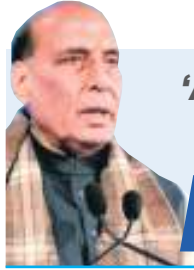


the pioneer

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'Adoption of unconventional ideas only way to progress'



'INDIA NEEDS TO CUT RELIANCE ON IMPORTED FEEDSTOCKS'



'Jani master deserves fair trial, not rushed JUDGMENTS'



QUOTE OF THE DAY

Congress Ministers are trying to remove Revanth Reddy from the Chief Minister's seat. They are conspiring to dethrone the CM like a fox waiting at a burial ground. Revanth will face problems if he does not wake up on matters like HYDRRA, the Musi Project and Group-I issues. Congress Ministers are trying to ensure that people oppose Revanth.

— Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Union Minister



P4

DON'T MISS...

Elaborate arrangements for...

Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad has instructed officials from various departments to make comprehensive arrangements for the successful conduct of the Amaravati Drone Summit 2024, scheduled for October 22 and 23. During a video conference from the Secretariat on Friday, he discussed preparations with the Collectors, SPs, JCs of NTR, Krishna, and Guntur districts, as well as the Vijayawada City Police Commissioner. The Chief Secretary highlighted that the Chief Minister, Union Civil Aviation Minister, several state ministers...

-PAGE: 3

Fee concession, cut-off relaxation...

The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) across the country are offering fee concessions and relaxation in already lower cut-off to students from reserved categories to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all, according to officials. "In the JEE-based admissions, fee remissions and fee waivers are provided right from the application stage. At the application stage, students belonging to the SC, ST, PwD (persons with disability) need to pay only half the examination fee. Further, cut-offs...

-PAGE: 5

Economic activity shows dynamism...

Economic activity continued to show dynamism in the second quarter of 2024-25, though at a moderated pace, according to the NCAER-NSE Business Expectations Survey. The survey said after improving for two consecutive quarters, business sentiments moderated in the second quarter of 2024-25 (134.3) compared to the first quarter (149.8) as well as the corresponding quarter of 2023-24 (140.7). "While all four components of the Business Confidence Index...

-PAGE: 8

Rohit, Kohli, Sarfaraz fifties...

A counter-attacking India kept alive the hopes of a miracle turnaround through free-flowing fifties from the trio of Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Sarfaraz Khan, reaching 231 for three in their second innings on the third day of the first Test against New Zealand here on Friday. Kohli (70), who completed 9,000 Test runs during the course of his knock, got out to Glenn Phillips off the last ball of the day, edging him to Tom Blundell, leaving Sarfaraz (70) at the crease at close. The deficit at the end of an overcast...

-SPORTS



Heavy inflows, 1 crest gate lifted at Srisaillam Dam

PNS ■ KURNOOL

The Srisaillam reservoir has been receiving heavy inflows due to continuous rains in the catchment areas, leading the engineers to lift one crest gate on Friday to release floodwater downstream. The water level in the reservoir has reached 885 feet, prompting the engineers to take action by lifting one crest gate to discharge water to the downstream Nagarjuna Sagar Project (NSP). Sriramdas Mohan, Executive Engineer of the Srisaillam project, stated that one crest gate was lifted this afternoon to release excess water. He added that more crest gates would likely be lifted tomorrow as the heavy inflow is expected to increase further. This marks the fifth time this year that the crest gates have been lifted to discharge excess floodwater from the Srisaillam project.

TDP role crucial in natl politics

Naidu raps Jagan rule for leaving the State in Rs 10.5L cr debts

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Despite being a regional party, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) has played a significant role in national politics and in forming governments at the Centre on multiple occasions, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu stated on Friday. Addressing a meeting of TDP MPs, MLAs, and MLCs, he remarked, "Although we are a regional party, we have played crucial roles in national politics. At one point, we were in a leading position, forming both the National Front and the United Front, and contributing to the formation of governments at the Centre." Naidu highlighted that the TDP had previously supported the government led by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee for six years without expecting any positions in return. He noted that Janasena chief Pawan Kalyan was the first to approach him before the Andhra Pradesh Assembly polls regarding an alliance with the TDP, as he wanted to prevent a split in the opposition votes. The BJP later approached the TDP, requesting them to join the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Criticising the previous government led by Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, Naidu pointed out that the state is now burdened with a debt of

■ Chandrababu Naidu highlighted TDP's support for Atal Bihari Vajpayee's government for six years without expecting positions.

■ He expressed gratitude for the Centre's assistance, stating the situation would be worse without it.

■ Naidu urged TDP MLAs to avoid repeating past mistakes, specifically cautioning against involvement in the liquor trade.

■ He noted Modi's recent five-hour meeting with NDA Chief Ministers, signalling readiness for upcoming elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand.



₹10.5 lakh crore. He expressed gratitude for the Centre's assistance, stating that the state would have faced a much worse situation without it. Naidu urged his party MLAs not to repeat the "mistakes" made by YSRCP leaders during their tenure,

emphasising that party leaders should refrain from engaging in the liquor trade unless it is part of their family business. "We all need to maintain some discipline in this," he said. Regarding the BJP's expansion, Naidu mentioned Prime Minister

Narendra Modi's recent meeting with NDA Chief Ministers and Deputy Chief Ministers in Chandigarh, where Modi sat for five hours, signalling his readiness for the upcoming elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand.



Free sand transport via tractors for local needs: MK Meena

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Mines Department Principal Secretary Mukesh Kumar Meena announced on Friday that the transport of sand via tractors for local needs has been permitted. Previously, only bullock carts were allowed for this purpose. In line with Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's directives, the government has revised the new sand policy to enable the transportation of sand through tractors. This amendment aims to facilitate sand transport for local construction projects, ensuring that there are no shortages that could impede construction activities, particularly in rural areas. The government issued these orders to prevent delays in house construction caused by a lack of sand. Principal Secretary Mukesh Kumar Meena emphasised that this decision was made to guarantee a sufficient supply of sand for local construction needs, especially in villages.

Continued on Page 2



Construction sector vital for economy: Lokesh

CREDAI team assured of govt support

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A delegation from CREDAI Visakhapatnam, led by Chairman KSRK Raju (Sai) and comprising President V Dharmender, Secretary V Sreenu, and Vice-President Ch. Govinda Raju, met Minister for IT and Electronics, Human Resources Development and Real Time Governance Nara Lokesh on Friday urging him to address the pressing concerns faced by the construction industry. The delegation gave a detailed representation outlining various challenges impacting the sector. Minister Lokesh, after patiently hearing the delegation, responded positively and assured them that the genuine issues raised would be

taken up with priority. "The construction sector is a vital pillar of our economy, and the concerns raised by CREDAI will be addressed in a timely manner. We are committed to resolving these issues and ensuring the sector's continued growth," he stated. CREDAI members expressed optimism following the meeting. "We are grateful to Minister Lokesh for his understanding approach. The construction sector has been facing several challenges, and we are hopeful that with the government's support, these will be resolved soon." The CREDAI delegation thanked the Minister for his assurance and looked forward to positive developments in the coming days.

AP Cabinet meet on October 23

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, is scheduled to meet on October 23 at the State Secretariat in Velagapudi, Amaravati. Chief Secretary to the AP Government, Neerabh Kumar Prasad, issued an urgent circular regarding this meeting, informing all concerned departments. The meeting will take place at 11:00 AM in the Cabinet Meeting Hall on the first floor of Building No. 1 in the AP Secretariat.

TDP coalition govt corrupt: Jagan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former Chief Minister and YSRCP president, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, launched a sharp attack on the TDP coalition government, accusing it of being riddled with corruption and scams. He called it a 'looting and sharing' regime, highlighting the government's failure to deliver on its promises, irregularities in the sand policy, and misuse of flood relief funds. He also pointed to corruption in liquor distribution and the Skill Development Scam, demanding transparency in elections through the counting of VVPAT

slips to safeguard democratic values. Addressing the media at the party's central office on Friday, YS Jagan criticised the TDP coalition for failing to present a full budget even after five months in power, continuing instead with a vote-on-account budget. He pointed to rampant corruption in key sectors like sand, liquor, gambling, and mining, where bribes are commonplace. He stated that the government has neglected its promises, allow-

ing scams to dominate governance post-election, pushing the state into deeper trouble. YS Jagan particularly criticised Chandrababu Naidu and other coalition leaders for mismanaging sand prices. He noted that while they had complained about high sand prices before the elections, the situation had worsened under the current government, with sand prices skyrocketing to between Rs 20,000 and Rs 60,000 per truckload across constituencies.

Continued on Page 2

The government has neglected its promises, allowing scams to dominate governance post-election, pushing the state into deeper trouble.

Help rein in prices, Manohar tells edible oil traders

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Minister for Civil Supplies Nadendra Manohar has urged edible oil importers and traders to cooperate with the government in reducing oil prices in the open market. During a meeting with edible oil importers and traders on Friday, Minister Manohar stated that the government is selling palm oil at ₹110 and sunflower oil at ₹124 per litre at subsidised prices due to the steep rise in oil prices. He emphasised that the government's initiative to sell edible oils at subsidised rates aims to pro-



vide relief to the common people, and the response has been overwhelmingly positive. The Minister appealed to importers and traders to continue selling edible oils at subsidised prices until market rates decrease. He also

encouraged oil importers to bring in larger quantities of edible oils to bridge the demand-supply gap. Additionally, Minister Nadendra Manohar expressed dissatisfaction with red gram wholesale traders for their lack of cooperation in selling the

commodity at the subsidised prices set by the government. He pointed out that the government buys red gram at market prices and sells it at subsidised rates to offer relief to consumers amid soaring prices. The Minister warned that action would be taken against traders who fail to supply red gram to the government while maintaining quality standards. He also invited them to discuss any issues they might be facing in supplying red gram to the government. Civil Supplies Commissioner Veerapandyan and Managing Director Manjiri Jilani were also present at the meeting.

MONEY LAUNDERING CASE

Delhi court grants bail to AAP leader Satyendar Jain



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Friday granted bail to AAP leader and former Delhi cabinet minister Satyendar Jain in a money laundering case, citing "delay in trial" and his "long incarceration". Jain was arrested by the

Enforcement Directorate (ED) on May 30, 2022, on the charge of laundering money through four companies allegedly linked to him. He is currently in judicial custody. "Considering the delay in trial and long incarceration of 18 months, and the fact that trail will take long to start, let alone conclude, accused is favourably suited for the relief," said Special Judge Vishal Gogne. The judge granted the relief on a bail bond Rs 50,000 with two sureties of like amount. The ED case stems from an FIR lodged against Jain by the Central Bureau of Investigation in 2017 under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

More than 1 billion people live in acute poverty

PNS ■ UNITED NATIONS

More than 1 billion people in the world live in acute poverty, over half are children and nearly 40 per cent live in conflict-torn and fragile countries, according to a report released Thursday. The report by the UN Development Programme and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative at the University of Oxford also said that more than 83 per cent of poor people live in rural areas — and the same percentage live in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. The UN Development Programme and Oxford have been publishing the Multi-dimensional Poverty Index, known as the MPI, since 2010 using 10 indicators including health, education and standard of living.

This year's index included data from 112 countries with a combined population of 6.3 billion people. According to the index, 1.1 billion people live in acute poverty, with nearly half in five countries: India with 234 million impoverished people, Pakistan with 93 million, Ethiopia with 86 million, Nigeria with 74 million and Congo with 66 million. Over half of the people living in poverty — 584 million — are children under the age of 18, with 317 million in sub-Saharan Africa and 184 million in South Asia, it said. In Afghanistan, where poverty has increased, the proportion of impoverished children is even higher — nearly 59 per cent. UNDP and Oxford said this year's report focused on poverty amid conflict because 2023 saw more conflicts than at any time since World War II

Half are children and many in conflict zones



and that an all-time high of 117 million people were forced to flee their homes due to conflict, disasters and other factors.

Pedro Conceicao, director of the UN Development Programme office that produces its annual Human Development Report,

said: "By overlaying conflict data with global MPI data for the first time, the report reveals the stark realities of those simultaneously enduring conflict and poverty." "A staggering 455 million people, both multi-dimensionally poor and living in contexts of conflict, face significantly harsher deprivations — three to five times more severe — when it comes to basic needs like nutrition, water and sanitation, electricity, and education, compared to those in poverty who live in more peaceful settings," he said in a statement to The Associated Press. Sabina Alkire, director of the Oxford initiative, said it's intuitive that reducing poverty is easier in peaceful settings than for these 455 million people, representing nearly 40 per cent of the 1.1 billion poor.

Continued on Page 2

Can AP's new liquor policy tame the black market, syndicates?

In India, liquor is more than just a commodity—it's a high-stakes, high-revenue business that state governments fiercely regulate. Each state enforces its own taxes and policies, resulting in wild price variations for the same bottle of whiskey. Take Karnataka, where a staggering 80% tax is slapped onto alcohol prices, compared to Goa's more modest 50%. The result? A bottle of whiskey that costs Rs130 in Goa will cost you Rs 513 in Karnataka. Such price differences have created a perfect breeding ground for black markets and smuggling, as consumers cross borders to find cheaper booze.

Amid this maze of regulations, liquor remains a golden goose for states, contributing around 13% of total state tax revenues in the 2024 fiscal year. In Andhra Pradesh, however, the liquor business

has been a rollercoaster of failed policies, fiscal hits, and unbridled black-market activity. The state government's recent effort to impose liquor prohibition backfired spectacularly, slashing revenues by Rs 20,000 crore. Now, the state is gambling on a new liquor policy, rolled out on October 16, 2024, aiming to generate over Rs 5,500 crore in revenue. But the question remains—can this new approach rein in illegal sales and reduce black-market dominance?

The history of Andhra Pradesh's liquor regulation is a cautionary tale. A few years back, in an attempt to curb alcohol consumption, the state took control of retail liquor sales and reduced the number of outlets from 4,380 to 3,500 while hiking up prices. This move slashed demand but fuelled a surge in blackmarket sales as people flocked to

This time, Andhra Pradesh is hoping to avoid the pitfalls of its earlier policy by handing the reins back to private players. Under the new policy, 3,736 liquor shops will be opened up for private ownership, with each licence requiring a non-refundable fee of Rs 2 lakh per shop. There is no limit on how many licences an individual can hold, which could either democratize the market or lead to monopolies.

neighbouring states for cheaper, untaxed alcohol. Smuggling networks thrived, and the state's attempt at controlling the liquor trade crumbled under the weight of its own restrictions.

This time, Andhra Pradesh is hoping to avoid the pitfalls of its earlier policy by handing the reins back to private players. Under the new policy, 3,736 liquor shops will be opened up for private ownership, with each licence requiring a non-refundable fee of Rs

2 lakh per shop. There is no limit on how many licences an individual can hold, which could either democratize the market or lead to monopolies. To sweeten the deal, the state is introducing low-cost liquor priced as low as Rs 99 to undercut black-market operations. Retailers are promised a 20% margin on liquor sales, but they will also face a steep annual retail excise tax (RET) ranging from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 8.5 lakh, depending on the size of the town or city. In the



DR. ARJA SRIKANTH
(Former Special Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh)

second year, this tax will increase by 10%.

On paper, the new policy looks promising. The combination of more retailers and cheaper legal alcohol could significantly reduce black-market activities. But the reality is murkier. Despite the

state's best efforts, the bidding process for liquor licences revealed worrying trends. Of the 85,000 applications received, around 900 shops were left without any bids. Some districts, including Tirupati, Nellore, and Vishakhapatnam, saw zero interest in certain outlets, while Vijayanagara reported a flood of over 800 bids. The uneven distribution of bids has critics worried that the new system could result in monopolies, with a few major players controlling large sections of the market.

The high taxes and low prices could also spell trouble for retailers. With slim profit margins and hefty excise duties, some shops may struggle to stay afloat. This economic pressure could push some licence holders toward illicit practices, further undermining the very purpose of the policy. Even more concerning is

the spectre of political syndicates. As the policy begins to take effect, reports of intimidation and coercion have already started trickling in. In districts like Vijayawada and Guntur, licence holders have been approached by local political leaders demanding a share of profits—sometimes as high as 20%. Syndicates have reportedly offered to buy out licences for sums as high as ₹1 crore, while some political figures are warning new entrants that they won't be allowed to operate unless they comply with these demands.

The stakes are enormous. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has vowed to crack down on such tactics, but whether his administration can deliver remains to be seen. This is a high-wire act for Andhra Pradesh, as its liquor policy could serve as a blueprint for

other states grappling with similar challenges. If successful, the state could revolutionize how liquor is regulated, simultaneously increasing revenue and curbing illegal activity. But if it fails, Andhra Pradesh could end up strengthening the black market it so desperately wants to dismantle.

In conclusion, Andhra Pradesh's new liquor policy is bold and ambitious, aiming to strike a delicate balance between economic gain and social responsibility. However, the road ahead is fraught with challenges, from the looming threat of black markets to the pressure exerted by political syndicates. Whether the policy can survive these hurdles remains to be seen, but one thing is certain—India will be watching closely as the state attempts to rewrite the rules of its liquor trade.

'Promises to lawyers will be fulfilled before polls'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Education and IT Minister Nara Lokesh has reaffirmed that the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) will keep its promises made to the legal community before the elections. Speaking at the Visakhapatnam Bar Association in the new district court complex, he emphasized the party's commitment to supporting the legal system and its professionals.

Lokesh, who walked 3.132 km as part of the Yuvagalam initiative, shared that he understands the challenges faced by lawyers. He promised to bring in a healthcare scheme for advocates, raise the age

Minister Lokesh said that he would discuss the issue of High Court bench in Vizag with the Chief Minister and a decision would be made soon. He also appreciated the efforts of the legal community in opposing the Land Titling Act and highlighted the arrival of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) in the city.

limits for welfare programmes, complete pending court-building projects, and provide housing and house plots for the legal fraternity.

Regarding the demand for a High Court bench in Visakhapatnam, Lokesh assured that he would discuss the matter with the Chief Minister and a decision would be made soon. He also appreciated the efforts of the legal community

in opposing the Land Titling Act and highlighted the arrival of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) in the city. Lokesh acknowledged the strong support from Visakhapatnam's people and spoke about the city's potential for economic growth. He promised to boost Visakhapatnam's economy through investments, an airport, a metro project, and special economic zones.

Lokesh also talked about the state's financial challenges, saying that Andhra Pradesh started with a deficit and needs reforms. He assured that the government is clearing dues in important sectors like education and healthcare. MP M Sribharat echoed Lokesh's support for the legal community and mentioned plans to create 20 lakh jobs in the next five years.

Visakhapatnam Bar Association President B Satyanarayana made a request for community building for lawyers and health insurance benefits. The event ended with the Association honouring Nara Lokesh for his continuous support to the legal community.

Lokesh addresses public grievances in Vizag

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

HRD and IT Minister Nara Lokesh arrived in Visakhapatnam for a two-day visit, during which he held the 44th Praja Darbar at the district party office. The event served as a platform for residents to voice their concerns, and Lokesh demonstrated a keen interest in addressing the various grievances presented by the public.

A significant focus of the Darbar was the issue raised by Burma Kandishikulu Residents' Welfare Association representatives. They urged immediate action against encroachments on land belonging to the Burmese Kandishikulu, highlighting that over 7,000 families are still awaiting justice. Minister Lokesh assured them, stating, "I will look into this matter and take nec-



essary steps to ensure justice is served."

The minister also responded to concerns from contract RTC drivers, who advocate for regularising their positions. Many of these drivers were selected in 2013 but only began their duties in 2022. Minister Lokesh promised to investigate their

concerns and ensure appropriate actions are taken.

Other issues discussed during the event included land injustices, requests for job support, and the recovery of retirement savings lost in Agrigold. Personal stories from residents resonated deeply with the minister. Muchakarla Dharalakshmi,

visibly emotional, shared the hardships she faced following her husband's passing due to stress related to their circumstances. Lokesh reassured her, saying, "I will assist you in any way possible."

Additionally, engineering graduate Battula Durga Praneet sought job opportunities, to which Minister Lokesh responded, "We will assist you in finding suitable job opportunities."

Anasuri Madhusudana Rao also requested a job for his son, and the minister pledged to look into the matter. Minister Lokesh reiterated his commitment to addressing the concerns raised by the residents.

"Your voices are important, and I will do my best to ensure that justice is served," he affirmed, leaving attendees hopeful for timely resolutions to their issues.

MAJOR DRUG BUST

148 kg ganja seized, 2 held in Visakha Agency

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a significant crackdown on drug trafficking in the Visakha Agency, the Vijayawada Patamata Police seized 148 kg of ganja and arrested two individuals. Acting on credible intelligence, police conducted a raid on Ramavarappadu Ring Road on Thursday, intercepting a car carrying the contraband, valued at around Rs 10 lakh. The ganja was reportedly being transported to various states, including regions beyond Guttu Chapada.

In addition to the ganja, the police also recovered a firearm from the suspects, indicating the dangerous nature of the drug trade. The arrested individuals are currently in police custody and are being interrogated to gather more information about the drug network involved.

A police spokesperson reaffirmed the department's strong commitment to combating drug trafficking and ensuring public safety. "This operation deals a major blow to the drug trade in the Visakha Agency. We remain determined to dismantle these illegal networks and bring those involved to justice," they

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:	Krishna Paksha
Tithi:	Dwitiya: Oct 18 01:15 PM to Oct 19 09:49 AM
Tritiya:	Oct 19 09:49 AM to Oct 20 06:46 AM
Nakshatram:	
Bharani:	Oct 18 01:26 PM to Oct 19 10:46 AM
Krithika:	Oct 19 10:46 AM to Oct 20 08:31 AM
Rahukalam:	9:07 AM to 10:34 AM
Yamagandam:	1:27 PM to 2:54 PM
Varjyam:	09:39 PM to 11:06 PM
Gulika:	6:13 AM to 7:40 AM
Amritakalam:	06:30 AM to 07:56 AM
Ahhijit Muhurtham:	11:37 AM to 12:24 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast:	Thunder Showers
Temp:	32°
Humidity:	80%
Sunrise:	6:01 AM
Sunset:	5:43 PM
Updated:	October 18, 2024 5:00 PM

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AMARAVATI DRONE SUMMIT 2024

'Elaborate arrangements underway'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad has instructed officials from various departments to make comprehensive arrangements for the successful conduct of the Amaravati Drone Summit 2024, scheduled for October 22 and 23. During a video conference from the Secretariat on Friday, he discussed preparations with the Collectors, SPs, JCs of NTR, Krishna, and Guntur districts, as well as the Vijayawada City Police Commissioner.

The Chief Secretary highlighted that the Chief Minister, Union Civil Aviation Minister, several state ministers, central government officials, and representatives from various states will participate in large numbers during the two-day event.

He noted that the summit is being organised in line with the Chief Minister's vision, in collaboration with the Union Civil



Aviation Department, the Drone Federation of India, and the Confederation of Indian Industry. This large-scale drone summit will be the first of its kind, featuring 400 speakers and government representatives, along with 1,000 attendees from educational institutions, industries, students, professionals, and technical aspirants.

Neerabh Kumar Prasad stated that nine sessions will be conducted on drone applications in fields such as drone manufacturing, agriculture, logistics, environmental monitoring, disaster management, and health. Additionally, four key presentations will focus on the use of drone technology and developing a comprehensive drone

ecosystem. A special interactive session will be held to discuss making Andhra Pradesh and Amaravati the drone hub of India. Furthermore, drone manufacturers from across the country will set up 40 exhibition stalls showcasing their products, along with a drone demonstration at the venue. Panel discussions will cover

drone regulations aimed at making India a global drone hub by 2030, with topics including public safety, disaster management, the adoption of drone technology, public planning, and building skilled manpower for the drone ecosystem. Discussions will also focus on drone innovation, aerial experiences in India, tourism, and entertainment.

As part of the Amaravati Drone Summit 2024, cultural programmes will be held on October 22 from 6 pm to 8 pm at Bern Park on the banks of the Krishna River in Vijayawada. The highlight will be the largest drone show in the country, featuring 5,000 drones.

The Chief Secretary urged officials to ensure all necessary arrangements are made for the summit's success, and he directed the electricity department to take appropriate measures to ensure uninterrupted power supply during the event.



Ensure temporary pathways during drain works: VMC chief

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner Dhyanaachandra visited the ESI Hospital at Gunadala on Friday and directed the officials to ensure that temporary pathways are provided during drain construction or repair works to avoid any inconvenience to the public.

He instructed the officials to

create a temporary pathway to the ESI Hospital so that the public does not face any discomfort, and also urged them to complete the work as quickly as possible.

Additionally, he directed that in major areas under the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation, measures should be taken to ensure that the public has temporary access routes while drain work is

being carried out. He emphasised that drain construction and repairs should be conducted without causing inconvenience to the public or obstructing the routes they frequently use.

Superintending Engineer P Satyanarayana, Executive Engineer (in-charge) G. Samrajyam, and other engineering staff accompanied Dhyanaachandra.

Implement PESA Act in liquor shop allocation in tribal areas: CPM

Auction process violates norms outlined in PESA Act

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a letter to Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, CPM State secretary V Srinivasa Rao has stressed the urgent need for the Andhra Pradesh government to implement the provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA) in the allocation of liquor shop licences in tribal areas.

The letter comes in response to a government order, issued on September 30, by the Director of the Prohibition and Excise Department, permitting the operation of liquor shops from 2024 to 2026. According to reports, the auction process saw an influx of applications from non-tribal individuals, with about 2,200 applications received for just 40 liquor shop licences in the Alluri Sitarama Raju district alone.

Rao highlighted that this process violates the norms outlined in the PESA Act, which mandates the involvement of local Grama Sabhas in decision-making processes that affect tribal commu-

nities. Under PESA, non-tribals are prohibited from acquiring liquor licences in Scheduled Areas, as these licences should be reserved exclusively for local tribal residents. The CPM leader expressed concern over the formation of syndicates by non-tribal applicants, resulting in the disproportionate allocation of shops to outside interests.

Rao's letter stressed that the government's auction process undermines the rights and customs of tribal communities, violating the spirit of social justice and cultural preservation mandated by the PESA Act. He urged the State government to cancel the auction and to hold democratic votes within the village councils to determine whether liquor shops should be allowed at all in these tribal regions.

The CPM called for immediate corrective action, asserting that the government must ensure compliance with PESA's provisions to safeguard the rights and traditions of tribal communities in Andhra Pradesh.

ITDA Project Officer stresses importance of career guidance

Inspects Guthula Puttu Government Tribal Welfare Girls' Ashram School

PNS ■ PADERU

In a bid to empower tribal students, the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) emphasised the importance of career guidance during a recent inspection at the Guthula Puttu Government Tribal Welfare Girls' Ashram School. ITDA Project Officer V Abhishek said, "Career guidance is crucial in helping students make informed decisions about their future. It's essential that they are aware of the opportunities available to them and the steps they need to take to achieve their goals."

The inspection reviewed the Super 50 programme, which provides focused teaching to select students. Abhishek expressed satisfaction with the current educational standards, saying, "This year, we expect students to surpass the best marks from last year." Students were educated on various career options post-10th grade, including intermediate groups, degree options, and non-conventional fields.

Abhishek advised students to explore fields like engineering, medical sciences, nursing, pharmacy, fashion designing, agriculture, horticulture, and animal



husbandry. "Every student should aim to complete at least a degree," he stated. "The medical field offers vast job opportunities for BIPC students." He also encouraged students to pursue technical courses like polytechnic and ITI, highlighting their employment prospects.

The Project Officer emphasised the importance of mock exams for UPSC, SSC, and APPSC. "Mock exams are essen-

tial for building confidence and improving exam performance," he said. This guidance aims to equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in their chosen careers.

Deputy Director in charge of the Tribal Welfare Department L. Rajini, school teachers, and officials were present. "Good health is fundamental to academic success," Abhishek concluded.

Shifting of Bala Sadan inmates to safer building demanded

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

BVS Kumar, former chairman, Child Welfare Committee, Krishna district has said that following the wall collapse of Bala Sadan situated in an old structure, the safety of children in need of care and protection is at risk. The incident at the government-run Bala Sadan in Vijayawada highlights this concern. He said that the Women

Development and Child Welfare Department operates two Bala Sadans on the same premises, housing girl children aged 6-10 from poor and incapacitated families. Kumar pointed out that these institutions are licensed and children are placed there by the Child Welfare Committee, Krishna district. He urged the State government to obtain a fitness certificate for the building.



Vizag Junior Literature Fest set to ignite young minds

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The fifth edition of the Lit Lantern Culture and Literature Welfare Society's 'Vizag Junior Literature Fest' is set to captivate audiences, both young and old, for two days starting November 23 at Hawa Mahal. Festival directors Sonal Sarda, Priya Uppalapati, and Sandhya Godey, during a media interaction on Friday, revealed exciting details of the festival.

The event kicks off with an outreach programme on November 22 in municipal schools, featuring three renowned storytellers. This initiative aims to introduce students to the essence of the literary fest and broaden their understanding of literature. One of the major highlights this year is a live performance by the Swatantra Theatre Group from Pune, who will

bring beloved characters from timeless Indian classics like Panchatantra and Vikram and Betal to life on stage.

"We are thrilled to offer a platform that inspires not just creativity, but also a deep love for literature in a world that is increasingly dominated by screens," said Sonal Sarda. "By engaging students in activities like creative writing, storytelling, and dramatised readings, we hope to foster a lifelong connection with books."

With sessions catering to three distinct age groups, the festival promises a wide array of interactive and enriching experiences. These include panel discussions, teacher training through storytelling, author readings, and a book fair showcasing works by Indian publishers.

"Our aim is not just to entertain but to provide an environment where children

can explore the many dimensions of language, culture, and literature," added Priya Uppalapati.

Since its debut in 2018, the Vizag Junior Literature Fest has grown steadily, attracting over 3,000 participants in each edition, including students, parents, and educators. "This is more than just an event; it's about nurturing the younger generation's love for literature and language, helping them to appreciate values through stories," said Sandhya Godey.

The festival, supported by prominent names such as Sandhya Marines Pvt Ltd, CMR Group, and Kankatala, is expected to draw a large crowd once again. Registrations for various sessions will commence from October 19 at multiple locations, including Tanishq Showroom, Pages Book Store, and Book Magic Library.

Tiruchanoor Brahmotsavam from Nov 28 to Dec 6

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The annual Brahmotsavam of Sri Padmavati Devi of Tiruchanoor temple will be observed from November 28-December 6, said TTD JEO Veerabrahram.

Directing the officials of all departments to make advance arrangements to organise the Brahmotsavam on par with Tirumala Brahmotsavam, on Friday, he inspected Ammavari Temple, Pushkarini, Mada streets, vacant land near Navajeevan Eye Hospital, Ghantasala Circle, High School surroundings, Pasupu Mandapam, Pudi Road and other areas.

Speaking on the occasion, the JEO said that all the departments of TTD should make arrangements in coordination with the panchayat and the police for a hassle-free darshan for the devotees. "The devotees who come for Brahmotsavam can have darshan of the presiding deity as well as Vahana Sevas in a convenient manner which is possible with our team work," he



reiterated. On the day of Panchami Teertham, the final day of the annual Brahmotsavam, areas should be earmarked for the parking of vehicles alongside Pudi Road, Renigunta and Market Yard areas. Similarly, German sheds should be set up at Navajeevan Eye Hospital, High School and Goshala (Pudi Road) for the devotees to relax. The authorities were also



instructed to set up gates for entering and exiting Pushkarini. Since devotees from Tamil Nadu are more likely to come, sign boards should be prepared in Tamil. TTD CVSO Sridhar said that strong security arrangements will be made in coordination with the local police so that the devotees do not face any security problems during Ammavari Brahmotsavam. He said that strong securi-

ty arrangements will be made at the sheds, queue lines and Pushkarini where devotees will gather in large numbers on the day of Panchami Teertham.

The CVSO also said that the procession of Sare covering the routes from Tirumala to Pasupu Mandapam will be examined beforehand and steps will be taken without any traffic problems along that route.

CE Satyanarayana, SE 1 Jagadeeswar Reddy, SE Electrical Venkateshwarlu, Deputy EOs Govindarajan, Guna Bhushan Reddy, Selvam, Siva Prasad, VGO Sada Lakshmi, Additional Health Officer Dr Sunil Kumar, EEs Narasimha Murthy, Mallikarjuna Prasad, Ravishankar Reddy, Tiruchanur Panchayat and police officers were present.

AK varsity V-C seeks funds for completion of works

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam District Collector A Thameem Ansariya visited Andhra Kesari University here on Friday and held a meeting with Vice-Chancellor Prof DVR Murthy and Registrar Prof B Haribabu.

She held a special meeting with Vice-Chancellor Prof. Murthy, Registrar Prof. Haribabu, heads of various sections of the University and faculty members of the University College in the V-C Chambers.

On this occasion, the V-C and the Registrar and others brought many issues to the attention of the Collector. The V-C informed the Collector that since the works in the Pernamitta premises allocated by the government for the management of the University have not been completed, at present the classes are being held using the old buildings in Pellur Colony. The V-C expressed hope that if funds were sanctioned by the government, the works would be completed on time.

Registrar Haribabu



informed the Collector that currently students are continuing their higher studies in 15 departments in Andhra Kesari University and the admissions related to research in various departments are also going on promisingly.

Later, Collector Ansariya, accompanied by the Vice-chancellor, the Registrar, the Principal and the Vice

Principal inspected the various departments of the University. The Collector assured that needed steps would be taken to remove unauthorized layouts. Meanwhile, the Collector conducted a surprise inspection at the mother and child hospital here on Friday.

She visited the OP registration, General OP ward, oper-

ation theatre, postnatal ward, sterilisation room and NTR Vaidya Seva counter. She inquired about the medical facilities being provided to the patients. She underscored the importance of carrying out sanitation in the GGH properly. Hospital Superintendent Dr Sandya and other doctors were among those who accompanied the Collector.

CII Andhra Pradesh conducts PLC training

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Andhra Pradesh organised a one-day training programme on Programmable Logic Controllers (PLC) in Visakhapatnam on Friday. The initiative aimed to equip participants with the essential skills to control machinery and processes, thereby enhancing operational efficiency in the manufacturing sector.

Dr V Murali Krishna, Chairman of CII Andhra Pradesh, highlighted the growing importance of automation in modern manufacturing. "The complexity of industries is increasing, and automation is not just a trend but a necessity," he said. "A skilled workforce capable of adapting to the evolving industrial automation market is crucial." S Narendra Kumar, Co-Convenor of CII's Tech Adoption, Digital Transformation & Industry 4.0 Panel, emphasised the programme's significance.

Tourism Minister lays stone for Rs 3 crore developmental works



PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh laid the foundation stone for 50 developmental works across several villages, with a total project cost of Rs 3 crore.

The works will be carried out in Peravali, Kottapalli Agraharam, Khandapalli, Makkamala, Pitla Vemavaram, Malleswaram, and Annavarappadu villages. The Minister performed a bhoomi puja and unveiled a plaque, officially launching the projects

on Friday. Speaking at the event, Minister Durgesh announced that drains and roads will be constructed at various locations, with efforts underway to complete all projects within the stipulated time.

He also shared plans for the reconstruction of roads across the state, adding that tenders have already been invited for 11 roads in Kovvur division. The Minister assured that the TISCO houses will soon be handed over to the beneficiaries. Criticising the previous YSRC government, the Minister lamented that the former regime left the state burdened with debt and an empty exchequer. Addressing the sand scarcity, he attributed it to heavy floods in the rivers, which hampered sand extraction. He also mentioned that the conditions set by the National Green Tribunal further slowed down the process but assured that the issues would be resolved, and sand would soon be supplied as needed.

'Govt which has shed the blood of youth will never survive'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar said that the lathicharge against Group-I hopefuls was shocking.

Sanjay posted on X regarding this on Friday. He said in his post that the "Congress is against reservation. This has been proved in Telangana. Met teary Group-I hopefuls in Karimnagar, who were seeking help on postponing the Mains Exams. GO



No. 29 is proof of how the government is damaging SC, ST, BC reservations.

The BJP extends support to all Group-1 hopefuls and will fight till the Group-1 Mains exams are rescheduled. A government which has shed the blood of youth will never survive. This is wrong and I strongly condemn the lathicharge. I will be going to Ashoknagar to meet the hopefuls as per the directions of @BJP4Telangana President Shri @kishanreddybjp garu."

GVMC urges bankers to advance loans for urban poor

Stresses need for collaboration between banks and government agencies



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) has called upon local banks to expedite the disbursement of loans to beneficiaries of government schemes within the city limits. During a meeting with bank representatives, GVMC Additional Commissioner DV Ramanamurthy stressed the importance of collaboration between banks and government agencies to ensure that vulnerable populations have access to financial resources.

"Bankers must prioritise the processing of loan applications related to pending schemes," Ramanamurthy stated. "We need to ensure that beneficiaries can access these funds promptly to uplift their livelihoods." The meeting focused on government initiatives like PM Vishwakarma, AP Titco Housing Loans, One Cent SHG Loans, and the Self Employment Programme. Ramanamurthy emphasised the need for immediate action. "It is crucial for bankers to not only approve loan applications quickly, but also to report any challenges they encounter in loan recovery."

UCD Project Director Satyaveni echoed this sentiment, emphasising the impor-



ance of effective coordination between bank officials and UCD officials. "By working together, we can achieve better outcomes for the beneficiaries," she said. Bank officials supported key schemes like AP TIDCO and PM Vishwakarma. "We must ensure that all eligible

beneficiaries can access the benefits of the Swanidhi schemes," Satyaveni added. The gathering was attended by GVMC UCD Project Officers, APDs, TPROs, and representatives from all banks operating under GVMC, as well as senior officers and UCD staff.



Develop 11 parks, and construct walking tracks, officials told

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector Chadalavada Nagarani has directed the municipal commissioner to develop the 11 parks in the city and take steps to construct walking tracks.

The Collector held a meeting with the municipal commissioners and reviewed various issues here on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, she told them to develop the 11 parks of the city by utilising the land. She directed them to set up water sports and adventure sports in the park to provide entertainment to the children. She advised them to examine the viability of setting up boating activity in the Edward Tank Park located in the 21st ward here. She also ordered the officials to construct walking tracks in the parks. She told the officials to beautify the parks in such a manner that they should be adults and also children. The Collector suggested to the municipal commissioners that they should adopt technology to provide more civic amenities. She told them to examine how the technology is being used to provide amenities

by the municipalities in the other States. "Dumping of garbage has become a major problem in cities. Plans should be evolved to overcome the garbage dumping problem," she told the Municipal officials. Nagarani directed the amenity secretaries and welfare secretaries to examine the implementation of the mid-day meal scheme at the ground level every Tuesday and Thursday and submit her report. She asked them to issue notices and send SMS to the owners to collect property tax and water tax in advance. She ordered the Municipal officials to ensure that the Municipal lands should not be vacant at any place and they should be utilized properly to earn money.

She said that sanitation should be carried out efficiently and the wastes collected from the chicken and mutton shops should be disposed of properly. Joint Collector T Rahul Kumar Reddy, Bhimavaram municipal Commissioner K Ramachandra Rao, and TP Gudem Commissioner M Yesubabu were among those who attended the meeting.

Two killed in hit-and-run case

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Two persons were killed as an unidentified vehicle hit the motorcycle at Nidumukkala village in Tadikonda mandal on Friday.

Police said that the deceased Ayyappa and Yesu

were going on their motorcycle towards Tadikonda. An unknown vehicle hit their bike from the rear end and fled. The two were killed instantaneously.

The Tadikonda police registered a case and shifted the bodies to the GGH.

CRIME SCENE

Two teenagers killed as bus knocks down bike

PNS ■ RAYACHOTI

In a tragic road accident, two teenagers lost their lives when an APSRTC bus hit their motorcycle at Mudivedu village in Kurabalakota mandal on Friday. Sub-Inspector Dilip stated that the victims, Yashwant Kumar Reddy (19) and Ajay Kumar Reddy (19), were on their way to Madanapalle on a motorcycle



when a speeding APSRTC bus collided with them, killing both on the spot. The deceased were residents of Chetlavaripalli village in Thamballapalle mandal. The police registered a case and shifted the bodies to the Government General Hospital (GGH) in Madanapalle for postmortem. Vehicular traffic was disrupted due to the accident but was later cleared by the police.

Young lovers end life by jumping before running train

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Two young lovers committed suicide by jumping before a running train at Pedakani on Friday.

Police said that the deceased Danaboina Mahesh (22) and Nandru Sailaja (21) had been in love for the last few months. Mahesh belonged to Pedakani working in a mobile phone store in Hyderabad while Sailaja belonged to Rudravaram village in Nandigama mandal.

They fell in love in Hyderabad and decided to marry. Mahesh's parents consented to their marriage. However, Sailaja's parents did not agree to their marriage proposal.

Disgruntled over this, both went to the railway track and jumped before a running train. Both were killed instantaneously. The railway police registered a case and shifted the bodies to the GGH for post-mortem.



Man kills daughter-in-law for resisting sexual assault

PNS ■ NANDYALA

In a shocking incident, a man killed his daughter-in-law for resisting his sexual overtures at Nagarur village in Nandikotkur mandal on Friday.

Police said that the accused Golla Kurumanna (51) attempted to outrage the modesty of his daughter-in-law, the deceased, G Shirisha (28) in the agriculture field. However, she strongly resisted his sexual misconduct. Enraged at this, Kurumanna bludgeoned his daughter-in-law with a



boulder and fled the scene. The deceased Shirisha had two children. A large number of villagers rushed to the place, where she was murdered, and demanded that the accused be punished stringently. The police registered a case and shifted the body to the GGH for postmortem.

Two farmers killed in lightning strike



PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Two farmers were killed when lightning struck them at Hanumanthapuram village in Picchaturu mandal in Satyavedu constituency on Friday.

According to the revenue officials, the deceased Manikanha (54) and Ramu (50) were working in their

fields. Lightning struck on them killing them on the spot. One of the deceased Manikanha is survived by three daughters and wife.

The villagers appealed to the government to help the family by extending financial assistance.

Revenue and police officials visited the village and registered cases.

Visakhapatnam Growth Hub Project takes off

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A high-level meeting was convened in Visakhapatnam today to assess the progress of the Growth Hub Project, a strategic initiative spearheaded by NITI Aayog. The project aims to unlock the region's immense potential across various sectors, including agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing. BVR Subrahmanyam, CEO of NITI Aayog, emphasized the region's untapped potential and highlighted the Growth Hub Project as a crucial catalyst for its development. "This region possesses a wealth of resources and opportunities," he said. "The Growth Hub Project is a strategic step towards realizing its full potential and transforming it into a thriving economic powerhouse."

The meeting brought together district officials from eight districts, including



Visakhapatnam, Anakapalli, Vijayanagaram, Srikakulam, Alluri Sitarama Raju, Parvathipuram Manyam, East and West Godavari. The participants reviewed the project's progress, discussed challenges and opportunities, and explored ways to accelerate its implementation.

MN Harendhira Prasad, Collector of Visakhapatnam, stressed the importance of ensuring that each district contributes effectively to the growth hub's success. "We are working to equip every district with the necessary tools and strategies to participate fully in this transformative project,"

he said. The Growth Hub Project is designed to leverage the region's natural resources, including its strategic port and mineral reserves, to attract industries and create employment opportunities. By enhancing infrastructure, addressing rural and urban challenges, and involving the

local community, the project aims to establish Visakhapatnam as a significant economic center.

The project is expected to drive development across various sectors, including agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, trade, commerce, transport, and governance. Visakhapatnam, along with Mumbai, Surat, and Varanasi, is one of four cities selected for development under the Growth Hub Programme. NITI Aayog officials aim to release the project report by January 2025. With its strategic location, abundant resources, and growing economy, Visakhapatnam is well-positioned to become a major growth hub. The Growth Hub Project is a testament to the government's commitment to unlocking the region's potential and driving inclusive development.

ACROSS THE STATES



'No haggling in MVA over Assembly seats'

Amid an impasse over seat-sharing among Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) parties in Maharashtra, Shiv Sena (UBT) President Uddhav Thackeray on Friday cautioned that haggling among allies must not be allowed to reach a breaking point.



AIIMS guard accuses CSO of sexual harassment

A female guard at AIIMS-Delhi has accused its chief security officer of sexual harassment and caste discrimination, prompting the premier medical institute to initiate a probe into the allegations.



Bishnoi gang member sent in police custody

A court at Panvel in Maharashtra on Friday remanded a member of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang, arrested for alleged involvement in a conspiracy to kill Bollywood actor Salman Khan, in four-day police custody.

BJP, JD(S) welcome ED raids in MUDA 'scam'

'Fair probe not possible by Lokayukta'

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Welcoming the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) raids in the MUDA site allotment case allegedly involving Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's family, opposition BJP and JD(S) in Karnataka asserted on Friday that they are necessary to uncover the "scam" and to bring out the truth.

Leaders from the two parties slammed the ruling Congress for questioning the ED probe in the case, in which Siddaramaiah is an accused, asking whether a fair probe into the case was possible by the Lokayukta police that function under his government



and some other locations are being raided by the federal probe agency officials along with an escort of a central paramilitary force.

denied suggestions of political motive behind the raids, noting that the complaint against the CM and others was not filed by the party.

VIRAL VIDEO

'Outstation voters will get money for travel to seat'



PNS ■ CHHTRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

A video of Shiv Sena MLA Santosh Bangar's speech has gone viral in which he is purportedly heard saying that voters from his constituency staying outstation would be paid money online if they travel to their native place for voting.

Bangar, who belongs to the ruling Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, represents the Kalamnuri assembly seat in Hingoli district.

The video of his speech has gone viral on social media and has been shared by some regional news channels. However, when and where he made the comment could not be known.

In the video, he said, "The list of those (voters) who are out of station should be submitted to us in the next 2-3 days. Ask them to hire vehicles and they should get what they want. Everything will be made available to them including 'PhonePe' (online payment app). Tell them that they are coming for us. The voters staying outside should come to our village."

Bangar was elected as an MLA of the undivided Shiv Sena in 2019. After the party's division, he sided with CM Shinde. When contacted, Hingoli collector Abhinav Goel told PTI, "I have not seen the video (of Bangar's speech) so far. But we have our teams and they are keeping a watch. We will examine the video and take action if it is necessary."

Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly R Ashoka

UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE

'Adoption of unconventional ideas only way to progress'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday said technology has "transformed" the conventional warfare into an unconventional one, and adoption of "unconventional ideas", not yet known to the world, is the only way to progress while navigating this change.

In his address at the 'DRDO-Industry Workshop on Defence Technology Acceleration' held at the DRDO Bhawan here, he also called upon the private sector to move forward from the state of 'participation' to 'taking lead' in the defence sector.

Today, technology has "transformed" conventional warfare into unconventional warfare, the defence minister said.

"New dimensions have been added to modern-day warfare, such as drones, cyber warfare, bio-weapons and space defence.

In this transformative phase, research and development in defence will definitely make the defence sector stronger," he was quoted as saying in a statement issued by the defence ministry.

It is heartening to witness Indian scientists, industrialists, academia, start-ups, MSMEs and young entrepreneurs working together in this endeavour, he said.

The defence minister asserted that "it is time for the private sector to take lead as it has the ability to absorb rapid changes and create new innovations".

Singh, in his address, described the adoption of "unconventional ideas, not yet known to the world, as the only way to progress in unconventional warfare".

Acknowledging it as a tough task, he stated that the government, led by Prime Minister



Narendra Modi, will "continue providing all necessary support" to the youth, scientists, industrialists and MSMEs in this endeavour.

Singh reiterated the government's commitment to make the defence sector more innovative and technology-oriented.

At the event, the minister launched 'Dare to Dream 5.0' to encourage next generation of

innovators and start-ups to come forward with transformative ideas for defence applications.

The fifth edition of DRDO's innovation contest aims to generate cutting-edge solutions for India to progress further in its pursuit to achieve 'aatmanirbharta' in defence technologies, the statement said.

Singh also felicitated the win-

ners of 'Dare to Dream 4.0', recognising individual innovators, start-ups and MSMEs for disruptive solutions and innovations in the fields of countermeasures for drones and swarm of drones; advanced acoustic system to locate gunfire, directed energy technologies, cognitive listening device, target seeking, among others.

He described the challenges as a testament to the commitment of the industrial ecosystem of the country to protect the future of the defence sector.

"Like our brave soldiers, scientists, industry leaders, academia, start-ups, MSMEs and entrepreneurs too are the warriors of the country, prepared to complete every assigned task," he said. Singh laid emphasis on the need to achieve advancements in both incremental and disruptive technologies within the defence sector.

EC issues notification for bypolls to 9 assembly seats in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Election Commission on Friday issued the notification for the upcoming bye-elections to nine assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh, a senior official said.

According to the EC, the last date of making nominations is October 25, while scrutiny of the nomination papers will be held on October 28.

The last date for the withdrawal of candidature is October 30.

Voting will be held on November 13, while counting of votes will take place on November 23.

The EC on Tuesday announced that bypolls to nine of the 10 vacant assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh, except Milkipur of Ayodhya district, will be held on November 13. Bypoll to the Milkipur assembly seat was not announced as an election petition is pending in the high court against the candidate who had won the seat earlier.

Meanwhile, officials at the office of UP's Chief Electoral Officer on Friday said that they have forwarded to the Election Commission of India the letter by the BJP, asking the poll authority to postpone the bypoll dates from November 13 to November 20 in view of Kartik Purnima.

A BJP delegation led by state general secretary Govind Narain Shukla had on Thursday met Uttar Pradesh additional chief electoral officer and handed over a letter of their demands to him.



The delegation said Kartik Purnima is on November 15. It is known that on this occasion in the state, a large number of people take bath, it said.

People reach Kundarki (in Moradabad), Meerapur (in Muzaffarnagar), Ghaziabad and Prayagraj three-four days in advance to perform puja. Many people may be deprived of voting due to this, the delegation had noted.

The assembly seats where bypolls will be held are Katehari, Karhal, Meerapur, Kundarki, Phulpur, Sisamau, Ghaziabad, Majhawan and Khair.

Eight of these assembly seats fell vacant after its MLAs were elected to the Lok Sabha, while bypoll in Sisamau is being held due to the disqualification of SP MLA Irfan Solanki, who was convicted in a criminal case.

In the 2022 assembly polls, Sisamau, Katehari, Karhal, Milkipur and Kundarki were held by the Samajwadi Party, while the BJP had won Phulpur, Ghaziabad, and Khair. The Meerapur seat was held by the RLD, while the Majhawan seat was won by the NISHAD party.

MEASURES FOR RESERVED CATEGORY STUDENTS

Fee concession, cut-off relaxation: IITs reach out

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) across the country are offering fee concessions and relaxation in already lower cut-off to students from reserved categories to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all, according to officials.

"In the JEE-based admissions, fee remissions and fee waivers are provided right from the application stage. At the application stage, students belonging to the SC, ST, PwD

(persons with disability) need to pay only half the examination fee. Further, cut-offs are relaxed to support a greater number of admissions in the SC, ST, PwD and OBC categories," said IIT Madras Director V Kamakoti.

IIT Madras conducted the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE)-Advanced, the entrance exam for IITs, this year.

"There are 23 IITs currently and as per Ministry of Education's focus on providing support to students from the disadvantaged sections of soci-



ety, several initiatives have been taken. Besides these, some IITs take additional measures individually as well," he said.

"To further enable a greater number of students to benefit from the high quality of education that the IITs have to offer, SC, ST students who secure marks lower than the relaxed selection cut-off, are given special training through a preparatory course, which enables them to directly join the IITs after completion of the preparatory course," he added.

Starting this year, JEE (Advanced) 2024 team enabled "Citizen Service Centres" across the country to help candidates, specifically from rural places, to fill out the choices and pay the fees through the online portal.

"A multi-lingual call centre was also set up to answer queries from candidates.

A reconciliation day after the fee-payment deadline date was introduced this year to handle cases (who made at least one payment attempt) that had last-minute technical glitches," Kamakoti said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Balancing act

SC upholds Section 6A of Citizenship Act, balancing humanitarian concerns with indigenous rights of Assamese people

In a landmark judgement the Supreme Court of India has upheld the constitutional validity of Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955. In a 4:1 majority verdict, the bench led by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud endorsed the provisions that grant citizenship to people who migrated from Bangladesh between January 1, 1966, and March 25, 1971. The decision comes amidst long-standing debates over immigration in Assam. Section 6A was introduced in 1985 as part of the Assam Accord, an agreement between the Indian government and Assam's agitating groups to address the issues arising from illegal immigration. Those who arrived after March 25, 1971, are not eligible for citizenship and are considered illegal immigrants under Indian law. The Assam Accord aimed to balance the humanitarian concerns of migrants with the socio-economic and cultural interests of the indigenous Assamese population. The cut-off date of March 25, 1971, corresponds to the beginning of 'Operation Searchlight,'



a military crackdown by the Pakistani Army in then-East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), which triggered a significant influx of refugees into India. In the majority ruling, Chief Justice Chandrachud noted that Section 6A does not violate the fundamental rights guaranteed under Articles 6 and 7 of the Constitution, which pertain to the conferring of citizenship to migrants from East and West Pakistan at the commencement of the Constitution on January 26, 1950. The court held that the legislation sought to address specific historical and demographic realities in Assam, making the separate cut-off date for the state reasonable and justifiable. However, while upholding

the constitutional validity of Section 6A, the Supreme Court expressed concerns over the inadequate implementation of immigration laws in Assam. Indeed the porous borders and incomplete fencing have allowed a continuous influx of migrants, which exacerbates demographic challenges. Besides, existing mechanisms, including the Foreigners' Tribunals, are insufficient for effectively identifying and deporting illegal immigrants. The Supreme Court's decision has far-reaching implications for the socio-political landscape in Assam. The ruling, while affirming the validity of Section 6A, also recognises the concerns of petitioners who argued that cultural and demographic tapestry of Assam has changed by mandating better enforcement of immigration laws. If the directives for stricter border controls and timely identification of illegal immigrants are implemented effectively, it could help address long-standing grievances regarding demographic changes in Assam. On the other hand, striking down Section 6A would have rendered many residents, who have lived in Assam for decades, effectively stateless, leading to potential humanitarian crises. The court's ruling ensures that such individuals retain their citizenship rights, thus preventing large-scale displacements and unrest.

PICTALK



Women make 'rangoli' on the occasion of Lakshmi Puja, in Nadia

Unveiling Canada's hidden history of injustice

A contradiction in Canada's identity—championing human rights and multiculturalism while perpetuating deep injustices against its most vulnerable



NILANTHA ILANGAMUWA

Chanie Wenjack was a 12-year-old Anishinaabe boy who attended the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School in Kenora, Ontario, in the 1960s. Like many Indigenous children, he was forcibly removed from his family and placed in the school, where the goal was to assimilate him into Canadian culture. Chanie was lonely, abused, and homesick. In 1966, he ran away from the school, trying to find his way home—over 600 kilometres away. Chanie set out on foot, without proper clothing or food, and tried to follow a set of railway tracks that he believed would lead him back to his family. After days of walking in the freezing October weather, Chanie died from exposure and hunger. His body was found on October 22, 1966, curled up beside the tracks. He was clutching matches and a frozen lump of sugar in his pocket. He was just a child, lost in a hostile world that had torn him from his family.

This tragic narrative, among hundreds of thousands of similar cases swept under the carpet of history, encapsulates a fundamental contradiction within Canada's national identity—a nation that presents itself as a bastion of multiculturalism, tolerance, and human rights while simultaneously perpetrating profound injustices against its Indigenous peoples. From the brutal implementation of the residential school system to contemporary systemic racism, Canada's historical contradictions are glaring and demand serious examination. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) reported that many children experienced physical, emotional, and sexual abuse while at these schools—a grim testament to a system that was, in its essence, a form of cultural genocide. This system did not simply end with the closing of these schools; the effects are still felt today, manifesting in intergenerational trauma and systemic discrimination against Indigenous communities. As the well-known Canadian writer John Ralston Saul aptly notes, "Canada's story is one of



contradiction; we celebrate diversity while practising exclusion and denying the full citizenship of Indigenous peoples," adding, "the unconscious civilisation is the one in which we have lost our sense of the individual, in which the individual has become a statistic."

While Indigenous peoples face systemic discrimination, the Canadian government has also engaged in doublespeak regarding human rights. Canada often positions itself as a global leader in advocating for human rights, yet its track record reveals a different reality. For instance, Canada's participation in international human rights agreements contrasts starkly with its treatment of Indigenous populations. The United Nations has repeatedly criticised Canada for its failure to uphold the rights of Indigenous peoples, pointing to issues such as the lack of access to clean water, adequate housing, and education. The disparity between Canada's self-image and the lived experiences of marginalised communities highlights a persistent hypocrisy. Systemic discrimination in Canada impacts not only Indigenous communities but also various racialised groups, who encounter significant barriers in employment, education, and healthcare. This inequitable access reinforces cycles of poverty and marginalisation. The recent rise in anti-Asian

sentiment has exposed the pervasive nature of racism in Canadian society, with hate crimes against Asian Canadians increasing sharply. This alarming trend highlights the fragility of Canada's multicultural narrative and reflects a broader pattern of scapegoating marginalised groups, revealing the inadequacies of government responses that often fail to deliver meaningful action. It is quite unfortunate to see how Canada has become a sanctuary for extremist movements, allowing groups like the Khalistani separatists and Tamil Tiger sympathisers to thrive within its borders. This situation raises alarming questions about the nation's complicity in international terrorism. Critics argue that the Canadian government's leniency towards violent nationalists and separatists not only enables these ideologies but also positions Canada as a breeding ground for extremism that threatens global security. The government's failure to confront these dangerous ideologies casts doubt on its commitment to combating terrorism and upholding human rights.

The Khalistani movement, which seeks a separate Sikh state in India, has erupted into violent clashes, giving rise to grave allegations of Canadian collusion in the turmoil. This week, the expulsion of six Indian diplomats over evidence of a "campaign of violence" against dissidents fur-

ther exposes the hypocrisy of a government that engages in doublespeak while attempting to deflect attention from its shortcomings. While Canada positions itself as a supporter of human rights and development, its actions frequently tell a different story. For example, Canadian mining companies operating in Africa have been criticised for their exploitative practices and the environmental degradation they cause.

The extraction of resources often comes at the expense of local communities, whose rights and livelihoods are compromised in the name of profit. This contradiction is starkly illustrated in countries like the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where Canadian companies have faced allegations of human rights abuses and complicity in violence against local populations.

The quest for justice is not just a collective responsibility but a relentless commitment to truth and accountability. Only then can Canada build a future where dignity is not a privilege but a right for every citizen, thus challenging the very essence of what it means to be Canadian? As Gabor Maté, a well-known Canadian physician and author, states, "the question of who we are is deeply embedded in the culture we are raised in and the stories we tell ourselves."

(The writer is a journalist and author, views expressed are personal)



SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION IN CANADA IMPACTS NOT ONLY INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES BUT ALSO VARIOUS RACIALISED GROUPS, WHO ENCOUNTER SIGNIFICANT BARRIERS IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND HEALTHCARE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CONGRESS FACES SETBACKS

Madam — The article 'Haryana setback exposes cracks in INDIA Bloc' (October 17) has exposed chinks in the opposition armour. The tussle for the opposition face never settled even before Lok Sabha elections but after the Congress debacle in Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana elections, the severe infighting has surged on the ground. Rahul Gandhi has lost not just credibility in the opposition but even the Congress cadre has a trust deficit in him. All enthusiasm appears lost for the Jharkhand and Maharashtra Assembly elections and bypolls. The blame game on EVMs has already commenced even before poll campaigns.

The allies of the INDIA bloc are marginalising Congress on seat sharing. The Udhav Thakre-led Shiv Sena has completely sacrificed its Hindu ideology and its stand on Article 370 and Veer Savarkar, so Shiv Sena (UBT) relinquished its distinct identity and space in Maharashtra politics. The opposition in the INDIA bloc and other alliances are chasing minority votes as its vote bank leaving Hindus for the BJP. The entire opposition is numbed on terrorism-related killings, illegal waqf claims on government owned properties, temples and their lands, anti-India tirades abroad, insults heaped on Sanatan and our Gods and faiths, Bengal carnage and massacres of Hindus in Bangladesh.

The National Conference boldly gave up Congress in his cabinet for better coordination with the Modi government, certainly for more empowerment of his governance. Haryana's verdict is a big blow to Congress for the fallacy of Rahul Gandhi's typical campaigning based on narratives, hypes and unsubstantiated allegations on the Modi government and the lack of good governance in Congress-ruled states.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

CRIME BEYOND BORDERS

Madam—In India, it is rarely heard that the business of the criminal gang here runs at the international level. It was revealed for the first time when Canadian Prime

Justice statue reflects change



The unveiling of the new lady statue of the justice by the delegates of the Apex Court of India is more about resemblance with the Indian Justice Vision. Despite India had been in so many years of independence now, the existence of colonial laws and justice icons presents a jeopardised picture. Often, Indian judiciary is

renowned for its delayed handling of cases, notoriously defamed as the 'Tarikh pe Tarikh' system.

The new lady icons, in their renowned appearance, will propel the audience to expect renowned justice mechanisms. The changing of sword with the Indian Constitution book, opening of her blindfold, and changing in cloth with a saree allow the same lady to visualise the renowned aspirations of the people from the Indian justice mechanism. We can expect that with indigenous statues and indigenous Samhita laws, India can pave the way for improved justice mechanisms with speedy justice delivery. We hope that this new version of the justice delivery system will enhance the trust and reliability of the Indians in these justice delivery bodies and will propel Indians to get rid of this Black coat syndrome and ineffective judiciary.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

Minister Justin Trudeau said that 'India's Bishnoi group is currently carrying out its exploits at the international level. This group has created a sensation in the whole country by shooting 66-year-old Baba Siddiqui, a well-known leader and former MLA of Mumbai, in broad daylight. Apart from this, this group has also threatened to kill Bollywood celebrity Salman Khan since 2018. Bishnoi is the prime accused in the sensational murder of Sidhu Moose Wala, who was shot dead near his village in October 2022. Police say his accomplice Goldy Brar, who is also a co-accused in the murder of Moose Wala, runs the gang from Canada via remote control. Bishnoi has more than 30 cases pending against him, 19 of which are currently being heard in court. A senior officer of Punjab's Anti-Gangster Task Force has admitted that "He runs his gang from jail without any coordination."

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

BLIND SUPPORT FOR CANADA

Madam — The US, UK, Australia and New Zealand blindly supporting their

partner Canada in the 'five eyes' group on the unsubstantiated allegation against the involvement of the Indian government in the killing of an Indian-origin Canadian who belongs to the 'Khalistani' Indian Separatist group is deplorable. The allegation is based only on the basis of the intelligence reports from the Canadian Police without any evidence, as per Justin Trudeau himself.

In diplomatic matters such as these one wonders how there can be an assertion of charge by Canada, and the friendly nations support the same 'blindly' just on here say. It is sad the 'five eyes' group, which has opened its eyes on Trudeau's call against India, has turned a blind eye to what is happening in West Asia, where its lead member, the US is bolstering the attack by the rogue nation Israel in Gaza, the West Bank, Syria, and Lebanon and now readying to attack Iran as a retaliation.

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

A call to secure a lead-free future for children

As the world marks the twelfth International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, the spotlight is on eliminating lead from paints

The world is observing the twelfth International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (ILPPW) from October 20-26, 2024. This year's theme, "Bright Futures Begin Lead-Free," echoes the grave danger that the presence of lead in paints has on the environment and human health, and more specifically on children.

Lead, a potent neurotoxin, has long been recognised as a serious public health threat, particularly to children, and pregnant and lactating women. Exposure to lead can cause irreversible damage to the brain and nervous system, leading to cognitive impairment, learning disabilities and developmental delays. It negatively affects children's intellectual ability, attention span and academic performance.

Further lead exposure can have a huge bearing on the economy of the nation. According to a study, childhood lead exposure in low- and middle-income countries resulted in economic losses amounting to \$977 billion annually, representing 1.2 per cent of the global GDP



in 2011. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), there is no known safe level of lead exposure in the human body. The UN agency has classified lead as one of the top ten chemicals of primary public health concern.

Efforts are being made globally and nationally to phase out lead from different sources, as it directly and indirectly, harms human health. The phase-out of lead from gasoline has been a remarkable success, but lead in paints remains a key source of lead poisoning, and more so in developing and the least developed countries. Nevertheless, lead-based paint

is a common source of lead poisoning in children. They ingest and inhale lead particles even when they are in the safe confines of their homes. Lead paints are more harmful when they deteriorate, releasing dust and flakes that contaminate indoor environments and pose a direct risk to human health, particularly to children.

Many countries have introduced regulations to control or ban the use of lead in paints, but it is still a problem in low- and middle-income countries where such regulations are either absent or poorly enforced. The continued sale and use of lead paint in over 100 countries without

binding legal limits, exacerbates the threat. India has restricted the use of lead up to 90 PPM in household and decorative paints through a regulation, but challenges in implementing the regulations in small and medium-scale industries, persist.

The Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint, formed by WHO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 2009, aims to phase out lead from paints worldwide by 2025. However, considering the current pace of developments, that seems far from being achieved if the movement is not accelerated. This year's theme "Bright future begins lead-free," can perhaps be catalysed as an action-oriented approach to eliminate lead from paints. There is only a year to go, so all stakeholders including government, industries, and civil society must join hands in this global effort to eliminate lead from paints and keep the future generation safe.

The author is a Senior Programme Coordinator (Chemical and Health) with Toxics Link; views are personal



PIYUSH MOHAPATRA



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PM MODI'S ASEAN OUTREACH

This strong diplomatic push comes as India emphasises ASEAN centrality



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Lao PDR last week to attend the India-ASEAN summit was an important message for allies in the Indo-Pacific region regarding shared interests and common goals. PM Modi laid out a ten-point action agenda plan for upgrading relations with the ASEAN member countries, covering technology cooperation, trade, people-to-people ties, education, health, green energy and a focus on the global south bunch of nations. This comes at a time when External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar visited Pakistan (a first-in-line visit by any Indian External Affairs minister in the past 9 years) to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit. PM Modi during his inaugural address at the ASEAN India summit mentioned "Ten years ago, I announced India's 'Act East' policy. Over the past decade, this initiative has revitalised the historical ties between India and ASEAN countries, infusing them with renewed energy, direction and momentum. Giving importance to ASEAN centrality, we launched the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative in 2019." Clear references were made regarding the Indo-Pacific's centrality for India's foreign policy interests. India has under the current government's foreign policy priorities, kept the Indo-Pacific as a centre-piece. It has joined one of the most significant multilateral platforms, QUAD with the US, Australia and Japan and also entered into an economic partnership framework with the US and several countries in Asia under IPEF (Indo-Pacific Economic Framework).

The QUAD even though not a security alliance is focussed on maintaining a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region. India managed to include several crucial pointers inserted in the Chairman HE Mr Sonexay Siphandone's, (also, the Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic) statement during the summit. The statement read "We reaffirmed the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability, safety, and freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea.



We reaffirmed the need to enhance mutual trust and confidence, exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability and avoid actions that may further complicate the situation. We further reaffirmed the need to pursue peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with the universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. We emphasised the importance of self-restraint in the conduct of all activities by claimants and all other states, including those mentioned in the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) that could further complicate the situation and escalate tensions in the South China Sea.

We underscored the importance of the full and effective implementation of the DOC in its entirety and committed to maintaining and promoting an environment conducive to the negotiations of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) that is in accordance with International Law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. "Meanwhile as expected India did not engage in any bilateral dialogue with the SCO host country, Pakistan. Relations with Pakistan have been on the edge, for nearly a decade now, with an escalation, when India removed Article 370, regarding a special status for Kashmir. A couple of Pakistan-based terror attacks and India's surgical strike on terrorists on Pakistan soil ensured the relationship has been frosty. Meanwhile, Pakistan's national economy has plummeted in a post-Covid era. The guardian country for Pakistan in the region is India's other real problem, China. However, the binding economic packages China offers, are sure to make Pakistan a colony in the long run. While EAM's visit to Pakistan could be seen as a good goodwill gesture, in the long run, economic bilateral ties and the human bridge between the two nations, would be the only saviour for Pakistan.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Bangladesh reforms: Exaggerated importance



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

As scepticism mounts and electoral timelines remain vague, questions about the interim government's long-term ambitions are becoming harder to ignore

The latest buzzword in Bangladesh is reform. A report by Reuters, datelined August 16, 2024, and carried in the Dhaka Tribune under the heading, "Student protestors plan new party to cement their revolution," quoted Nahid Islam, a coordinator of the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement and an advisor to the interim government, as saying, "The spirit of the movement was to create a new Bangladesh, one where no fascist or autocrat can return," and adding that to ensure that "we need structural reforms, which will definitely take some time." The government, he further said, was not considering calls from the Awami League and BNP to hold fresh polls as early as fall.

According to a report in The Daily Star, datelined August 18, 2024, and carried under the heading "No option but to succeed: Yunus," the interim government's chief advisor said, while addressing foreign diplomats during a "Meet and Greet" session at a hotel in Dhaka, that the interim government would hold a free, fair and participatory election as soon as it could complete its mandate to carry out vital reforms in the election commission, judiciary, civil administration, security forces and media. He added that the students wanted meaningful and deep reforms, which would turn Bangladesh into a "real and thriving democracy". Things have been moving. In his address to the nation on September 11, 2024, Yunus announced the names of the heads of six commissions of reform along with the areas of governance they would address. Thus, Shahdeen Malik would lead the Constitutional Reform Commission; Justice Shah Abu Naim Mominur Rahman, the Judicial Reform Commission; Badiul Alam Majumdar, the Election System Reform Commission; Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury, the Public Administration Reform Commission; Safar Raj Hossain, the Police Administration Reform Commission; and Iftekharuzzaman, the Anti-Corruption Reform Commission.

Yunus stated in his 32-minute speech that the commissions were expected to start their work from October 1 and finish within the next three months. Thereafter, the interim government would, on the basis of their report, organise discussions with major political parties and, in the final stage, hold comprehensive consultations, spread over three to seven days, with representatives of student bodies, civil society, political parties and the government. He added, "This discussion will finalise the outline of the reform plan and provide an idea on how it will be implemented."

There was, however, a stumble as early September 18, 2024, when it was announced that the Constitutional Reform Commission was to be headed by Ali Riaz, a Distinguished Professor at Illinois State University in the United States, and not Shahdeen Malik who, one learnt subsequently, had himself opted out, citing his own work load.

Even if the move does not make much of a difference in the commission's work, it indicates inefficiency and thoughtlessness. The interim government should have got Malik's consent before announcing his name as the head of the Constitution Reforms Commission. Besides, work has not been progressing fast enough. A



IF FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS COULD BE HELD EARLIER UNDER CARETAKER GOVERNMENTS, THESE CAN BE HELD AGAIN UNDER A CARETAKER GOVERNMENT WHOSE COMPOSITION IS SANCTIONED BY ALL OR A MAJORITY OF PARTIES IN BANGLADESH

report in the Dhaka Tribune, datelined October 14, 2024, and carried under the heading "Badiul Alam: Election Reform Commission reviewing laws, regulations," quotes Badiul Alam Majumdar, head of the Constitutional Reform Commission, as saying that laws, regulations, and rules were [being] reviewed as a part of the election review process, "to gain a clear understanding of electoral reforms." The implication is that the commission had yet to get a clear understanding of its task. At this rate, it is unlikely to finish its work within 90 days of starting it. Delay is almost certain to happen because the introduction of the proportional representation system is being considered. According to Riadul Karim in his piece, "Proportional system scheme in discussion," in Prothom Alo English (updated on October 15, 2024), the proceedings of a virtual discussion meeting showed that while the BNP opposed the decision and the Awami League's view was not known, both 'eminent personalities' and the other political parties favoured it. Given the BNP's opposition, there is bound to be heated discussions and delays if the Constitutional Reform Commission considers proposing such a change.

Given the difficult and contentious nature of the political and administrative terrains to be covered, progress in the other sectors of reform would also be slow unless the commissions have been told what to recom-

mend and the members have agreed. Hence, the urgency of the question, when would the elections be held? The urgent need for an answer is sharply underlined by the absence of the announcement of a timeframe, to say nothing of dates, for holding elections to the new Jatiya Sangsad or National Parliament. Continued silence on the matter is bound to raise the question: is the interim government planning to become permanent? Some may regard this as an unwarranted question. The complete overhaul of the civil administration, foreign ministry, judiciary, police and military under way, is, however, significant in this context. The plea is that these have to be rid of those complicit in the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government's gross human rights violations. Given, however, the very large number of people shunted to sinecures, sacked or compulsorily retired before time, the question arises whether all of them were actually guilty, or the interim government is staffing the administration, judiciary, police and military with people who would support its bid to stay indefinitely in power.

The prospect must worry the BNP. With the Awami League being sought to be systematically crippled through murder and large-scale imprisonment, it has every chance of sweeping the parliamentary elections, which have become due following the dismissal of the former parliament on August 6, 2024. It might also

ask whether the reforms are so important as to make their completion a pre-requisite for holding elections. The argument, articulated ad nauseum, that reforms are need for holding free and fair elections and preventing the return of an autocrat to power, is ridiculous. If free and fair elections could be held earlier under caretaker governments, these can be held again under a caretaker government whose composition is sanctioned by all or a majority of parties in Bangladesh. The point needs to be made because the importance of reforms as a means of ensuring a "real and thriving democracy," is highly exaggerated. The impeccably democratic constitution of the Weimer Republic could not prevent Hitler's ascent to power through the electoral process. No constitutional safeguard can prevent a legally-elected leader becoming a tyrant, or a military coup, or a violent mass-movement forcing the ouster of an existing government, a telling example of which has recently been provided by Bangladesh itself!

The harsh reality is reflected in the sage words of late Justice Learned Hand of the United States who said, "Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women; when it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it; no constitution, no law, no court can do even much to help."

(The writer is a consulting editor of The Pioneer; views are personal)

The need for regulatory action on public conduct is imperative

The Delhi High Court's recent decision to suspend the counting of votes for the DUSU elections over public property defacement underscores civic responsibility

The High Court recently halted and deferred the counting of votes for the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) elections on the issue of public property defacement. Additionally, the court mandated that Delhi University recover costs incurred in repairing the public property from the candidates and reimburse the civic authorities including the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, government departments, and Delhi Metro. This landmark decision has brought two grave issues to the fore, viz., citizens' ignorant and irresponsible behaviour and the need for regulation by authorities in issues of national interest. The world economies are



KAJLEEN KAUR

working their way to a decarbonised Green Economy, which results in improved human well-being and social equity while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. India is envisioning to be a Global Leader @2047 and boasts of its G20 presidency which focussed on creating LiFE (Lifestyles

for Environment) and sustainable practices. However, careless behaviour, such as littering, pollution, or illegal deforestation, can harm ecosystems, reduce biodiversity, and contribute to environmental degradation. Such reckless acts question the credibility of the action plan and its implementation. Repairing and maintenance of public property require financial resources, often sourced from taxpayers. It causes an unnecessary burden on public funds, diverting money away from other vital areas such as education, healthcare, and social services. The responsible use of public property is a fundamental aspect of maintaining a thriving, equitable, and sus-

tainable society. It helps preserve resources for future generations, minimises economic burdens, fosters civic responsibility, promotes environmental sustainability, and ensures public safety and equality. The modern structure of economics favours a laissez-faire economy or a non-interventionist market structure. However, ensuring a sensible regulatory mechanism that respects the fundamental role of free-market competition and can also keep a check on unfair civic practices, oversupply or wastage of resources, can provide vital public benefits. There are unmet visible examples in the economy and society such as the infringement of public prop-



erties, illegal encroachments of roads, the almost disappearing footpaths, and unadministered vendors, distribution of freebies for attracting vote banks to name a few, which call for an ardent need for an effective control mechanism. The outnumbing E-rickshaws in the name of giving employment

are a menace to the traffic system and road safety, requiring urgent action. Another important aspect that needs policy action is the small packaging of products, often called "overpackaging" or "excessive packaging". It often leads to increased waste, particularly in the form of non-recy-

clable materials. Manufacturing small packages requires more raw materials (plastic, paper, metals), resulting in a higher carbon footprint and increased consumption of finite resources. Regulating packaging can contribute to a circular economy, where materials are reused or recycled effectively, minimising environmental harm. To quote the famous economist Say's law of the market, "Supply creates its own demand", it is for the authorities to introduce regulations, limiting the use of small packaging, especially for non-essential or high-waste products. Policies could include taxes or restrictions on single-use plastics and encourage pro-

ducers to switch to larger or reusable packaging, which is cost-effective. Most importantly, educating consumers on the benefits of choosing products with minimal or sustainable packaging can influence purchasing decisions and drive demand for environmentally friendly options. Creating a conducive society and economic structure includes judicious demand, supply, usage and a regulatory framework to ensure the same. It is imperative for all the stakeholders to act more responsibly and to minimise wastage in all forms.

(The author is assistant professor at Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, University of Delhi; views are personal)

Akshay, Ananya, Madhavan unite for Nair's less known Independence story

Get ready for an intriguing cinematic journey as Karan Johar's Dharma Productions, in partnership with Akshay Kumar's Cape of Good Films and Leo Media Collective, gears up to release an untitled historical drama featuring powerhouse actors Akshay Kumar, R. Madhavan and Ananya Panday. The film is set to hit theaters on March 14, 2025 and promises to explore a lesser-known yet significant chapter in India's fight for independence.

Directed by Karan Singh Tyagi, marking his debut behind the camera, the film sheds light on the life of C Sankaran Nair, a prominent lawyer who courageously took on the British Empire during the turbulent 1920s. Dharma Productions emphasises that the film uncovers "an unknown story, an unheard truth," centered around a shocking cover-up of a massacre that propelled Nair into a historic legal battle against British authorities.

The narrative is rooted in the critically acclaimed

book *The Case That Shook the Empire* by Raghu Palat and Pushpa Palat, published in 2019. The book delves into the 1924 defamation trial in which Michael O'Dwyer, the former Lieutenant Governor of Punjab and mastermind behind the infamous Jallianwala Bagh massacre, sued Nair for his outspoken criticisms of British brutality in Punjab. This trial was not only one of the longest in legal history but also a crucial moment that laid bare the harsh realities of British colonial rule in India.

The film aims to reveal the profound impact of the trial, which shocked the world and exposed the horrors of the British Empire. Through a detailed portrayal of court proceedings and a nuanced examination of Nair as a complex nationalist, the film highlights a pivotal moment in India's struggle for independence. With an exciting ensemble cast and a gripping storyline, this untitled film is poised to resonate with audiences, igniting discussions about the legacy of colonialism and the ongoing quest for justice in contemporary society.



what's brewing?

'I live with no regrets and grateful how my life has unfolded'

They were no longer seen together, and Malaika notably missed Arjun's birthday celebration. Adding to the tumult, she lost her father, Anil Mehta, last month, which left her family in deep grief. Now, however, the actress has started to find her footing again.

In her interview with Global Spa, Malaika reflected on the importance of inner strength during difficult times. She shared, "You have to dig deep within to find strength. While my family, friends and work offer significant comfort and resilience, those around me are crucial in helping me stay grounded. Their support has a huge impact on my ability to keep moving forward." The 50-year-old star also opened up about her journey in the entertainment industry, where she has built a reputation as a model, actress, dancer, and reality show judge. She said, "I live with no regrets and feel grate-

ful for how my life has unfolded." She acknowledged that her decisions have significantly influenced her personal and professional growth.

Despite years in the spotlight, Malaika expressed her desire to take on a fully-fledged role in a feature film. While she has made numerous guest appearances, she hopes for more substantial roles with depth and complexity.

She also revealed her entrepreneurial ambitions, planning to open a chain of cafes and restaurants centered around serving healthy, home-style cuisine. This venture aligns with her passion for promoting wellness and nutritious eating.

Meanwhile, sources suggest that she and Arjun Kapoor have ended their relationship, though neither has made an official statement.

Alicia Silverstone joins Emma Stone and Yorgos Lanthimos in Bugonia

Alicia Silverstone, known for her role as Batgirl in the 1997 film *Batman & Robin*, has been cast in *Bugonia*, the upcoming film from director Yorgos Lanthimos and star Emma Stone. This project marks a reunion for Silverstone and Lanthimos, who previously collaborated on the acclaimed 2017 film *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*.

Emma Stone reunites with five-time Oscar nominee Yorgos Lanthimos for the fourth time, following their successful partnerships on *The Favourite*, the short film *Bleat*, and *Poor Things*. Their latest project, *Bugonia*, is inspired by the 2003 South Korean sci-fi comedy *Save*

the Green Planet! and will also feature Jesse Plemons, who recently worked with Stone and Lanthimos on *Kinds of Kindness*.

While details about Silverstone's role in *Bugonia* remain under wraps, her addition to the film is generating excitement. Yorgos Lanthimos has a history of collaborating with a select group of actors, including Colin Farrell, Olivia Colman, and Willem Dafoe, a trend that will continue in *Bugonia*. Jesse Plemons, who won the Best Actor award at the Cannes Film Festival for *Kinds of Kindness*, is also set to reunite with the director and Stone, enhancing the film's impressive ensemble.



When SRK asked Kajol to learn acting!



The legendary on-screen chemistry of Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol might never have graced Bollywood if it weren't for Kajol's determination to overcome her early struggles in the film industry. After feeling "burnt out" by her third film, it was Shah Rukh who provided the pivotal advice that would shape her acting journey—encouraging her to delve deeper into the art of acting, which he believed would help her rekindle her passion for the craft.

In a revealing interview, Kajol reflected on her experience while shooting *Udhaar Ki Zindagi*, her third film at the tender age of 18. She

recounted a conversation with Shah Rukh, who urged her to focus on honing her acting skills. At the time, his suggestion left her feeling perplexed. "I remember finishing the film and thinking, 'What does he mean? I'm doing a fabulous job!'" she recalled, chuckling at her youthful bravado.

However, it didn't take long for Kajol to come to terms with the emotional toll that acting was taking on her. Despite her youthful enthusiasm, she soon found herself grappling with fatigue and exhaustion. By the time she wrapped up *Udhaar Ki Zindagi*, she felt overwhelmed and craved roles that were less demanding. "I turned to my mother and said, 'Mom, I'm done. I'm burnt out. At 18-and-a-half, I can't cry anymore or use glycerin. I don't want to do these heavy-duty roles anymore. I want to do films with four scenes and ten songs,'" she shared candidly.

This desire for lighter fare led her to sign on for a series of films that were more in line

with her aspirations, including popular titles like *Gunda Raj* and *Hulchul*. These projects allowed her to explore different facets of her acting abilities while relieving the pressures of emotionally taxing roles. "That's where I learned the technique of acting," Kajol explained, highlighting how her experiences helped her grow as an artist.

Now, as she gears up for the release of her latest project, the Netflix thriller *Do Patti*, Kajol stands poised to showcase her refined skills and versatile talent. Directed by Shashanka Chaturvedi and penned by Kanika Dhillon, the film promises to be a gripping narrative that sees Kajol in the role of a tough cop investigating a complex case. Co-starring Kriti Sanon, who plays a double role, the film marks another significant step in Kajol's illustrious career.

Tom Holland shares exciting news about Spider-Man 4

Tom Holland has provided an exhilarating update on *Spider-Man 4*, revealing that he and his co-star Zendaya have read a draft of the script and are both excited about it. Holland, who portrays Peter Parker (*Spider-Man*), shared that the script has ignited a fresh sense of energy and motivation within him as they move forward with the project.

In a recent appearance on *The Rich Roll Podcast*, Holland expressed his enthusiasm, stating that he and Zendaya had a great time reading the draft together.

Their excitement was so palpable that they found themselves bouncing around in the living room, believing this script would resonate well with fans. While Holland praised the draft for its quality, he acknowledged that it still requires some refinement, expressing confidence in the writers' abilities.

Additionally, there are developments regarding the film's direction. Last month, it was reported that Destin Daniel Cretton, known for directing *Shang-Chi*, is in discussions to helm *Spider-Man 4*, marking a shift from Jon Watts, who directed the

previous three films in the franchise. Holland also discussed the unique challenges of crafting a *Spider-Man* film within the expansive Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU). He explained that each *Spider-Man* installment is part of a larger narrative involving numerous characters and films. Therefore, the timing of *Spider-Man 4's* release is crucial, as they need to ensure it aligns seamlessly with the MCU's overarching timeline, a task that can be quite intricate.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



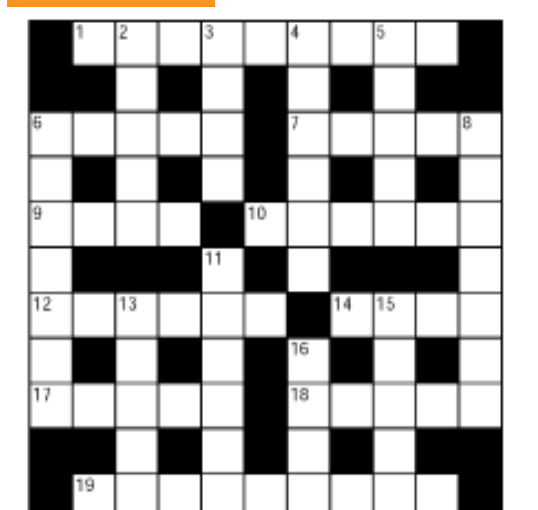
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



SUDOKU

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9	6	3	5	1				4
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Yesterday's solution

3	7	9	8	6	4	5	1	2
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- Rules
- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
 - The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

ACROSS

- Look at the stars through this
- Naming words
- Memorise
- Awful to look at
- Say again
- A team game with sticks
- Trip over
- A short spell of very wild weather with wind and rain
- Instructions for building houses
- Played make-believe

DOWN

- Of the same length
- A compass direction

4 Less hot

- A flat dish
- Zeros
- Stinging plants
- A hard safety hat
- A large group of singers
- Not asleep
- Unlock

SOLUTION



Vijayawada

the pioneer

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Saturday
October 19, 2024

Mishti, Maa & Masab Tank: The Bengali blend in Hyd

Hailing from Delhi, Sanjay Pan has found his home here in Hyderabad and of course, is taking Hyderabadis to the tradition of Kolkata during Durga Puja.

The Pioneer

interacts with him as he discusses his association with the city, regard for the people here and more

AARTI SREENATH
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In the enchanting realm of Hyderabad, where biryani is a way of life and the Charminar is the crown jewel, the Bengali community has woven its vibrant threads into the city's cultural fabric, complete with lively *dhak* beats and an abundance of fish curry. Every October, the city buzzes with excitement as Bengalis transform Hyderabad into a mini-Kolkata for Durga Puja, swapping the usual honking for the rhythmic thump of the *dhak*.

You haven't truly experienced Hyderabad until you've witnessed a group of Bengalis passionately debating the best pulao while donning their finest sarees and kurta pajamas, proving that no matter the distance, the love for food and festivities knows no bounds. One such person is Sanjay Pan, the Vice President of the Bengali Cultural Association, who embodies the spirit of the community and shares his unique bond with the city.

In 2005, when Sanjay Pan, a Delhi-born Bengali, first set foot in Hyderabad, he didn't expect to fall in love with the city. He arrived for work, overseeing operations at Golconda Hotel and Resorts, but ended up staying for much more. "I came with no expectations, just going with the flow," he shares. What surprised him most wasn't just the work or weather, but the people. "The city was charming with frequent rains back then, but it's the people who made me feel at home."

With a natural need to find his roots in an unfamiliar place, he soon stumbled upon the Bengali Cultural Association, a group established in

1974. Located at Vindhyachal Apartments, it quickly became his go-to spot for a dose of culture and community. "As Bengalis, we love to socialise and Durga Puja is a big part of that," Sanjay says with a twinkle in his eye. "The association was started by Bengalis from organisations like NMBC and it's kept that spirit alive."

Looking back at his early days, he reflects fondly. "Hyderabad welcomed me in a way no other city has. I've

and even the international airport—has been extraordinary. This city is on the rise, no doubt about it."

His love for the city isn't just about the infrastructure. It's about the people. "One of my fondest memories is from my old neighborhood in Masab Tank, near our Bengali club. It's where Hindu and Muslim families lived side by side in harmony. Once, when my daughter was sick, our neighbour—a flower shop owner—brought

inevitable congestion. We could use more flyovers and better connectivity." But despite the occasional traffic jam, his affection for Hyderabad remains strong—especially when it comes to the food. "I'm a foodie at heart, and Hyderabad is a paradise! From Mexican to shawarma, the variety is endless. My family has this tradition of visiting Ofen in Banjara Hills every Christmas. It's our spot."

For anyone visiting Hyderabad, he has his favorite tourist picks ready: "Ramoji Film City, the Birla Temple and the new Durgam Cheruvu Hanging Bridge, which I visit almost every day. The city has something for everyone—from Golconda Fort to quick escapes like Narsapur Forest and Vikarabad Hills, just a short drive away."

He also loves the contrast of city and village life. "One of the best things about living here is that you can drive 100 kilometers and find yourself surrounded by serene villages. It's a great way to escape the hustle."

As for what his family loves to take back from the City of Pearls? "Sarees, of course! The traditional sarees from Andhra and Telangana are always a hit. And pearls—Hyderabad is the City of Pearls for a reason! Miniature Charminars make great souvenirs too."

HYDERABOND

Every city has its own flavour. Kolkata is all about that urban rush, and visiting my native village brings out the nostalgia. But Hyderabad, it's in a league of its own. Watching it evolve—from roads to golf courses and even the international airport—has been extraordinary. This city is on the rise, no doubt about it.

worked in Delhi, Bhubaneswar, and Kolkata, but here, I knew this could be my home. The people, the weather, the growing infrastructure—everything just clicked. When I first moved here, my daughter was just a toddler. Today, she's finishing college and I've seen her grow up alongside this city."

Comparing Hyderabad with his hometown in West Bengal, he acknowledges the differences but says the emotional connection is undeniable. "Every city has its own flavour. Kolkata is all about that urban rush, and visiting my native village brings out the nostalgia. But Hyderabad, it's in a league of its own. Watching it evolve—from roads to golf courses

over a fruit, insisting it would help her recover. That small act of kindness stays with me to this day."

Having transitioned from hospitality to real estate, he is now Vice President at Hallmark Builders. "Professionally, Hyderabad has opened many doors for me," he says, smiling. "I've built a network of high-profile connections, and it's given me opportunities globally. The city has truly been instrumental in shaping my career and personal growth."

Though deeply connected to Hyderabad, he isn't blind to its challenges. "Traffic is the one thing I wish could improve. The city's growth is phenomenal, but with it comes the



'Not taking a stand means not being true to yourself'

TEJAL SINHA
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Brawls, fights and heated arguments have always been a part of India's most controversial show, *Bigg Boss*. And the ongoing season has been nothing new to it. The latest episode has brought in a lot of grapples, especially between Avinash Mishra and Chum Darang. Post the episode going live, a lot of talks have been over Avinash getting evicted. Well, that's something not confirmed yet, but the love and support that he's been receiving all over on social media has been tremendous. Being this season's *Kukaad Kamaal Da*, not just with his charm but also with his strong grit in the show, has been one of the favourites. Amidst all this chaos over his eviction, *The Pioneer* takes you back through his excitement over getting on to the show.

The *Bigg Boss* house was no less than that of a destiny for him. During an interaction with us, just before entering the house, he harks back on sharing, "The *Bigg Boss* team, they have been approaching me for the show since last 3-4 years. Unfortunately, I couldn't do it because I was doing a show at that time. This year, when I was about to do a show again, the offer again came in and everything got locked."

Literally, it had just happened when he was thinking of what to do next and here he is. Getting off his comfort zone and doing something new, who would even miss out on an opportunity of *Bigg Boss*? He didn't let it go either.

In the show, one thing that fans really adore about him is his honesty and being real. This was something that he believed in too and with this he says, "There's nothing to be scared of. There's nothing to have that kind of mentality that it's a very controversial show. If you're being very genuine, you will be praised by people outside. Being genuine and real makes you the winner." Well, he is actually.

Bigg Boss has been one of those shows that test one as a person and

As the drama unfolds in the *Bigg Boss* house, Avinash Mishra stands tall captivating audiences with his charm, grit, and unapologetic honesty. He sat down with *The Pioneer*, discussing getting into the *Bigg Boss* house, keeping his own stand and more



also, test you mentally and physically. "I believe that you have to perform there. You have to face every challenge, whatever comes your way and overcome it. I'm totally ready for everything. Not to prepare too much, just go and play the game, enjoy the journey. There's nothing to feel that it's gonna be mentally exhausting or physically exhausting. If you are prepared and if you are there to enjoy the journey, you won't feel any of it," says the *Meetha Khatta Pyaar Humara* star, for whom having no strategy is the best strategy.

Just as how balance is very much required in everything in life, so is it according to him, when one plays the game in the house. "It's equally important to think from your brain and also from your heart. The balance is required in every aspect of your life."

When in situations, the Title star says, "You need to be on the upfront and take a decision about what's right and what's wrong. And when you don't take a stand, you're not being true to yourself."

On the other hand, from always being inspired by Salman Khan to share a stage with him was no less than an unreal feeling for him. Meanwhile, he says, "I'm just going to be myself, very real and genuine. I'll speak out whatever I feel from my heart and, I believe Papa will guide me throughout the journey."

As we head towards the end of the chat, he's got a special message for his fans: "I just want to say thank you so much to all my fans who have always supported me throughout my journey. They've always seen me playing different characters, the real Avinash. The love that I've received means a lot and I feel whoever I am today is because of them. I hope I deliver some good entertainment to them, with the show."

Arthritis not just an adult problem, kids get it too!

It's a common misconception that only elderly people have arthritis. People of all ages, including children, can have this disease. Although it's mostly a burden in the older population, arthritis in children is

more active. It is crucial to note that unlike osteoarthritis and other degenerative disease, which is common in older individuals, arthritis among children is due to autoimmune causes.

PNS| HYDERABAD

If your child is experiencing persistent joint pain, swelling, stiffness, or difficulty moving their joints, these could be signs of arthritis. Your child may be avoiding certain activities that interest him, looking more fatigued than normal, or struggling to walk. At times the child may also experience fever and even rashes during episodes of joint pains. In case these signs persist for about six weeks, or more than a child less than 16 years of age, then the diagnosis of juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA) is made after ruling out other causes of arthritis.

The term refers to different subtypes of arthritis affecting children, clinical features of which are not identical to each other, however, each includes persistent arthritis of the joints as a common feature. The severity of arthritis pain that children experience is just as much if not more, than what can be experienced by adults. Expressing pain, or understanding the cause of their pain, can be very distressing for children. The intensity of distress or discomfort can be different for each child and may be more or less on some days or following inactivity. This pain, in some cases, can become long-lasting and affect your child's temperament, sleep as well as general health.

In the mildest cases, there is the likelihood that your child will have mild discomfort and or joint stiffness on and off especially during the first half of the day. Over time, although still infrequent, the stiffness may last longer with more grinding pain affecting more than one joint. In moderate cases, there may be any of the following symptoms in conjunction with pain and perfect mobility hindrance: inflamed joints with swelling, redness of the skin, warmth of joints. In severe cases, the pain may be constant, joints may become visibly deformed, and your child may



struggle with everyday activities.

It is important to note that juvenile arthritis is a disability that has a great impact on all aspects of the child's day to day activities. As the severity increases, your child may be limited in their ability to walk and climb stairs or even writing and playing. Lack of the physical ability brings about irritation and in the extreme case, your child may even require aid in carrying out simple activities. However, with appropriate treatment and management, many children can continue to lead active lives.

Currently, there isn't a definitive test to predict the onset of juvenile arthritis before symptoms appear. However, if your child is at high risk due to family history and has symptoms of arthritis, consult a Pediatric Rheumatologist. A thorough history and physical examination is necessary before doing any tests. Based on the clinical picture, your doctor will ask for blood test to look for inflammatory markers and antibodies associated with autoimmune conditions. These tests, combined with imaging studies like X-rays or MRIs, can help in diagnosing arthritis early, even in younger children.

It is especially important in the

case of juvenile arthritis to identify the disease at the earliest stage and prevent further damage through early intervention. All children with JIA need their eyes to be checked to look for any silent inflammation in the eyes called uveitis, which if not detected can lead to decreased vision and even blindness.

Upon the diagnosis of juvenile arthritis in a child, doctors generally follow a treatment regime that consists of a course of anti-inflammatory medication, physical activity therapy and often also immune suppressive agents. In cases that do not respond to standard first-line treatment or in some other cases at onset itself, biologic drugs that inhibit only certain pathways of the immune system are given. Physical therapy is as important as medication to preserve joint mobility and should be under the guidance of a trained pediatric physiotherapist. You should always ask your physician's permission before trying any home treatment.

Juvenile arthritis is a disease that should be considered severe due to its influence on both the physical and emotional aspects of the child being affected. The Pediatric Rheumatologist is the anchor person of your child's treatment who will liaise with the other specialists such as the Ophthalmologist, physiotherapist, Orthopedic surgeon and General Pediatrician. Regular growth monitoring, immunisation, prevention and treatment of infections, periodic follow-ups for adjusting the medications and even career choices are to be discussed with your doctor. With the right medical care and regular follow-ups, your child can lead a fulfilling life despite the challenges of arthritis. The key is early intervention and ongoing management to reduce pain and prevent joint damage.

(The author, Dr Jyothi Raghuram, is a senior consultant-Pediatrics & Pediatric Rheumatology, at Aster Whitefield Hospital.)

ROHIT, KOHLI, SARFARAZ FIFTIES TAKE INDIA TO 231/3 AT CLOSE ON DAY

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Counter-attacking India kept alive the hopes of a miracle turnaround through free-flowing fifties from the trio of Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Sarfaraz Khan, reaching 231 for three in their second innings on the third day of the first Test against New Zealand here on Friday.

Kohli (70), who completed 9,000 Test runs during the course of his knock, got out to Glenn Phillips off the last ball of the day, edging him to Tom Blundell, leaving Sarfaraz (70) at the crease at close. The deficit at the end of an overcast day was a less intimidating 125. Kohli and Sarfaraz added 136 runs for the third wicket after skipper Rohit did the early running with a fluent 52.

This was after New Zealand posted a total of 402 all out to gain a massive lead of 356 runs thanks to Rachin Ravindra (134) and Tim Southee (63), who added precious 134 runs for a flowing eighth wicket stand.

The largest deficit India has overturned to win a Test in their cricketing history is 274 during the iconic Kolkata Test against Australia in 2001.

Such an epic is still some distance away, but hopes will be flickering after the day's effort with the bat.

Amid the more coruscating fifties by Rohit and Sarfaraz, Kohli's effort still stood out for its personal and situational significance.

It was his first Test half-century of 2024, and he could not have timed his 31st in the longest format better -- literally and figuratively.

Seldom a shot describes the touch of Kohli better than the cover drive, and the moment he executed one off pacer William O'Rourke, the 35-year-old was in full flow. He took 15 balls to get off the mark.

Kohli brought up his fifty with a single off Matt Henry but at the other end, Sarfaraz resembled a race car on the tarmac.

The Mumbai man punished all bowlers with disdain and left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel was shunted off the park for two successive sixes.

Then there was a daring upper cut for maximum off O'Rourke and fortune also blessed him as a couple of edges fell inches short of Ajaz at gully and wide of third slip.

Before Kohli and Sarfaraz ran

RESURRECTION AFTER COLLAPSE



roughsho, another old-young combination of Rohit and Yashasvi Jaiswal (35) gave India a solid start.

Jaiswal went through an early uncertain play-and-miss phase but he overcame that to play some sparkling shots.

Rohit had no such issues. The right-hander flicked and drove New Zealand pacers to reach a fifty off just 59 balls, and also thrilled the crowd with that patented swivel pull on one leg. But his tenure in the middle ended in unfortunate circumstances. Rohit offered a forward defensive shot to Ajaz, but the ball trickled back onto his stumps after taking a deflection from his bat.

A few minutes before that, Jaiswal's decision to give a charge to Ajaz resulted in him getting stumped by Tom Blundell, after adding 72 for the opening wicket with Rohit. The recovery was impressive but it could not overshadow what New Zealand accomplished earlier in the day.

Resuming the day at 180 for three, the Kiwis were halted to an extent by Ravindra Jadeja (3/72) and the other Indian bowlers who took some early wickets to reduce them to 233 for seven.

They lost Daryl Mitchell, Glenn Phillips, Blundell and Henry in this period.

Jasprit Bumrah snaffled Blundell while Mohammed Siraj had the number of Mitchell. Phillips and Henry perished to the crafty Jadeja.

The Blackcaps were ahead by 187 runs at that point and it was imperative for them to stretch the lead at least till the 250-mark to maintain their edge.

Ravindra and Southee exceeded the expectations during their partnership to take the lead past the 300-run mark.

Ravindra started cautiously but unfurled his full range once he and the pitch settled down past the first-hour mark.

The 24-year-old, who has his family roots in Bengaluru, showed the correct method of playing Indian spinners, either staying on the front foot or making a shimmy down to nullify the turn. A cleanly swept four off Ravichandran Ashwin carried him to his second Test hundred.

Southee, who hammered a couple of his trademark sixes, gave solid company to Ravindra and duly completed his seventh Test fifty immediately after the lunch.

Arjun crushes Maxime to win WR Chess Masters



PTI ■ LONDON

Indian Grandmaster Arjun Erigaise secured the WR Chess masters title after defeating Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France in the Armageddon game following two draws in Classical chess during the final.

Arjun displayed great form and precision throughout the event to bag the winner's prize of 20,000 Euros. He defeated his friend R Praggnanandhaa in the semifinals of the knock out event before eventually getting past Vachier-Lagrave. The 16-player tournament

saw Arjun scoring a 2-0 victory over Sivananda Bodhana of England who is known to be the youngest ever to play in the Chess Olympiad for her country.

Fellow Indian Grandmaster Vidit Gujrathi also fell to Arjun, who won the second game in the two-games mini-match by 1.5-0.5 margin.

Against Praggnanandhaa in the semis, Arjun took an early lead by winning the first game as white and did well to draw the second game to win the match 1.5-0.5.

In the final, Vachier-Lagrave put up stiff resistance against



the World number four Indian but eventually crumbled in the Armageddon. The first game ended in an easy draw for Arjun as black, while the second game

featured wild complex play out of a Sicilian Najdorf opening where the Indian played white.

The dust subsided on the 21st move leading to a tricky endgame post the queen trade and the game was drawn.

Vachier-Lagrave had 10 minutes on his clock with white pieces in the finale against Arjun's 6 minutes and 58 seconds. However, as is the law, the Frenchman needed a win.

Arjun navigated the opening well despite less time out of a Petroff defense and reached a balanced position.

Vachier-Lagrave sacrificed two minor pieces for a rook to make some threats around Arjun's King but the Indian remained on guard. The game could have been a draw through repetition but that would have won the match for Arjun anyway.

The Queens were traded but Arjun was never in trouble as Vachier-Lagrave fought in vain for 69 moves before calling it a day.

With this victory, Arjun moved closer to the coveted 2800 ELO rating mark, though he will need to wait for his next event to achieve it.

Pakistan seals 152 run win in second test

AP ■ MULTAN (PAKISTAN)

Noman Ali and Sajid Khan claimed all 20 wickets on a recycled turning pitch as Pakistan ended a long wait for a home win with a 152-run victory over England in the second test on Friday.

Left-arm spinner Ali took 8-46 to finish with a match haul of 11 wickets and England was bowled out for 144 inside the first session on Day 4 on a tailor-made dry wicket.

Off-spinner Khan took 2-93 to go with his 7-111 in the first innings as both spinners bowled unchanged and ran through the tourists' batting lineup after Pakistan had set up a daunting target of 297 runs.

The win was first for captain Shan Masood, who lost six tests in a row since being elevated as red-ball skipper last year and also ended Pakistan's winless 11-match home run that included four losses against England.

England capitulated against Khan and Ali for the second time in the match after it

resumed on 36-2 and needed a further improbable 261 runs for victory of a tricky turning wicket.

Khan gleefully accepted a return catch from Ollie Pope on his second ball of the day before Ali cut through by claiming all the remaining seven wickets as the tourists failed to counter the spin through their sweeps and reverse sweeps.

Captain Ben Stokes, who returned to lead the side after recovering from a torn hamstring, top-scored with 37 before falling in a bizarre fashion. Stokes charged down the wicket to Ali, but the bat flew out of England captain's hand and backward square leg and he was stumped.

Brydon Carse smashed three sixes against Khan and scored 27 before he edged Ali in the slips as England couldn't counter the spinners on a wicket which had plenty of cracks and turn.

England won the first test by an innings and 47 runs last week after posting a record-breaking 823-7 declared.

Indian junior team, guided by Sreejesh, faces Japan in Sultan of Johor opener

PTI ■ JOHOR (MALAYSIA)

Two-time Olympic medal-winning stalwart P R Sreejesh will face his first major test as India's new junior men's hockey coach when the under-21 team aims for a fourth title triumph at the 12th Sultan of Johor Cup, beginning with a clash against Japan here on Saturday.

The 36-year-old former goalkeeper, who retired after the bronze-winning campaign in the Paris Olympics earlier this year, took over the reins of the junior group soon after.

India triumphed over Japan in their last encounter at the Junior Asia Cup in May last year, securing a 3-1 victory and also defeated them 5-1 in the 2022 Sultan of Johor Cup.

"The team has been training well under the new head coach



PR Sreejesh and we are excited to play our first tournament with him," captain Amir Ali said in a release.

"After losing to Germany last time, we were unable to retain our crown but this time we are better equipped and ready to take on any team in the

competition."

India, who have previously won the title in 2013, 2014 and 2022, will face Britain on Sunday. The side is also a four-time second-place finisher in the event.

Following a day off, the Indians will take on hosts Malaysia on October 22 and then Australia on October 23.

India will conclude the group stage against New Zealand on October 25, aiming to finish in the top two to advance to the final on October 26.

"We have been training hard over the past few days to be in the best shape ahead of the Sultan of Johor Cup," vice-captain Rohit said.

"This time around, the team has several new players who are excited to demonstrate their abilities on the field. All of the players are encouraging one another to improve in preparation for a busy time for us, which includes the men's junior Asia Cup Muscat in November."

After the Paris campaign, Sreejesh had stated that he always harboured coaching ambitions and wanted to be the Rahul Dravid of Indian hockey by shaping the younger generation of players.

Dravid, before serving as the senior team coach, mentored the under-19 players for a significant duration.



Chelsea, Lyon and Roma stay perfect with victories in Womens Champions League

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Chelsea, Lyon and Roma all stayed perfect in the Women's Champions League by cruising to away victories.

Roma routed Galatasaray at Istanbul 6-1, Chelsea beat Twente in the Netherlands 3-1 and eight-time champion Lyon won 2-0 at Wolfsburg.

Real Madrid claimed its first victory of the campaign by easing past Celtic 4-0.

Roma and Lyon both have six points in Group A. Two-time champion Wolfsburg and Galatasaray, the first Turkish team to reach the group stage, have no points.

In Group B, Chelsea leads with six points, with Madrid and Twente on three and Celtic last bottom without a point.

Renard strikes on Popp's day/Wolfsburg striker Alexandra Popp made her 100th competition appearance - becoming only the second player to reach the mark but it was Lyon defender Wendie Renard, the only one who has played more, who stole the show.

Renard's header found the back of the net early on in her 118th game in the competition.

U.S. International Lindsey Horan netted from the penalty spot in the second half.

Lyon is the competition's record eight-time champion but last won the trophy in 2022. It was runner-up last season to Barcelona.

Roma routed In a matchup between the Italian and

Turkish champions, Roma dominated in Istanbul.

Summer signing Hawa Cissoko scored in the seventh minute to mark her debut game in the competition. The France defender who transferred from West Ham headed home off Manuela Giugliano's corner.

Valentina Giacinti made it 2-0 in the 24th minute when she was left unmarked near the spot to head in Verena Hanshaw's cross.

Giugliano failed to convert from the spot in the first-half stoppage time but Emilie Haavi got Roma's third with a right-footed blast past goalkeeper Gamze Yaman early in the second.

Giugliano finally found the back of the net from close range for a 4-0 lead before Andrea Stankova scored the consolation goal for the hosts.

Roma substitutes Marta Pandini and Alice Corelli also scored.

Blues win again under Bompastor/Chelsea struck early in another winning performance under new coach Sonia Bompastor, who joined from Lyon.

Agnes Beyer-Jones put the Blues ahead with a long-distance deflected strike in the seventh minute and Maika Hamano made it 2-0 a short time later by lifting the ball over goalkeeper Olivia Clark from outside the area.

Substitute Guro Reiten added the third in the second from the spot just past the hour mark.

Nadal loses to Alcaraz at Six Kings Slam exhibition event

AP ■ RIYADH

With an eye on the Davis Cup, Rafael Nadal said he was pleased with his performance despite losing 6-3, 6-3 to Carlos Alcaraz at the Six Kings Slam.

Jannik Sinner beat Novak Djokovic 6-2, 6-7 (0), 6-4 in the other semifinal at the exhibition event that awards money but no ATP ranking points and is Saudi Arabia's latest foray into tennis.

The match against Alcaraz was Nadal's first since he announced last week that he would be retiring after playing for Spain in the Davis Cup next month. Nadal and Alcaraz played doubles together at the Paris Games and could team up again for the Davis Cup.

"I have the Davis Cup in front (of me) in a month so every day is an opportunity to be better and better and be ready for this final tournament of my career," Nadal said. "I want to try my best to be ready for that and help the team in some way."

Thursday's match was the first contest for Nadal since his exit at the Paris Olympics in July.

"Carlos was too good. I haven't been on the competitive stage since a couple months ago," Nadal said. "So yeah I think it was a good performance, even if it was not enough to play against an animal like him. But it was a positive match for me and I'm happy."

Nadal will play Djokovic on Saturday in a third-place match before Sinner faces Alcaraz.

The top-ranked Sinner was cleared in a doping case shortly before winning last month's U.S. Open, although the World Anti-Doping Agency



has appealed that exoneration. Djokovic and Sinner met for real on Sunday, when the Italian won in straight sets for the Shanghai Masters title.

Iga Swiatek has hired Wim Fissette as her new coach

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Iga Swiatek is hiring Wim Fissette to be her new coach, announcing via social media that she is bringing aboard someone who has worked with a long list of top players that includes Naomi Osaka, Kim Clijsters and Victoria Azarenka.

"I'm excited and motivated to start a new chapter," posted the No. 1-ranked Swiatek, who parted ways with Tomasz Wiktorowski two weeks ago after three years together.

Swiatek hasn't competed since Sept. 4, when she lost in the U.S. Open quarterfinals to eventual runner-up Jessica Pegula. Since then, Swiatek withdrew from the China Open and Korea Open.

Next up for Swiatek is the season-ending WTA Finals, which will be held in November in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

"As you know, I'm preparing for the WTA Finals but my perspective is, as always, long-term, not short-term. I said many times that my career is a marathon for me, not a sprint, and I'm working, operating



and making decisions with this approach," Swiatek wrote on Thursday. "I want to say that I'm very excited and looking forward to working with Wim. He seems to have a great attitude, vision and huge experience at a very top level of tennis. It's always crucial to try and get to know each other better but we're off to a good start and I can't wait to compete soon."

Swiatek is 54-7 this season with five titles and about \$7.5 million in prize money. She won the French Open in June for her third consecutive title in Paris and fourth in the past five years, raising her career

haul to five Grand Slam trophies. Four of those came with Wiktorowski as her coach.

The 23-year-old from Poland also picked up a bronze medal at the Paris Olympics in August.

She will be trying to hold off Sabalenka for the year-end No. 1 ranking.

Fissette, who is Belgian and Swiatek's first non-Polish coach, had worked with Osaka most recently, and helped her win two of her four Grand Slam titles. He also was with Clijsters and Angelique Kerber for major championships. Other No.

'Jani master deserves fair trial, not rushed judgments'

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Renowned choreographer Shaik Jani Basha, aka Jani Master, faced allegations of prolonged sexual harassment of a 21-year-old female colleague. Despite the incident occurring weeks ago, the industry has remained silent. Breaking the silence, fellow choreographer Anitha Lama, popularly known as Anee Master, has spoken out in support of Jani Master, the victim, who is also a female choreographer assistant.

"The allegations put on him have still not been proved yet. He was supposed to get a National award, which is a big honour. However, revoking his award, I really feel sad about it. A technician getting a national award is a very big thing; Jani Master is representing our Telugu film industry. Without proving anything, cancelling his national award and giving it to another person is erroneous," said Anee.

She further went on to discuss his work and praised him for the same: "He entered the industry without having any background and today, he has reached immense heights, which is a result of his hard work. I worked with Jani master for two years. He was the one who gave me work after my marriage and having my baby. He is a very kind and a person with



Choreographer Anee in a chat with the Hyderabad media, speaks out on the allegations on Jani Master, cancelling the National Award and also shared her experience working with him

a helping nature. When I saw the news, I was in deep shock and couldn't digest it. If he has really done it, then he should be punished. However, I know Jani master and he is a nice person."

She further shared that she has travelled to many places with him. "Not only in India but we had also travelled to Romania for Salman Khan sir's film. I worked with many choreographers, including Jani Master. He always behaves like a gentleman," she said.

When asked why she responded very late when the issue happened nearly a month ago,

she said that she was in deep shock. "I was in shock and no one knows what had really happened between them as it is something completely personal. More than that, it is a very sensitive issue and many others also did not respond because the victim is a female choreographer," said Anee.

Anee Master has been in the industry for the last 20 years and she has not faced any difficulty from anyone. She further shared, "Whenever a dancer is suffering with some medical problem or any other problem, Sekhar Master, Jani Master, or Ganesh Master respond immediately and take care of the dancer," said Anee adding that he had also helped the victim get a card in the union. "It is Jani Master and his wife Sumaltha who supported the victim and got a card for her. A few months ago, the victim spoke highly about Jani Master in front of cameras and I even saw her with Jani Master. Seeing this news on TV, I couldn't believe my eyes."

Talking about the victim, Anee says that she sent a message to her when she worked for a dance show. "The victim did a dance show and gave a message to me back then for work. I asked her to approach dance masters like Sekhar, Jani, Ganesh and others to get work. I don't know what is wrong and which one is correct, but what I want to tell you is that Jani master is a nice person. I am not here to support Jani master. I just want to say that I worked with him and he is a nice person. I didn't face any difficulty while working with him," said Anee.



Naveen Chandra slithers into action with

Snakes and Ladders

Actor Naveen Chandra is keeping busy with both films and numerous web series. He now plays the lead in a new web series titled *Snakes and Ladders*. This nine-episode series is directed by Ashok Veerappan, Bharath Muralidharan and Kamala Alchemis and produced by Karthik Subbaraju and Kalyan Subramanian.

"The story revolves around four teenage kids and an unexpected incident that changes their lives, and how they navigate through it. The four kids featured are newcomers and they performed brilliantly. The three directors have crafted this web series wonderfully," said Naveen Chandra. He added that he had worked in three shifts and filmed entirely in Kodaikanal. The actor mentioned that he is already receiving positive responses. "The web series is streaming in six languages, making it accessible to all and I hope families will enjoy it this weekend. This is universal content. While it's a crime thriller, it has dark humor that makes it suitable for family viewing. All nine episodes are going to thrill you," said actor Nanda.

Nidhi Agerwal's double pan-India power play



Nidhi Agerwal made her Telugu film debut in *Savyasachi* alongside Naga Chaitanya and quickly followed it up with *Mr. Majnu* opposite Akhil Akkineni. Despite multiple projects since then, she is yet to establish herself as a star in the industry. Although her role in *iSmart Shankar* coincided with the film's success, it didn't significantly elevate her career.

Currently, Nidhi is working on two high-profile pan-India projects—*Hari Hara Veera Mallu* and *Raja Saab*, where she plays the lead. Thrilled to be part of these ventures, she recently shared her excitement on X, writing, "An artist's life is full of surprises, but some leave you feeling truly blessed and grateful. I'm delighted to have shot for 2 much awaited pan-Indian films on the same day, that too one in Andhra and another in Telangana. 1 day 2 film shoots 2 states. Eagerly waiting for you all to see what we have done. It's going to be a celebration!" Nidhi is hopeful that her roles in these projects, starring opposite Prabhas and Pawan Kalyan, will help her reclaim the spotlight and open up new opportunities.

Victory Venkatesh, Nithiin, Keerthy Suresh join forces for investigative thriller

Telugu star Nithiin is stepping into the role of producer with an exciting new project, a gripping investigative thriller directed by Tamil filmmaker TN Santosh. Inspired by a real-life incident, the film has already created a buzz among audiences. Nithiin's production house, Sresht Movies, is backing the venture, drawn to its compelling storyline.

The movie has already secured Keerthy Suresh for a key role, adding to the anticipation. But the biggest news is the potential casting of Victory Venkatesh, who is in talks to take on the lead role as a determined cop. Known for his commanding screen presence, Venkatesh's involve-



ment could bring an extra edge to Santosh's intense narrative. While his participation is yet to be

confirmed, the possibility of this collaboration has generated significant excitement in the industry.

Pranayagodari gets groovy with Tellarupoddullo

Some small films have been doing well at the box office recently, providing a boost to many filmmakers to produce small films with quality content. The film *Pranayagodari*, directed by PL Vignesh and produced by Paramalla Lingaiah, is one such content-driven film. According to the makers, it is a feel-good entertainer with a unique storyline. Sadan stars as the lead actor, with Priyanka Prasad as the female lead. The promotional content released recently garnered significant attention. Now, the makers have released another song titled *Tellarupoddullo*, launched by star choreographer Shekhar Master. The music is composed by Markan deya, who also wrote the lyrics. The song is sung by Dhanunjay and Aditi Bhavaraju.

"It's a wonderful song and a good one," said Shekhar Master, praising director Vignesh and producer Lingaiah for their passion for the film. The song, choreographed by Mohan, has been beautifully shot in Araku. Shekhar Master wished for the film's great success. The release date for the movie will be announced soon.



Kiran Abbavaram fulfills his promise

A few days ago, actor Kiran Abbavaram participated as a special guest at the pre-release event of the *Love Reddy* movie. At the event, he pledged to support the small film by offering free shows in the Nizam, Andhra and ceded areas.

Keeping his promise, four free shows were organised on Friday. Kiran Abbavaram hosted these free screenings at GPR Multiplex in Hyderabad, Sri Rama Theater in Visakhapatnam, Krishna Teja Theater in Tirupati and Swarna Multiplex in Vijayawada.

On this occasion, the film team expressed their gratitude to Kiran Abbavaram. Social media has been buzzing with praise for the actor's support of the film. Directed by Smaran Reddy, the film is produced by Sunanda B. Reddy and Hemalatha Reddy.



All We Imagine as Light to hit theatres on Nov 22

All We Imagine as Light is set for its Indian release on November 22, with Rana Daggubati's Spirit Media distributing the film across India. After receiving acclaim at film festivals and enjoying a successful theatrical run in France and Italy, the film is gaining momentum as it heads to Indian theatres. It will also be released in the UK and the United States in November.

Rana Daggubati expressed his enthusiasm, saying, "We are very excited to bring this incredible film to Indian theatres. At Spirit Media, we are committed to bringing unique and meaningful stories to audi-

ences across the country. Payal has made a beautiful film, and we can't wait to share it with Indian audiences."

Speaking about the India theatrical release, Payal Kapadia, the film's director, said, "This film has been years in the making, and with our partnership with Rana Daggubati, I am incredibly excited for the next phase. It is the first time that a film of mine will be released in theatres, and Indian audiences will finally be able to buy tickets and experience it on the big screen, where cinema truly comes to life." *All We Imagine as Light* is an official Indo-French co-production.