugu industry. But do you think we are doing enough and can we be doing more? I absolutely think so."

Well, one thing about our interviewee is that she is one headstrong person. How does she keep it? "Fake it till you make it," gushes the *Yakshini* actress because, she says, you don't have an answer for everything in your life. And it's then you will find your answers because you are staying true to yourself. But, "If you're going to wait for the rest of your life to get answers, to find your strength, that's a long way and then you're not going to make it that long."

Heading towards the end of this insightful chat with the *Gundello Godari* actress, she tells us about her project-choosing process: "I always look at it as an audience and how interesting it is for me to do it. That's what really motivates me to take up a project. I just finished a series on Amazon. I've just signed something for Netflix and then of course there's *Adiparvam* releasing on the 31st."



Allu Arjun's Nandyal visit takes centre stage in *Unstoppable Season 4*

It's official now. Season 4 of the popular talk show *Unstoppable* on Aha OTT will begin streaming from October 24. The host, Nandamuri Balakrishna, released a promo for the upcoming season on Sunday. While the celebrity guest list hasn't been officially revealed, the animation promo depicted Balakrishna as a superhero. According to our sources, Balakrishna has already completed two episodes, one featuring Malayalam actor Dulquer Salmaan and the other with Icon Star Allu Arjun.

Our reliable source reveals that in the episode with Allu Arjun, Balakrishna posed a direct question about Arjun's controversial visit to Nandyal during an election campaign. In response, Allu Arjun offered a diplomatic explanation, stating, "I've regularly visited many friends in the past, including my friend Shilpa

Ravi Chandra Kishore Reddy, and this visit was blown out of proportion."

Interestingly, the source also noted that Balakrishna supported Allu Arjun's visit to Nandyal, expressing, "What's wrong in your visit?" This exchange touches on a sensitive issue, as Allu Arjun's visit has led to distance between him and the Mega Family, with him missing from many family events. Moreover, since the visit, Mega Fans have been trolling him, and some Jana Sena supporters have openly stated that they plan to target Allu Arjun's upcoming film *Pushpa 2*.

While the show starts streaming on October 24, it remains undecided which episode will air first. If Allu Arjun's episode is the debut, it could stir controversy and potentially reignite tensions between Mega Fans and Allu Arjun's supporters.

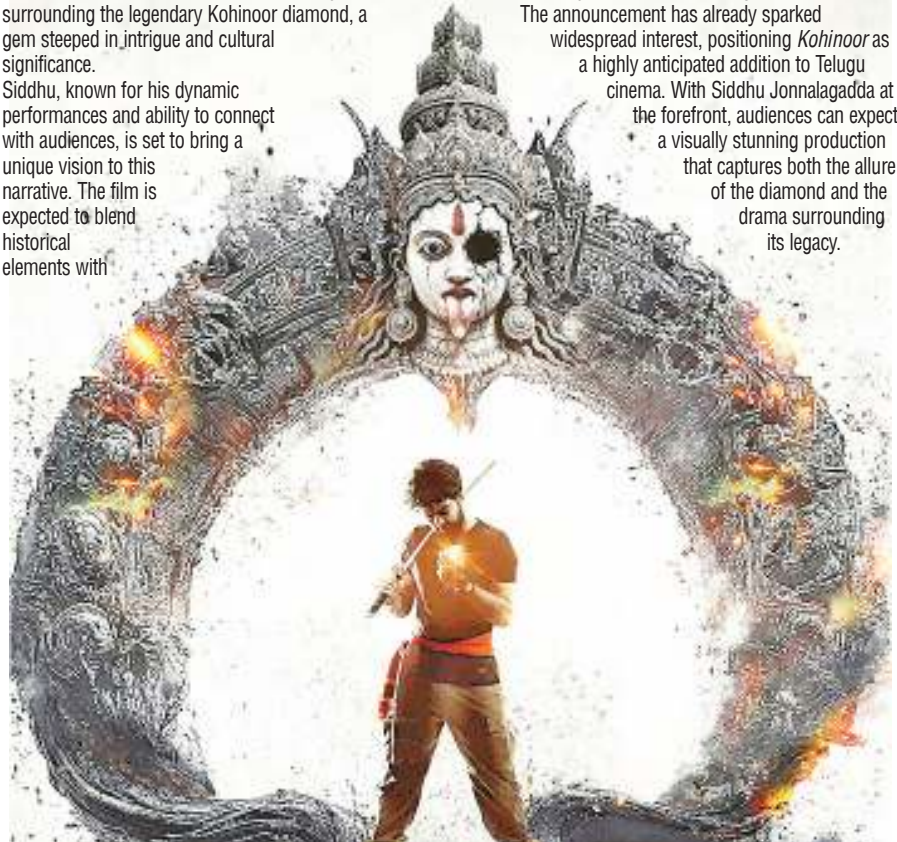
Siddhu aims hat-trick with Sitara Entertainment

Star Boy Siddhu Jonnalagadda has officially unveiled an ambitious project titled *Kohinoor*, in collaboration with Sitara Entertainments. This cinematic venture aims to delve into the rich and tumultuous history surrounding the legendary Kohinoor diamond, a gem steeped in intrigue and cultural significance.

Siddhu, known for his dynamic performances and ability to connect with audiences, is set to bring a unique vision to this narrative. The film is expected to blend historical elements with

gripping storytelling, creating a cinematic experience that resonates with viewers. As excitement builds, fans and industry insiders alike are eager to see how this iconic diamond's story will unfold on the big screen.

The announcement has already sparked widespread interest, positioning *Kohinoor* as a highly anticipated addition to Telugu cinema. With Siddhu Jonnalagadda at the forefront, audiences can expect a visually stunning production that captures both the allure of the diamond and the drama surrounding its legacy.



It's official: Nara Rohit gets engaged to his forever after!

Actor Nara Rohit got officially engaged to his long-time friend and co-star from *Prathinidhi 2*, Sireesha Lella, on Sunday. Reports had been circulating about his engagement and the couple finally made it official at a private ceremony in Hyderabad. Nara Rohit is the nephew of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. The event was kept low-profile, with no media presence allowed inside.

According to sources, Nara Bhuvaneshwari, the Chief Minister's wife, personally oversaw the arrangements for the event. The engagement was attended by several celebrities, including members of both the Nandamuri and Nara families. Nara Rohit's cousin, Minister Nara Lokesh, along with his wife Nara Brahmani, was also present. It is reported that Nara Lokesh, along with his mother, warmly received the guests and ensured everything went smoothly. Rohit and Sireesha have known each other for a long time, and their relationship blossomed while working together on *Prathinidhi 2*, which was released in May this year, just before the elections. Sireesha had been pursuing her education in Australia before making her acting debut with this film. Sources suggest that their wedding will take place soon.

Nara Rohit, who debuted with *Baanam* in 2009, is known for his versatility in films like *Solo*, *Rowdy Fellow*, *Jyo Achyutananda*, *Asura*, and *Saarocharu*. After taking a long break following the release of *Veera Bhoga Vasantharayalu* in 2018, Rohit is set to make a comeback with *Sundarakanda*, which is slated for release soon. Though *Prathinidhi 2* was released earlier this year with election-related themes, it did not perform well at the box office.



PAWAN KALYAN HITS HIGH NOTES:

Turns singer for *Hari Hara Veera Mallu*



The much-awaited *Hari Hara Veera Mallu* starring Pawan Kalyan is nearing completion, with the makers confirming that part one will wrap up by November 10. A fresh schedule kicks off on Monday, October 14, in Vijayawada with a special ceremony. The shoot recently resumed after a long break, featuring action scenes choreographed by Hollywood director Nick Powell with over 400-500 artistes and Pawan Kalyan. In exciting news for fans, the first song from the film, sung by Pawan Kalyan himself, will be released soon! Bollywood actor Bobby Deol plays a key role, while Nidhi Agerwal stars as the leading lady.

While Krish directed the initial parts, the film's reins have now been taken over by director Jyothi Krishna, with Oscar-winning composer MM Keeravani scoring the music. Produced by A Dayakar Rao, the film is set to release on March 28, 2025, in multiple languages, including Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Hindi and Kannada.

"We're aiming for a December 20 release," said producer Sivalenka. "The shooting wraps in September and post-production is underway. We'll complete censor formalities soon and bring audiences a delightful comedy just in time for the Christmas season." He promises *Sarangapani Jathakam* will be a memorable comedy for their banner.

PRABHAS' DEBUT FILM *EESWAR* SET FOR RE-RELEASE ON HIS BIRTHDAY

Actor Prabhas, one of the biggest stars in Indian cinema, is all set to relive his early days with the re-release of his debut film *Eeswar* on October 23, in celebration of his birthday. Directed by Jayanth C Paranjani and produced by K Ashok, this film is being re-released by Lakshmi Narasimha Movies. Tollywood has seen a surge in successful re-releases, with some even grossing as much as new films and the makers of *Eeswar* hope to replicate that success at the box office. The newly released trailer, featuring iconic mass dialogues by Prabhas, has already struck a chord with audiences, serving as a nostalgic re-introduction to the star. With fans known for celebrating re-releases like festivals, this 4K re-release of *Eeswar* will allow them to relish Prabhas' early charm, further amplifying the pan-Indian stardom he enjoys today.



A CHRISTMAS COMEDY TREAT BEFORE SANKRANTHI!

With *Game Changer* postponed to Sankranti, filmmakers are adjusting their release calendars. Director Indraganti Mohanakrishna and actor Priyadarshi are teaming up for *Sarangapani Jathakam*, produced by Sivalenka Krishna Prasad, which is now set to release on December 20, 2024.

Priyadarshi stars as Sarangapani, with Roopa Koduvayur in the lead. This marks the third collaboration between Indraganti and Prasad, following *Gentleman* and *Sammohanam*.



STANDALONE

Akinenni Nagarjuna and Mega star Chiranjeevi were invited to the Devi Navratri festival at the residence of S. Kalyanaraman, MD of Kalyan Jewellers.