

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**  
 The Congress has become the biggest fake news peddler in the country. Congress FAILED Telangana farmers by every measure. In Telangana, 40 lakh farmers did not get their loans waived. The state government also knows that its scheme is a complete flop. Prime Minister Modi saw through Congress's fake propaganda and recently exposed the truth behind their false claims. Rythu Bandhu has not been given for the Kharif crop for the first time since the scheme's launch. Shame.  
 - Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Union Minister

**'Cong, SP followed policy of nepotism, overlooked Varanasi'**  
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**DESERT**  
 ROOTS BUT GLOBAL BEATS!  
 10

Sustaining 25 years is not a joke; it's a big **GIFT: AJAY**  
 P12

**DON'T MISS...**  
**Village panchayats being rejuvenated...**  
 Alleging that the YSRCP-led erstwhile government crippled the village panchayats during the five-year regime, Minister for Water Resources Management Nimmala Ramaiah has reiterated that the village panchayats are being revitalised now. The Minister along with West Godavari district Collector C Nagarani and ZP chairperson Ghanta Padmasri laid the foundation stone for the development works at Burugupalli and Doddipatla villages in Yelamanchili mandal on Sunday...  
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**Majority healthcare workers feel their...**  
 More than half of the healthcare workers who participated in a survey feel that their workplace is "unsafe", particularly in state and central government medical colleges. Led by experts from the Vardhman Mahavir Medical College (VMHC), Safdarjung Hospital and AIIMS, New Delhi, the study highlighted 'significant gaps' in the security infrastructure within Indian healthcare settings. The 'Workplace Safety and Security in Indian Healthcare Settings: A Cross-Sectional Survey' published in a recent issue...  
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**Many firms see AI as key to...**  
 A significant percentage of organisations see Artificial Intelligence as key to competitive advantage and said they have experienced a notable boost in productivity through AI integration, according to a new report. According to the "Industry 5.0 and AI report", compiled by BML Munjal University, 44 pc of organisations have experienced a significant boost in productivity through AI integration. Additionally, 21 pc reported that AI can play a pivotal role in driving innovation, enabling...  
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**New Zealand win by eight wickets...**  
 New Zealand survived a hostile Jasprit Bumrah spell to foil India's attempt to add a final-day twist to an absorbing series-opener, slaying the cricketers at home by eight wickets and ending a 36-year long wait to taste Test success in the country, here Sunday This is Kiwis' first Test win on the Indian soil after the John Wright-led outfit bowled India by 136 runs at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai, way back in 1988. Even hunting a modest 107 on the fifth day against a world-class attack could be...  
 -SPORTS

**Won't allow AIIMS brand dilution: Nadda**  
 PNS ■ NEW DELHI  
 Union Health Minister J P Nadda on Sunday said he would not allow any dilution in the standards of teaching and faculty at all the new AIIMS set up across the country as he vowed to protect the institute's brand.  
 Addressing the BJMFCON 2024, a forum of doctors from Bihar and Jharkhand practising in Delhi-NCR, Nadda said AIIMS-Delhi was set up in the '60s but it was only in the '80s that it became a brand name.  
 "It takes 10 to 20 years for any institution to grow and function in full swing. I will not allow the dilution of the standards of AIIMS and will protect its brand name," Nadda said, adding that no compromise will be made in the faculty recruitment.  
 The health minister also said that the groundbreaking ceremony for AIIMS-Darbhanga will be held soon, while the commissioning of AIIMS-Deoghar has been done and recruitment of staff is presently underway.  
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**Bomb threats delay 24 more flights**  
 PNS ■ MUMBAI/NEW DELHI  
 As many as 24 flights of Indian airlines received bomb threats on Sunday, according to sources. IndiGo, Vistara, Akasa Air and Air India and Akasa Air are among the airlines that received bomb threats, including international flights, they added.  
 Six flights each of IndiGo, Vistara and Air India received the threats.  
 So far this week, more than 90 flights have received bomb threats and most of them have turned out to be hoaxes.  
 In separate statements, an IndiGo spokesperson said the airline is cognisant of a situation involving flight 6E 58 (Jeddah to Mumbai), 6E87 (Kozhikode to Dammam), 6E11 (Delhi to Istanbul), 6E17 (Mumbai to Istanbul), 6E133 (Pune to Jodhpur) and 6E112 operating (Goa to Ahmedabad).  
 Vistara said it got security threats for six flights -- UK25 (Delhi to Frankfurt), UK106 (Singapore to Mumbai), UK146 (Bali to Delhi), UK116 (Singapore to Delhi), UK110 (Singapore to Pune) and UK107 (Mumbai to Singapore).  
 "In line with the protocols, all relevant authorities were immediately notified, and security procedures, as directed by them, are being carried out," a Vistara spokesperson said in a statement.  
 Security alerts were received for six Akasa Air flights -- QP 1102 (Ahmedabad to Mumbai), QP 1378 (Delhi to Goa), QP 1385 (Mumbai to Bagdogra), QP 1406 (Delhi to Hyderabad), QP 1519 (Kochi to Mumbai) and QP 1526 (Lucknow to Mumbai).  
 "Following defined procedures and thorough inspections of six aircraft, they have been released for operations," an Akasa Air spokesperson said in a statement.  
 The sources also said there were threats for at least six flights of Air India flights. There was no comment from the airline.  
 Against the backdrop of bomb threats, mostly through social media, to airlines, the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) held a meeting with representatives of airlines on Saturday.  
 The civil aviation ministry plans to put in place strict norms to prevent incidents of hoax bomb threats to airlines, including placing the perpetrators in the no-fly list

**CLEAN ENERGY INITIATIVE**  
**AP to lead world in five yrs**

**SPL CS VIJAYANAND SAYS THE STATE AIMS TO NET RS 67K CR REVENUE**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Integrated Clean Energy (ICE) Policy-2024 aims to create a strong framework for attracting investments in clean energy and generating local jobs. Special Chief Secretary for Energy, K. Vijayanand, highlighted the importance of the new ICE Policy-2024, which includes an investment plan of Rs 10 lakh crore for overall economic growth. This policy is expected to create 7.5 lakh direct and indirect jobs for the unemployed. Vijayanand emphasised the need for cooperation among AP power utilities to implement the policy, which is expected to generate Rs 67,000 crore in net revenue for the State over the next five years.

He stated, "With the visionary leadership of CM Chandrababu Naidu and support from Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar, Andhra Pradesh's clean energy revolution will provide great opportunities in renewable energy in the coming years."

The ICE policy focuses on promoting clean energy solutions to harness renewable energy potential, driving progress towards net zero targets, optimizing energy costs through renewable energy and

- The ICE-24 policy plans to attract investments of Rs 10 lakh crore and create 7.5L jobs.
- It focuses on promoting renewable energy and supporting net-zero goals while enhancing grid management.



- Key targets include 78.5 GWp of solar energy, 35 GW of wind energy, and 5,000 EV charging stations.
- The state is developing green hydrogen, ethanol production, and bio-CNG to strengthen its clean energy initiatives.

- Initiatives like the PM Surya Ghar Scheme and the KUSUM scheme aim to revive investor interest in solar energy.
- The government is committed to making Andhra Pradesh a global leader in renewable energy.

advanced technologies, improving grid management, and developing a circular economy to create jobs.

Vijayanand also noted that the state government has set ambitious targets to make Andhra Pradesh a leader in renewable energy, including solar energy of 78.5 GWp, wind energy of 35 GW, pumped storage of 22 GW, battery energy storage systems of 25 GWh, green hydrogen at 1.5 MMTPA, ethanol production of

1,500 KLPD, bio-CNG/CBG of 1,000 TPD, EV charging infrastructure with 5,000 public charging stations, and clean tech manufacturing of 30 GW.

The government has already created new opportunities, reviving investor interest with 3 GW of solar rooftop capacity under the PM Surya Ghar Scheme for 10 lakh households and 3.7 GW of solar capacity under the KUSUM scheme

for 5 lakh pump sets. It also plans to develop 1,000 MW/2,000 MWh of battery energy storage capacity for 15 years under the BOOT model.

"The ICE policy aligns with Andhra Pradesh's goal of net zero by 2047. With renewed efforts, the state will attract investment over the next five years, significantly increasing its renewable energy capacity and establishing itself as a leader in energy transition," he concluded.

**Torched teenage girl succumbs**



PNS ■ KADAPA

A 16-year-old girl, who was set on fire by a youth in Badvel town on Saturday, succumbed to her injuries in the early hours of Sunday at RIMS hospital.

The girl had suffered 80% burns and fought for her life at the Government General Hospital (GGH) but succumbed to her injuries. In a statement given to the police before her death, the girl revealed that the accused had recently married another woman.

On Saturday, he called her and threatened to end his life if she did not meet him.

She travelled to the outskirts of Badvel town by auto rickshaw, where they met and went to an isolated area. During their conversation, she insisted that he marry her. Enraged, the accused set her on fire and fled the scene.  
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**Take stern action against accused: CM**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu expressed deep regret over the tragic incident in which an intermediate student in Budvel, Kadapa district, was set on fire. He directed district police officials on Sunday to expedite the investigation and ensure that the accused is severely punished.

Upon learning that the girl student was burnt alive after being doused with petrol, the Chief Minister closely monitored the investigation's progress and the treatment provided to the victim.  
 Continued on Page 2



**All gates of Prakasam Barrage lifted**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A large volume of floodwater from the Pulichintala, Nagarjuna Sagar, and Srisailem Projects has reached the Prakasam Barrage. Officials in Vijayawada released 1.18 lakh cusecs of floodwater into the sea by lifting all 70 crest gates on Sunday. This surge in floodwater at the Prakasam Barrage is due to heavy rains in Maharashtra and other states in the upper catchment area of the Krishna River.

Due to heavy inflows into the Srisailem Project, dam officials lifted six gates and discharged 1.67 lakh cusecs of flood water into the Krishna River. The Srisailem Dam received around 2.17 lakh cusecs of flood water, with 60,000 cusecs released for power generation and the remainder discharged downstream.

Additionally, officials from the Nagarjuna Sagar Project are dis-

charging surplus water towards the Pulichintala Project, which has reached its full reservoir level. Authorities released 1,78,482 cusecs to the Prakasam Barrage from Pulichintala.

Irrigation officials in Vijayawada maintained the Prakasam Barrage level at 12 feet and discharged the excess water into the Bay of Bengal. They discharged 1,57,250 cusecs of floodwater downstream by lifting 20 gates to a height of four feet and the remaining 50 gates by three feet.

Officials expect that more than 2 lakh cusecs of flood water will come from the upper regions. While keeping the barrage level at 12 feet, the authorities released surplus water and also directed 5,439 cusecs to the canals, with 3,923 cusecs going to the Krishna Eastern Canals and 1,516 cusecs to the Western Canals.  
 Continued on Page 2

**Probe ordered into diarrhoea deaths**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has ordered a thorough inquiry into the diarrhoeal deaths in the Gorla villages of Vizianagaram district, to be conducted by a senior IAS officer. The CM has appointed K. Vijayanand to investigate the root causes of the incident.

Naidu reviewed the situation following the deaths of eight people due to diarrhoea in Gorla village, located in the Cheepurupalli constituency.  
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**ED raids assets of ex-MP MVV**

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) conducted raids on Saturday at the properties of former YSR Congress MP MVV Satyanarayana in connection with an alleged land-grabbing case. The raids, which continued until midnight, targeted five locations, including the residences and offices of Satyanarayana, his auditor Ganmani Venkateswara Rao, and a key associate, Gadde Brahmaji.

The ED's action was prompted by an Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) filed after a complaint by the Arilova police under the Visakhapatnam Police Commissionerate. The agency con-



firmed that documents related to the land-grabbing allegations were seized during the operation.

The case centres around a complaint filed by Ch. Jagadeeswarudu, Managing Director of Hayagreeva

Constructions. He accused Satyanarayana and his associates of conspiring to illegally seize 12.5 acres of land in Yendada village, which the Andhra Pradesh government had originally allocated for the development of an old-age home, orphanage, and housing for the elderly.

Jagadeeswarudu alleged that the accused used forged documents to claim ownership of the property and resorted to intimidation tactics. "They forced us to sign blank papers under duress and fabricated documents to take control of our land. It's a blatant act of cheating and fraud," he stated.  
 Continued on Page 2

**Free LPG scheme from Diwali: Manohar**



PNS ■ GUNTUR

Minister for Civil Supplies, Nandendla Manohar, has announced that the free gas cylinders scheme will begin from the Diwali festival.

The Civil Supplies Minister laid the foundation stone for various development projects worth Rs 1.25

crore in Tenali on Sunday. These projects include the construction of roads and drains, funded by MGN-REGA, in five villages within the Tenali constituency.

Speaking at the event, Manohar confirmed that the free domestic gas cylinder scheme will be launched from Diwali. He noted that eligible

households will receive three gas cylinders per year. The Telugu Desam Party had promised this scheme in their election manifesto as part of the "Super Six" flagship initiatives.

"The government will allocate Rs 3,000 crore annually for the implementation of the free gas cylinders scheme. We will seek Cabinet approval for the scheme in the next Cabinet meeting. Despite financial constraints, the government is committed to fulfilling all assurances," Manohar stated.

He added that there are over 1.40 crore ration card holders in the state, and all eligible cardholders will receive three gas cylinders under this scheme.



**Gunfire in AP village as TG cops confront Bihar gang**

PNS ■ RAMAPURAM/SRI SATHYASAI DIST

A tense situation gripped Ramapuram in Battapalli mandal of Sri Satyasai district in Andhra Pradesh on Sunday when an unexpected exchange of gunfire broke out between the Telangana police and a gang of thieves from Bihar. The gang had been under surveillance and suspected of being involved in several thefts across Telangana.

Based on intelligence inputs, the Telangana police learned that the gang had taken refuge in Ramapuram. Acting on this information, the police arrived in Battapalli on Saturday night and set up a covert operation near the Ramapuram bus stand.

On Sunday, the Bihar gang attempted to flee the area on motorcycles. The Telangana police, lying in wait, moved swiftly to apprehend them. However, the suspects resisted arrest, forcing the officers to fire warning shots. Reports suggest that the police fired at least three rounds.  
 Continued on Page 2



Monday Mirchi

CRPF PERSONNEL FLEX MUSCLE, STATE COPS TASTE DOSE OF THEIR OWN MEDICINE

Cops are pushy; the higher the rank, the greater the power that they pack in their punch. This treatment is typically for aam admi, who may be protesting an unaddressed grievance. But when a Union Minister chooses to be street smart, and there is a pecking order among central forces and state forces that are out to maintain law and order, you get the rare chance of witnessing state police officers being pushed aside. This exactly is what happened when the Central Reserve Police Force personnel flexed their muscle on Saturday while state cops were attempting to approach Bandi Sanjay whose solitary protest at Ashok Nagar shook the state police force for its grave implications. They were forcefully pushed aside, including the brass. The message was loud and clear: he is no longer the man who could be manhandled like in the past. One cop was overheard saying, "If he wants to be arrested, then we can arrest him. It's not in our hands". Clearly, the power dynamics have shifted, and the state police seemed taken back by the sheer authority that Bandi Sanjay displayed. But not everyone walked away unscathed. Seethayya, Chikkadpally Sub-Inspector and a known admirer of Sanjay, faced the axe for manhandling a group of Group I aspirants, after Sanjay reportedly complained directly to the Commissioner of Police. The swift transfer for Seethayya sent across another message that even loyalists among the uniformed forces will not be spared when the lines are crossed.

HEARTBURN IN ADMIN CIRCLES OVER ED NOTICE TO BABU

There has been a lot of heartburn among bureaucratic circles after Amoy Kumar received a notice from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with land irregularities. The ED notice, many are saying, is a classic example of what happens when bureaucrats get caught in the crossfire of political one-upmanship. A little bird tells us that this particular move stemmed from a complaint lodged by a key Bharatiya Janata Party leader from Telangana with clout enough to shift gears at the Centre. None expected the Chief Minister to step in with 'Ahoj Kumar'; for, Revanth Reddy's relationship with the babu who has landed in trouble was not exactly smooth, considering his posting came much later than expected. Still, the timing of the ED notice has caused quite a stir. Some insiders suggest that this might be a signal to other bureaucrats: pick sides, and face the consequences. Already many within the bureaucracy are reportedly shying away from visibly pledging their support,

unwilling to risk being singled by power struggles between the big fish. It seems amid the constantly shifting political dynamics, no overactive babu's job is secure.

TELANGANA'S SPECIAL REQUEST FOR TWO BUREAUCRATS RAISES EYEBROWS

It looks like a bureaucrat may attain 'special category status' (SCS) for reasons that may not be obvious. Despite the diktat of the Central Administrative Tribunal and the orders of the High Court to 'go and report for duty in AP', at least two of the four TG IAS officers who obeyed the orders seem to belong to SCS. The buzz in the corridors of power is all about the latest move by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy-led Telangana government. The whispers in informed circles suggest that Revanth Reddy has nevertheless approached the Centre, specifically requesting the return of two bureaucrats-Telangana. Maybe Kata is cut out for TG and Ronald has a rosy future in the state. Meanwhile, in a not-so-subtle career update, Srijana Gummalala has announced that she is making Hyderabad her new base. Let us wait and see if the cadre change is permanent or allows for detour by SCS officers.

TOUGH COP'S HEART BEATS FOR THE ELDERLY

Tough cop VC Sajanar, known for his non-sense and extra-judicial approach to deviant youths, in a heartfelt post on Twitter took a strong stand against the rising cases of elder abuse. He posted: "I'm deeply troubled by how some people are treating their elderly parents/in-laws these days. The videos circulating on social media are really disturbing, boss." Sajanar's words struck a chord as he reminded everyone of the sacrifices parents make: "We must never forget that whatever we achieve in life is because of our parents' support and sacrifices." His post called out the attitude of those who see their elderly relatives as burdens who would be better off only in old age homes. He passionately urged errant members of society to rethink their attitude, emphasizing that mistreatment of the elderly can never be justified. "What kind of example are you setting for your children, who are quietly observing how you treat the elderly at home?" he questioned, while urging strict legal action against those responsible. While exhorting enlightened members of the public to report any incident of elder abuse by visiting the nearest police station or dialing 100, he offered to personally back them, saying "You can also reach out to me or my team here for additional support."

--Yours truly

FIDE rating chess tourney from October 22-27

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada is set to host the first International FIDE Rating Chess Festival-2024 from October 22-27. Sponsored by the BNKU Foundation, the tournament will take place at ICON Public School. The event will feature three formats of play—Classical, Rapid, and Blitz—offering a total prize pool of Rs.15 lakh. This Chess Festival is expected to attract participants from various regions.

The six-day tournament is organised under the aegis of the World Chess Federation, All-India Chess Federation, Andhra Chess Association, and the Vijayawada Chess Association. Around 500 players from three countries have registered their names to participate in the Classical Open tournament, another 300 for the Rapid, and 300 players have registered their names to participate in the Blitz tournament.

CLAP vehicles stalled as drivers remain unpaid

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Due to the non-payment of wages to Clean Andhra Pradesh (CLAP) vehicle drivers, door-to-door waste collection has come to a halt across the combined Krishna district.

The State government had introduced CLAP vehicles for waste collection from households, but the drivers have stopped attending to their duties because they have not received their wages.

Sources say that the state government had allotted hundreds of CLAP vehicles for the combined Krishna district. Out of these, 225 vehicles were assigned to the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation, 42 to Machilipatnam, 31 to



Gudivada, and 42 to YSR Tadigadapa Municipality.

For the past three months, the CLAP vehicle drivers have not been paid, leading them to go on strike. As a result, waste collection has been suspended for the last few days in Vijayawada,

Machilipatnam, Gudivada, YSR Tadigadapa, and other Urban Municipalities.

As per the agreement, the government is supposed to pay Rs. 18,500 per driver to the agency handling the CLAP vehicles.

However, the drivers allege

that they are being paid only Rs. 12,000. They also claim that the agency has not received payments from the government for the last three months, which is why they have stopped paying the drivers their wages. This non-payment has put the drivers under severe financial strain.

The drivers, who work throughout the year without a break, have gone on strike due to the wage neglect.

Waste collection has been at a standstill for a week now, but no officials have responded to the issue, the drivers alleged.

They warned that if the government does not take action, they will intensify the strike, extending it not only to cities and towns but also to villages.

Botsa Satyanarayana slams govt over diarrhoea deaths

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Opposition Leader in the Legislative Council, Botsa Satyanarayana, has strongly condemned the TDP-led coalition government for what he described as their 'negligence' in addressing the diarrhoea outbreak in Gurlu mandal in Vizianagaram district. Satyanarayana held the government directly responsible for the preventable deaths and called for immediate compensation to the grieving families. He also urged swift action to stop further outbreaks of the disease.

After visiting the affected villages, Satyanarayana expressed outrage at the government's failure to ensure clean drinking water and proper sanitation. "These tragic deaths are a direct result of contaminated drinking water and poor sanitation in the region," he said, stressing that the situation could have been avoided. Official figures put the



death toll at 11, but locals claim at least five more people have died due to the outbreak.

"These deaths are not natural; they are due to the government's negligence," Botsa asserted. "It is appalling that such a preventable tragedy has been allowed to happen. The government's failure to monitor public health and sanitation in these villages is inexcusable."

Satyanarayana demanded that immediate ex gratia payments be made to the families of the deceased. "The govern-

ment must compensate these families without delay and ensure that no more lives are lost to this completely avoidable disaster," he added.

He also criticized the government's attempt to shift the blame to the previous YSRCP administration. "Instead of making excuses and pointing fingers, the current administration should focus on what matters—preventing more deaths. The people deserve action, not political blame games," he said sharply.

The opposition leader called for house-to-house surveys to identify other potential victims, urging authorities to distribute essential medicines and provide better healthcare in the affected areas. "It is unacceptable that these villages have been left to suffer due to a lack of basic services," he concluded, demanding immediate and meaningful intervention from the government to address the health crisis.

YSRCP slams TDP govt over Badvel girl's death

PNS ■ BADVEL

YSRCP MLA Dr Dasari Sudha and MLC DC Govind Reddy expressed deep sorrow over the tragic incident in Badvel, where a student lost her life after being attacked by a man obsessed with her. They raised serious concerns about the increasing violence against women under the TDP coalition government and called for urgent action to address the issue.

Speaking to the media in Badvel on Sunday, they criticised the TDP coalition government for neglecting its promises to the people. They pointed out that incidents like the one in Kurnool and now in Badvel reflect the government's failure to ensure women's safety. They emphasized that during YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's government, significant measures were taken to protect women, including the implementation of the Disha App. However,

they questioned the current government's silence and inaction on such serious matters, despite having a woman as the Home Minister.

Recalling the recent gang rape incident in Hindupur during Vijayadashami, the leaders highlighted that such heinous crimes are becoming more frequent. They condemned the Badvel attack as a barbaric act and blamed the coalition government for weakening the strong Disha initiative introduced by the previous YSRCP government.

They urged Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu to prioritize the safety and dignity of the people over political power, demanding that the government take strict action to prevent further atrocities. They also called on law enforcement officials to respond appropriately to these issues and warned that YSRCP would hold the government accountable if no action is taken.

ED raids assets of ex-MP...

Continued from Page 1

MVV Satyanarayana, a prominent figure in the Telugu film industry and local politics, had previously obtained anticipatory bail in this case from the Andhra Pradesh High Court. Despite his political and cinematic influence, he now faces serious charges of criminal conspiracy, cheating, forgery, and criminal intimidation.

The land, initially registered in 2010, was granted to Jagadeeswarudu's company by the Andhra Pradesh government for senior citizen and orphan housing. In 2020, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between Jagadeeswarudu and Satyanarayana's company for project development. However, the complainant claims that the signatures were forged and the

sale documents were falsified. An ED official, speaking on condition of anonymity, remarked, "The seized documents will provide vital clues in our ongoing investigation into financial irregularities and land misappropriation. This case is just one of several under scrutiny." The investigation is expected to intensify in the coming weeks as authorities continue to examine the seized evidence.

Gunfire in AP...

Continued from Page 1

Despite the gunfire, the gang escaped by splitting into smaller groups. While one group headed towards Kadi, another fled in the direction of Tadimar. Telangana police teams have since divided their forces to chase down the fleeing suspects. The incident has left the residents shaken.

Bommasani all praise for Art of Living Foundation

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP leader Bommasani Subba Rao appreciated the efforts of Sri Ravi Shankar's The Art of Living Foundation for their remarkable service in assisting flood victims. Speaking at a relief distribution event, Subba Rao highlighted the foundation's selfless work in providing essential supplies to those affected by the recent floods in Vijayawada.

The event, held at Swathi Centre in Bhavanipuram, witnessed the distribution of essential kits, including daily



necessities and clothes, to over 3,000 flood-affected families residing along the Krishna River. The relief activities were led by Sri Ravi Shankar, with participation from TDP leader Subba Rao and Art of Living

Apex Committee member Ravi Kiran.

Subba Rao commended the foundation's ongoing humanitarian efforts and urged continued support for the flood victims. Ravi Kiran, along with other

members of the foundation, mentioned that Sri Ravi Shankar had been personally overseeing the relief activities in flood-hit areas for the past month.

As part of the ongoing support, Sri Ravi Shankar will conduct a special Bhajan programme titled "Atmiyata Kalayika" with the flood victims on November 13 at Bobburi Grounds, on the banks of the Krishna River. The Art of Living team has called on everyone to participate in the event, which aims to bring comfort and spiritual strength to those affected.

All gates of Barrage...

Continued from Page 1

In response to this situation, officials from the Water Resources Department have instructed authorities in Krishna, NTR district, and the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation to take necessary precautionary measures. Following these directions, officials have advised residents in low-lying areas to remain alert for possible floodwaters.

Probe ordered into diarrhoea...

Continued from Page 1

He gathered information from officials about the current conditions in the village and the medical assistance being provided to those affected. Discussions with health department officials confirmed that the deaths were indeed caused by diarrhoea. District officials informed the Chief Minister that medical camps have been established and safe drinking water is being supplied. Despite this, Naidu has emphasized the need for a comprehensive inquiry to identify the

underlying causes and address any issues within the relevant government departments.

He instructed that water quality in the area be regularly tested and that the supply of drinking water continue until the problem is fully resolved.

CM Chandrababu also suggested that medical camps remain operational and directed the health, panchayat raj, and rural water supply departments to coordinate effectively. He urged officials to reassure the public and provide support until the situation is rectified.

Torched teenage girl...

Continued from Page 1

Her dying declaration to the magistrate has since gone viral on social media. Addressing a press conference in Badvel on Sunday, SP Harshvardhan Raju informed that the accused, Vignesh, was arrested on Saturday night on the outskirts of Kadapa. "The accused had premeditated the attack to get rid of her, as she was pressuring him to marry her," the SP said. He revealed that the deceased girl was a first-year Intermediate student, while the accused worked as a cook in a hotel. Vignesh was already married, and his wife is currently pregnant. According to the SP, Vignesh had called the girl, threatening to end his life if she did not meet him. She took an auto rickshaw to the polytechnic college, where the accused joined her. They later got down

Take stern action against...

Continued from Page 1

After the District Superintendent of Police (SP) informed him that the accused had been taken into custody, Chandrababu ordered the SP to complete the investigation quickly and present the accused before a fast-track court to avoid any delays in justice. The Chief Minister emphasized that true justice for the victim's family can only be achieved through swift and severe punishment for the accused. He stressed that the punishment should be comparable to the death penalty to serve as a strong deterrent against such heinous acts in the future.

near the Century Plywood factory and headed into a nearby forested area.

After spending some time together, an argument erupted when the girl urged him to marry her. In a fit of rage, the accused set her dress on fire using a lighter and fled the scene. "The accused had called

her with the preplanned intention of getting rid of her," the SP clarified. The police have collected all evidence from the crime scene and assured that the accused will face justice in court. Heart-wrenching scenes were witnessed at RIMS hospital, with the girl's grieving parents inconsolable.

Maharashtra polls: Kin of influential leaders find place in BJP's first list

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The BJP's move to retain 71 MLAs in the first list of 99 candidates for the Maharashtra assembly polls and field relatives of influential leaders in some segments reflects its risk-aversion approach in the wake of the poor show in general elections in the western state. Sreejaya Chavan, daughter of former CM and Congress turncoat Ashok Chavan who joined the BJP ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, is among the kin of regional satraps picked by the BJP for the November 20 contest.

Sreejaya, who holds a law degree, will make her electoral debut from the home turf Bhokar segment, represented by the senior Chavan, in Nanded district. The BJP has renominated Nitesh Rane, son of former Union minister and Konkani strongman Narayan Rane, from the Kankavli seat in Sindhudurg district.

Another political dynasty who secured the ticket is Amal Mahadik, the younger brother



of BJP's Rajya Sabha member Dhananjay Mahadik. He will try to reclaim the Kolhapur South assembly constituency he had won in 2014. The BJP has also approved the candidature of Santosh Danve, sitting MLA from Bhokardan constituency and son of former Union minister Raosaheb Danve, in Jalna district. Sambhaji Patil Nilangekar, former BJP minister and grandson of ex-chief minister Shivajirao Patil Nilangekar, has been renominated from Nilanga in Latur district.

Other candidates related to prominent politicians include Rana Jagjitsinha Patil, son of senior politician Padmasinha Patil closely related to Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar. Rana's wife, Archana Patil,

had unsuccessfully contested from the Dharashiv Lok Sabha seat as the NCP candidate.

In Pune, Siddharth Shirole has been renominated from the Shivajinagar constituency. He is the son of former BJP MP Anil Shirole.

In the Chinchwad seat, incumbent MLA Ashwini Jagtap has been replaced by her brother-in-law Shankar Jagtap.

In Mumbai, the BJP has fielded its city unit chief Ashish Shelar from the Bandra West assembly segment for the third time, while his brother Vinod Shelar will test the electoral waters from the Malad West seat. Vinod is likely to face sitting Congress MLA and former minister Aslam Shaikh if the latter is renominated.

In the previous polls, Shaikh defeated Ramesh Singh Thakur of the BJP by a margin of 10,000 votes.

The BJP has fielded incumbent MLAs Chandrashekhar Bawankule and Ram Shinde from Kamthi and Karjat Jambhed constituencies, respectively.

Won't allow...

Continued from Page 1

Stating that several policy interventions have been made to transform medical education in the past 10 years, Nadda said, "In the 2017 health policy, we tried to make it comprehensive and holistic. Earlier, the stress was on the curative aspect but now the focus is on preventive, promotive, curative palliative and rehabilitative aspects -- a holistic approach."

Underlining the government's efforts on preventive aspects of healthcare and early detection of diseases in the country, he said there are 1.73 lakh high-quality Ayushman Arogya Mandirs in India that go through a high-quality digital assessment. Out of these, 10,716 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs have been set up in Bihar which have witnessed a footfall of 8.35 crore so far while there have been 4.36 crore screenings for non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

There are 3,825 similar facilities in Jharkhand witnessing a footfall of 2.33 crore and 2.12 crore NCD screenings.

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# Govt to decide on additional funding for RINL next month

Centre expects technical viability report from a UK-based consulting firm in Nov

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The government is set to make a crucial decision next month regarding the potential allocation of additional funds to the Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL), which currently faces outstanding liabilities of around Rs 35,000 crore. Sources familiar with the situation indicate that the Centre is awaiting a technical viability report from a UK-based consulting firm, expected in November.

The government's decision to allocate additional funds to RINL will hinge on the findings of this report. A senior government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, stated, "Following the report's submission, both the government and the banks will evaluate the necessary funding for



the company and provide financial support accordingly." RINL, the corporate entity of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, has been struggling to stay afloat amidst a myriad of challenges. Despite its production capacity of 7.3 million tonnes of liquid steel per annum, the company has been plagued by declining profitability and financial distress.

The government's plans to strategically privatise RINL have faced significant opposition from the Andhra Pradesh government and trade unions, hindering its implementation. The upcoming consultancy report is expected to shed light on the company's viability and potential avenues for restructuring.

A source familiar with the matter noted that the report will play a pivotal role in determining RINL's future, including the possibility of a merger with the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL). "The report will examine all aspects of RINL, including its equipment, the reasons for declining production, supply chain issues, and its funding needs," stated another source. "It will also assess the extent of damage incurred, the reasons for non-operational machinery, and why production levels have not improved."

## Laryngectomy successfully performed on 47-year-old

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A 47-year-old man, diagnosed with recurrent laryngeal cancer (cancer of the voice box), has received successful treatment at the American Oncology Institute (AOI) in Mangalagiri, Vijayawada. The surgery was expertly performed by Dr Eshant Inapuri and his team at AOI.

The patient presented with several health complications, including a high cardiac risk and significant fibrosis in the neck, affecting muscles, nerves, blood vessels, and potentially the voice box, a consequence of prior radiation therapy. He underwent a complex salvage total laryngectomy, which involved the removal of the voice box, along with a bilateral functional neck dissection to excise lymph nodes and surrounding tissues from both sides of the neck. Harish Trivedi, CEO, CTSI - South Asia, said, "This case exemplifies AOI's commitment to delivering world-class, multidisciplinary cancer care even in the most challenging of cases."

## YSRCP leaders' corruption will be exposed: MP Ramesh

'Brazen misuse of power to loot public funds will not go unpunished'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Anakapalli MP CM Ramesh has vowed to expose the illegal activities of YSRCP leaders, promising that their abuse of power and corrupt actions would result in imprisonment. Commenting on the recent Enforcement Directorate (ED) raids at a former MP's residence in Visakhapatnam, Ramesh laid out the gravity of the investigation.

"A comprehensive report detailing the corruption committed by the YSRCP leadership has been handed over to the Central government. Their brazen misuse of power to loot public funds will not go unpunished," Ramesh declared. He accused YSRCP leaders of exploiting their positions for personal enrichment, particularly in land-grab schemes in North Andhra.

Ramesh didn't hold back, pointing to a staggering Rs. 500 crore wasted through fraudulent reports regarding Rushikonda. "This isn't just a case of financial corruption—it's a betrayal of public trust. The people have been cheated on an unimaginable scale," Ramesh said. He also implicated Dasapalla in land irregularities, stressing that these crimes have caught the full attention of the Central government.



"The Central government is treating these illegal land grabs and the corrupt activities in Visakhapatnam with the utmost seriousness," Ramesh asserted, adding that the perpetrators must be held accountable without exception. "Those who have shamelessly looted public money cannot be allowed to walk free. Justice must be served."

Ramesh also referenced the involvement of multiple investigative bodies, including the CBI and ED, in ongoing probes into YSRCP corruption cases. "I have personally informed Chandrababu Naidu about the magnitude of these developments," he revealed. "In line with the assurances we gave to the people, those responsible for this grand theft of public resources will face severe consequences."



## Amaravati Drone Summit-2024 from tomorrow

AP to be hub for drone technology in India

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Drones are rapidly transforming industries worldwide, revolutionising sectors ranging from agriculture to disaster management. These unmanned aerial vehicles are changing the way we live and work, making services more accessible and convenient. In recognition of this growing importance, Andhra Pradesh is positioning itself as a hub for drone technology in India, with the government prioritising the development and use of drones across various fields.

India's drone industry is on a trajectory of remarkable growth, with projections indicating that the sector will expand from \$19.3 billion in 2019 to approximately \$45.8 billion by 2025. This rapid rise positions India to become the third-largest drone market globally within the next year. The State government's commitment to advancing drone technology will be showcased at the upcoming Amaravati Drone Summit 2024, set to take place on October 22 and 23. The summit will serve as a national platform, attracting hundreds of experts from around the world. It aims to explore the potential of drones in a wide array of sectors while fostering innovation and investment. Up to 400 representatives from universities and research institutions will attend, adding to the momentum of drone development in the region.

## Diarrhoea outbreak in Gurla contained

Special team of local doctors to investigate causes and prepare report

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

MT Krishnababu, Special Chief Secretary of the Department of Health, Medical and Family Welfare, has announced that the diarrhoea outbreak in Gurla mandal of Vizianagaram district, has been effectively contained thanks to the quick actions taken by the Medical and Health Department and local healthcare personnel. "The immediate steps taken by our medical teams have been instrumental in mitigating the situation," Krishnababu stated. He highlighted the collaborative efforts of various health officials and local authorities.

Following instructions from the Minister of Health and Medical Affairs, Satyakumar Yadav, Health Director Dr Padmavathi was dispatched



to the district to oversee the response. "Our priority is to monitor the health of the residents and prevent further cases," she said. The Health Commissioner was also sent to the district on Sunday, and a special team of local doctors has been assembled to investigate the outbreak's causes and prepare a comprehensive report. Initial tests on drinking water samples revealed contamination, which local officials attributed to open defecation practices and leaking water supply pipes.

"We are implementing significant measures to prevent water pollution. Clean drinking water is being supplied to affected areas through tankers," Krishnababu said. Severe cases of dehydration, particularly those involving dehydration, have been transferred to nearby hospitals. A door-to-door survey was conducted to identify and treat suspected cases at free medical camps. The outbreak first emerged on October 13 with a single reported case. The situation escalated quickly, with 55 new cases on October 14, 65 on October 15, 40 on October 16, 32 on October 17, and eight on October 18. Only one new case was reported on Saturday.

## 2 students drowned in quarry pit

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The holiday trip of engineering college students ended in tragedy as two students drowned in a quarry pit at Madalavarigudem village in Gannavaram mandal on Sunday. According to the police, seven final-year B.Tech students from a private engineering college visited the village to enjoy their Sunday holiday. Some of them entered the quarry pit for a bath, but two of them slipped and drowned. The bodies were recovered and identified as Pagadala Durga Prasad (22) and Jaggaraju Venkatesh Raju (22). The bodies were sent to the GGH in Gannavaram for postmortem.

## Railways warns passengers against carrying firecrackers

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Transporting dangerous goods is a punishable offense. With the festive season of Diwali approaching, the Indian Railways is experiencing a surge in passenger traffic as travellers return home to celebrate with their families. In the light of this increased movement, the Railways has issued a stern warning to passengers against carrying firecrackers and other flammable items on trains. Under Sections 164 and 165 of the Railway Act, 1989, transporting such dangerous goods is a punishable offense that can result in imprisonment for up to three years, a fine of ₹1,000, or both. Highlighting the importance of safety, K. Sandeep, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager of the Waltair Division, emphasised, "The transportation of firecrackers poses a serious threat to passengers and railway infrastructure. We urge everyone to strictly adhere to safety regulations and avoid carrying any hazardous materials on trains." Authorities are encouraging passengers to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activities or items. "If you notice firecrackers or any suspicious packages on trains or at stations, please alert the railway staff or contact the Railway Helpline at 139," a senior official advised. To ensure a safe Diwali season, the Waltair Division of East Coast Railway has implemented stringent checks and round-the-clock surveillance to curb the illegal transport of firecrackers. Special teams have been deployed to inspect luggage and parcels in parcel vans, ensuring the safe handling of all goods.

## Cordon and search operations conducted in Visakhapatnam

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Following the directives of Commissioner of Police Shankabratha Bagchi, the IV Town and Gajuwaka police teams conducted extensive cordon and search operations in various localities across the city on Sunday morning. The operations were led by Assistant Commissioner of Police (East Sub-Division) K. Lakshmana Murthy and involved searches in areas like Varahagiri Nagar, Kailasa puram, Satyasai Nagar, Saligramapuram, Simhagiri Colony, and surrounding localities. A total of 110 police personnel were deployed, divided into 62 teams to check vehicle documents and verify the identities of suspicious individuals.



In a parallel operation in Gajuwaka, 50 police personnel in 25 teams conducted similar searches in various neighbourhoods. While no suspects were found, several vehicles were identified as lacking proper documentation. "The objective of these operations is to maintain law and order and ensure public safety," said the ACP.

# Minister announces year-round marketing initiative for women entrepreneurs

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

In a major boost to women's self-help groups, the Minister for MSME, SERP, and NRI Affairs, Kondapalli Srinivas, has announced plans to support their year-round marketing of handicrafts and products. The announcement was made during the closing ceremony of the All-India DWCRB Bazaar-2024 SARAS Fair. The Minister highlighted the government's commitment to empowering women entrepreneurs. "We are making arrangements to ensure that members of women's self-help



groups can market their products throughout the year," he stated. "This will provide them with a platform to showcase their talent and creativity." CM Chandrababu Naidu's decision to allocate 10 acres in Amaravati for a permanent centre for the sale and exhibition of DWCRB products was met with approval by the Minister. Addressing the event on the

## All-India DWCRB Bazaar-2024 concludes

Saras premises, the Minister emphasised the exhibition's role in providing valuable insights into diverse products from various regions. "This exhibition is not just about sales; it is an opportunity for our self-help groups to learn and grow," he said. The exhibition recorded sales worth Rs 7.20 crore, a testament to the hard work of the women entrepreneurs. Nellimarla MLA Lokam Naga Madhavi praised the initiative as a vital step towards fostering entrepreneurship. "This exhibition aligns perfectly with our government's vision of creating an entrepreneur in every household," he remarked. "It is crucial to provide marketing facilities for the products made by members of the Swayam Shakti organisation." Vijayanagar MLA Aditi Gajapathi also highlighted the importance of supporting women in entrepreneurship. "We must encourage women to become aspiring entrepreneurs by purchasing handicrafts, textiles, and other items created by DWCRB women," she stated.



**POLICE COMMEMORATION DAY -2024**

WE OBSERVE POLICE MARTYRS COMMEMORATION DAY EVERY OCTOBER 21ST, COMMEMORATING THE SACRIFICES OF CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE PERSONNEL WHO WERE MARTYRED BY THE ENEMY ON OCTOBER 21, 1959 IN THE AKSAI CHIN AREA OF THE INDO-CHINA BORDER.

**OCTOBER 21**  
POLICE COMMEMORATION DAY - 2024

OUR SINCERE TRIBUTE TO OUR POLICE BROTHERS WHO LAID DOWN THEIR LIVES IN THE LINE OF DUTY.

Tributes to Police Martyrs...  
PRAKASAM DISTRICT POLICE





Arrangements being made for paddy purchase: JC

PNS ■ ELURU

Stating that all arrangements are being made to buy paddy produce of kharif season from the farmers, Joint Collector P Dhatri Reddy said that it is estimated that 3.40 lakh metric tonnes of paddy could be purchased.

Talking to the media here on Sunday, Joint Collector Dhatri Reddy said that paddy was cultivated on about 1.80 lakh acres in Eluru district during the kharif and the yields are expected to be 5.60 lakh metric tonnes.

She said that 250 paddy purchasing centres would be set up through the procurement supporting agencies including cooperative society, DCMS and FPOs. The required technical equipment and 12 lakh ganny bags are being readied to procure paddy from the farmers, the JC stated.

District transport officials said that under their supervision, lorry unions, rice millers, and other private vehicle owners are installing GPS-equipped vehicles which will be engaged to transport paddy produce. It has been decided to provide the facility to transport paddy produce to the farmers through their vehicles with GPS devices.

# AP to play key role in fighting climate change

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Special Chief Secretary of the Energy Department, K. Vijayanand, released a special book on the Mission LiFE Programme, reaffirming the department's commitment to the initiative. He praised the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) for its efforts in spreading awareness about energy efficiency and Mission LiFE in a phased manner. Chandra Shekhar Reddy, Media Adviser for Southern States and Union Territories, along with BAV Kumar Reddy, CEO of AP State Energy Conservation Mission (SECM), met Vijayanand to seek his support for promoting the core goals of Mission LiFE, which aim to benefit society and future generations. Vijayanand expressed confidence that both rural and

Vijayanand expressed confidence that both rural and urban areas in Andhra Pradesh will play a crucial role in addressing climate change through this important program. He emphasized the government's commitment to bringing the benefits of energy efficiency to all corners of the state.



urban areas in Andhra Pradesh will play a crucial role in addressing climate change through this important program. He emphasized the government's commitment to bringing the benefits of energy efficiency to all corners of the state. Andhra Pradesh has

partnered with BEE, under the Ministry of Power, to lead the Mission LiFE initiative. The campaign will focus on major cities in Southern India, including Tirupati, Visakhapatnam, Vijayanand, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Trivandrum, and various Union

Territories. Mission LiFE outlines 75 actionable steps, such as using LED lighting, public transport, cycling, CNG or electric vehicles, carpooling, and solar energy solutions.

Vijayanand said, "The Andhra Pradesh government is actively involving all key departments to achieve the ambitious targets set by Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu. These initiatives will not only make Andhra Pradesh a leader in energy efficiency but also ensure that people get quality and affordable power while significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions."

To achieve these goals, the state is working closely with BEE and Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL), a joint venture of Central Public Sector Undertakings under the Ministry of Power.

## Woman, her son electrocuted

PNS ■ KAKINADA

A woman and her son were electrocuted when they came in contact with a live electric wire while drying clothes on their terrace in the Veeraragha vapuram area near Sattemma Talli temple in Samalkot town on Sunday.

The police said that the mother had raised the alarm on receiving an electric shock and her son went to her rescue but both of them electrocuted and died instantaneously. The Samalkot police who registered a case identified the deceased as Chittimani Padma (40) mother and her son Viswas alias Nani (23).

The bodies were shifted to Kakinada government general hospital, for post-mortem and further investigation is on, police added.



## 14 red sanders logs seized, three smugglers arrested

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The Red Sanders Anti Task Force personnel seized 14 red sanders logs and arrested three smugglers at Kotabayalu village in Bhakarapet division on Chinna Gottigallu Road.

DSP G Balireddy told the media that a task force team led by RI Suresh Kumar Reddy conducted combing in Bharapet forest area. They spotted some red sander

smugglers loading logs into a car.

When the task force personnel approached the smugglers, they started fleeing into the forest. The task force personnel chased and apprehended three of them. The police seized 14 red sanders logs, the car and a motorcycle.

CI Suresh Kumar registered a case and shifted the arrested smugglers to the task force office in Tirupati.

## Student unions demand Rs 50L ex gratia for kin of murdered girl

PNS ■ KADAPA

Leaders of student unions condemned the brutal murder of Intermediate student Dastagiramma by the accused Vignesh for asking him to marry her. The leaders of various student unions, including the SFI and DYFI staged a darna holding flexi banners at the Ambedkar statue near the RTC bus stand here on Sunday. They demanded the government to announce Rs 50 ex gratia payment to the bereaved family. They raised slogans demanding rigorous punishment for the accused.

"Setting fire of an Intermediate girl student to death is shameful to society. The Nirbhaya law is confined to papers only and it failed to deter



the culprits," the student union leaders lashed out.

They voiced concern at the rising atrocities, attacks and assaults against the women in the State. They regretted that there were no stringent laws to punish the offenders rigorously. The successive governments also failed to enact tough laws to curb the atrocities against women, the

student leaders alleged.

The student union leaders demanded the government to announce a Rs 50 lakh ex gratia payment to the bereaved family besides one government job to the kin of the deceased girl. DYFI district vice president Gurrum David Raju, Secretary Adi Tulasiswar Yadav and Shyam were among those who took part in the dharna.

## Village panchayats being rejuvenated: Minister Nimmala

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Alleging that the YSRCP-led erstwhile government crippled the village panchayats during the five-year regime, Minister for Water Resources Management Nimmala Ramanaidu has reiterated that the village panchayats are being revitalised now.

The Minister along with West Godavari district Collector C Nagarani and ZP chairperson Ghanta Padmasri laid the foundation stone for the development works at Burugupalli and Doddipata villages in Yelamanchili mandal on Sunday.

Later addressing a meeting held on the premises of ZP high school, Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu said that Grama Swarajyam-Palle Panduga programmes were organized across the State for which overwhelming support was received from the people.

"The erstwhile YSRCP regime ruined the grama panchayats during the five years. The Chandrababu Naidu-headed government is taking all steps to make the gram pan-



chayat system robust. The funds extended by the Central government for gram panchayats were diverted by the YSRCP government," he said.

The Minister listed out the achievements of the new government stating the social security pension was hiked from Rs 3000 to Rs 4,000, over 200 anna canteens were opened across the State to provide nutrition food at an affordable price to the poor, the input subsidy was risen to Rs 25,000 and the DSC is being conducted to fill up

vacant teacher posts. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is keen to develop the State, and at the same time, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is extending all help to Andhra Pradesh, he observed.

Collector Nagarani emphasized the need to utilise the MGNREGA scheme funds properly in the district to provide 100 workdays and directed the officials concerned to credit the wages of the workers by the prescribed time.

Stating the material component coming from employ-

ment guarantee works was 30 per cent earlier and now it has increased to 40 per cent, the Collector explained that if Rs 1 crore worth of work is done, Rs 40 lakh would be sanctioned under the material component so that development would take place in the villages.

ZP chairperson Ghanta Padmasri also spoke. Former MLC Angara Rammohan, RDO Desiraju, DWAMA PD Dr. KCH Appa Rao, ZP EE KSS Srinivasa Rao were among those who were present.

## Indiramma Rajyam nothing but 'Nafrat ka Bazaar': Sanjay

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress opened its 'Nafrat ka Bazaar' in the name of Indiramma Rajyam, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar said in a social media post on Sunday along with a photo of a Group-I candidate sitting on the ground and crying.

"The Congress admin in Telangana has opened a 'Nafrat ka Bazaar' in the name of Indiramma Rajyam. If this suffering doesn't move you, is the Congress admin 'for the people.' Is this Praja Palana? You have no right to talk about reconstruction of the state when our future generation is crying on the streets, suffering



lathi blows and police brutality," Sanjay said.

He also re-posted Congress posts on social media and asked how long the Congress will deceive farmers. The Congress had recently claimed that it had waived the loans of 40 lakh farmers. "The Congress has become the

biggest fake news peddler in the country. Congress FAILED Telangana farmers by every measure. In Telangana, 40 lakh farmers did not get their loans waived. The state government also knows that its scheme is a complete flop. Prime Minister Modi saw through the Congress's fake propaganda and recently exposed their false claims. Rythu Bandhu has not been given for the Kharif crop for the first time since the scheme's launch. Shame. The promise to pay Rs 500 bonus on MSP is nothing but a cruel joke the Congress played on farmers. How long will the Congress continue to deceive the nation with its lies?" Sanjay said in his post.

## Will not allow dilution of AIIMS brand: J P Nadda

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Health Minister J P Nadda on Sunday said he would not allow any dilution in the standards of teaching and faculty at all the new AIIMS set up across the country as he vowed to protect the institute's brand.

Addressing the BJMF-CON 2024, a forum of doctors from Bihar and Jharkhand practising in Delhi-NCR, Nadda said AIIMS-Delhi was set up in the '60s but it was only in the '80s that it became a brand name. "It takes 10 to 20 years for any institution to grow and function in full swing. I will not allow the dilution of the standards of AIIMS and will protect its brand name," Nadda said, adding that no compromise will be made in the faculty recruitment. The health minister also said that the groundbreaking ceremony for AIIMS-Darbhanga will be held soon, while the commissioning of AIIMS-Deoghar has been done and recruitment of staff is presently underway.

## Maharashtra polls: Kin of influential leaders find place in BJP's first list

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The BJP's move to retain 71 MLAs in the first list of 99 candidates for the Maharashtra assembly polls and field relatives of influential leaders in

some segments reflects its risk-aversion approach in the wake of the poor show in general elections in the western state. Sreejaya Chavan, daughter of former CM and Congress turncoat

Ashok Chavan who joined the BJP ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, is among the kin of regional satraps picked by the BJP for the November 20 contest.

Sreejaya, who holds a law degree, will make her electoral debut from the home turf Bhokar segment, represented by the senior Chavan, in Nanded district.

# BIS organises 'Quality Walk' in Vijayawada

Actor Sudhir Babu administering the oath as part of the Walkathon organised by the Income Tax Department

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As part of the 'Swachhata Hi Seva' campaign, the Income Tax Department organised a Walkathon in Vijayawada, which garnered significant participation from athletes and residents of the city and nearby areas. The event was flagged off by badminton player-turned-actor Sudhir Babu at the Income Tax Office near Mahatma Gandhi Road (MG Road) on Sunday.

On the occasion, the guests administered an oath to all participants. The Walkathon concluded at the Income Tax office at Mogalrajapuram.

Income Tax Chief Commissioner Veerendar Mehatha, Principal Commissioner Sunitha Billa, and others joined in the walk.

Sudhir Babu expressed happiness over participating in the Walkathon along with students. Also, he said that he was happy to take part in 'Swachhata Hi Seva'. He said that everyone should be responsible for maintaining cleanliness in their surroundings. Veerendar Mehatha, Suneetha Billa, Hyderabad Principal Commissioner Suresh Battina and other guests spoke about the importance of the



Actor Sudhir Babu taking part in the Walkathon organised by the Income Tax Department in Vijayawada on Sunday

'Swachhata Hi Seva' campaign. PIB DG Rajendra Chowdary, Income Tax Guntur Additional Commissioner Supriya,

Vijayawada Joint Commissioner Abhinaya, Assistant Commissioner Donepudi Vijay Babu and others were also present.

## BIS HOLDS 'QUALITY WALK'

Meanwhile, the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), Vijayawada Branch Office,

organised a Quality Walk on the occasion of World Standards Day, on the theme 'Our Shared Vision for a Better World - Sustainable Development Goals: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure'. Around 400 persons took part in the Quality Walk from various academic institutions, consumer organisations, and various departments.

BIS, Vijayawada Branch Joint Director M Ramakanth and Deputy Director D Vivek Vardhan Reddy spoke on the importance of standards in people's lives. BIS officials SVS Bhavanarayana, D Krishna Veer Varma and others were present.



## 1 kg of cannabis seized, 2 peddlers arrested

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The police seized 21 kg of ganja at the railway station in Venkatagiri town. Venkatagiri CI AV Ramana told the media that on a tip-off the police held a check-up raid at the railway station. They found two people moving suspiciously. They held them and checked their

luggage and found 21.500 kg of ganja. The police seized the ganja, worth about Rs 2.36 lakh and two mobile phones.

The police gave the names of the arrested as KS Faisal and K Unni Krishnan. Cases under section 8 (c) R/W 20 (b) II (c) of NDPS Act 1985 were registered by the Venkatagiri police.



ACROSS THE STATES



**Fake call centre busted in Lucknow, 12 held**

A fake call centre has been busted here and 12 cyber fraudsters were arrested, police said on Sunday. On October 19, the surveillance team of the Deputy Commissioner of Police, East, and the police team of PGI police station, Lucknow, successfully apprehended 12 cyber fraudsters operating from a flat in Everest Enclave, Sector 18 of Vrindavan Yojana in Lucknow. The accused were arrested following a tip-off. During the raid, cops seized a substantial amount of electronic equipment, including 11 laptops, a Samsung tablet, two airfibre units, two routers, five headphones, two mice and 17 mobile phones. The cyber criminals employed a sophisticated technique to target foreign nationals, primarily from the United States and Canada. They would intentionally introduce errors or bugs into the victims' laptops or computer systems, causing pop-up messages to appear. When the affected individuals attempted to resolve the issue, the fraudsters would contact them, posing as technical support agents, the statement said.



**18.9% overall prevalence of diabetes in Jammu**

The overall prevalence of diabetes in Jammu is 18.9 per cent, with an alarming 26.5 per cent in urban areas and 14.5 per cent in rural areas, a study has revealed. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), in collaboration with the Madras Diabetes Research Foundation (MDRF), has released critical data from the ICMR-India Diabetes (ICMR-INDIAB) national study, which includes data for Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. This first-of-its-kind study in the region also revealed that 10.8 per cent of the population in Jammu is affected by prediabetes, with 13.4 per cent and 9.3 per cent in the urban and rural areas respectively, emphasising the urgent need for action against the growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the region. According to the study, 40 per cent of individuals had undiagnosed diabetes and the overall prevalence of hypertension, generalised obesity, and abdominal obesity in Jammu is 27.1 per cent, 41.7 per cent and 62.7 per cent, respectively.



**MoS attends Indonesian Prez's inauguration**

Minister of State for External Affairs, Pabitra Margherita, on Sunday attended the inauguration ceremony of Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto and Vice President Gibran Rakabuming Raka at the Parliament complex in Jakarta. Margherita conveyed warm greetings to President Prabowo on behalf of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a press release. "President Prabowo conveyed his gratitude to Prime Minister Modi for his wishes," it said. Prabowo, 73, was inaugurated as the eighth president of Indonesia. He was the former defence minister of the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation. As part of his visit to Jakarta, Margherita also held discussions with CEOs of leading Indian companies operating in Indonesia, reinforcing India's engagement with its comprehensive strategic partner, the MEA said. The visit reaffirms India's strong commitment to its relations with Indonesia, a close maritime neighbour and strategic partner in the region, it said.

**Prayed to God for a solution to Ayodhya dispute, says CJI Chandrachud**

PNS ■ PUNE

Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud on Sunday said he had prayed to God for a solution to the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute and asserted God will find a way if one has faith.



He was addressing residents of his native Kanheras village in Khed taluka where he was felicitated. "Very often we have cases (to adjudicate) but we don't arrive at a solution. Something similar happened during the Ayodhya (Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute) which was in front of me for three months. I sat before the deity and told him he needs to find a solution," he said. Asserting that he prays regularly, the CJI said, "Believe me, if you have faith, God will always find a way."

**'Cong, SP followed policy of nepotism, overlooked Varanasi'**

PNS ■ VARANASI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday accused the Congress and Samajwadi Party of practising nepotism and the policy of appeasement, to the extent that they overlooked Varanasi's development. The PM, who kickstarted developmental projects worth over Rs 6,700 crore in his parliamentary constituency, also said that till 10 years ago scams worth billions used to be in the headlines, "but it is no longer the case." "What was the mentality due to which Kashi was deprived of development? Remember the situation 10 years ago, Varanasi had to yearn for development," he said. "Why did those who ruled the government for a long time in Uttar Pradesh and for decades in

Modi said his government has two major goals – to increase the convenience of the people and to give people jobs. "Today, new highways are being built in the country, railway tracks are being laid on new routes, and new airports are being built. This is not just a work of stone and iron, but it is increasing the convenience of the people and creating jobs for the youth,"



Delhi take no care for Varanasi? The answer is – nepotism and politics of appeasement." "Be it the Samajwadi Party or the Congress, the development of Varanasi was neither their priority nor will it be in future. The BJP government runs on the ideal-

ogy of 'sabka vikas,' the PM said. "Today, in just 125 days, the start of work worth over Rs 15 lakh crore is being discussed in every house-

hold," he added. Modi said his government has two major goals – to increase the convenience of the people and to give people jobs.

**PM announces projects worth Rs 6,700 in Varanasi**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday announced or inaugurated developmental projects worth Rs 6,700 crore here. He made the announcements from Sports Complex, Siga, in his parliamentary constituency. Earlier, Modi inaugurated RJ Sankara eye hospital being run by the Kanchi Math. The hospital will benefit people of 20 districts of eastern Uttar Pradesh as well as those living in the border areas of Bihar,

Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh, according to people associated with the Kanchi Math. Among the projects, 16 development projects worth over Rs 3,200 crore are in Varanasi. The PM also laid the foundation stone for extension of runway, construction of a new terminal building and allied work to be done Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport in Varanasi at a cost of approximately Rs 2,870 crore.

**NDA is 'Narendra Damodar Das ka Anushasan': Shankaracharya**

Shankaracharya of Kanchi Kama Koti Peetha Sri Shankar Vijayendra Saraswati Swami on Sunday said that God has blessed Narendra Modi and his government is 'NDA', which means 'Narendra Damodar Das ka Anushasan'. Addressing a function after the inauguration of RJ Sankara Eye Hospital in Varanasi, Shankara

charya said, "God has blessed Narendra Damodar Das Modi and his government is 'NDA' Narendra Damodar Das ka Anushasan (discipline of Narendra Damodar Das)." He said that the government is doing beautiful work for the welfare of everyone as an ideal government in the world.

**1.5 lakh wellness centres being set up across country : Jitendra**

PNS ■ JAMMU

About 1.50 lakh health and wellness centres are being set up across the country with a focus on prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, including diabetes, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said on Sunday.

The minister of state in the PMO, who is also a renowned diabetologist, released the Jammu-related data of the 'first of its kind' the world's largest survey – 'ICMR-India Diabetes (INDIAB) Study' to assess the prevalence of the disease in the country. "The government is setting up nearly



1,50,000 Health and Wellness Centres all over the country with a focus on prevention and control of NCDs like diabetes, hypertension and some forms of cancer," Singh said. He credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi with bringing

in a preventable healthcare ecosystem in the country, saying before the Covid pandemic, this concept was alien to India.

"The credit goes to Prime Minister Modi for awakening the nation to the virtues of preventable healthcare, using traditional medicines like Ayurveda and Unani, and practising yoga for health," the minister noted. Singh called for tapping the vast expanse of unexplored Himalayan resources of Jammu and Kashmir, saying these resources have a huge potential for making value addition to India's economy.

**Will explore more possibilities of mutual interest with Singapore: Pradhan**

PNS ■ SINGAPORE

Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Sunday said he will explore enhanced cooperation and mutual interests in the education sector with Singaporean ministers during his upcoming meetings here.

Pradhan is in the city-state on the first leg of his seven-day two-nation visit to Singapore and Australia from Oct 20 to 26 to foster collaboration, participation, and synergy in areas of mutual interest in education.

"I am here to explore more possibilities of mutual interest



in the area of education, such as PhD programmes among others and futuristic areas like Artificial Intelligence and biotechnology," he told PTI after addressing some 500

members of the Indian diaspora over lunch. Singapore is a natural correlation with the Indian market, and "we will engage with the city state in a big way in the future", the minister said.

During his two-day Singapore visit, Pradhan will meet Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, Deputy Prime Minister Gan Kim Yong, Education Minister Chan Chun Sing and Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan. He will also visit the prestigious National University of Singapore as well as a local secondary school to discuss the scope of syllabus integration, keeping AI in focus.

**Even if we go solo in J'khand polls, won't sabotage INDIA bloc: RJD**

PNS ■ RANCHI

Expressing its disappointment with the JMM and Congress over seat-sharing for the Jharkhand assembly polls, the Lalu Prasad-led RJD on Sunday said it would not settle for less than 12 constituencies, but would not sabotage the prospects of the INDIA bloc even if it goes solo. The JMM and Congress on Saturday announced that the two parties would contest 70 of the state's 81 assembly seats, leaving the rest for their allies, including the RJD.

"Less than 12-13 seats are not acceptable to us as the RJD has a strong hold on 18-20 seats. If we are asked to contest three-four seats, we are not ready to make any sacrifices," Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) spokesperson Manoj Kumar Jha said. "Our sole aim is

"Less than 12-13 seats are not acceptable to us as the RJD has a strong hold on 18-20 seats. If we are asked to contest three-four seats, we are not ready to make any sacrifices," Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) spokesperson Manoj Kumar Jha said.

to defeat BJP, we will not sabotage the INDIA bloc," he said. Jha, a Rajya Sabha MP, said even if the party decided to go solo in the elections, it would extend support

to INDIA bloc candidates on 60-62 seats. Last time, RJD contested seven seats and won one. Its MLA Satyanand Bhokta is a minister in the Hemant Soren cabinet. Jha said



the turn of events "pained" him as his party was not consulted despite the sacrifices made during the 2019 elections when it agreed to contest seven seats.

**NDA to form govt in Jharkhand: CM Himanta**

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday said the next government in Jharkhand will be formed by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Speaking to reporters on the

sidelines of an official function here, Sarma, the BJP's co-in-charge for Jharkhand Assembly elections, offered his best wishes to all the party candidates. "We hope that the BJP will form the government in Jharkhand," he said.

**Influx of buses from other states increasing pollution in Delhi: Atishi**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Atishi on Sunday said one of the biggest contributors to pollution in the Anand Vihar area is the influx of buses from other states, adding the Delhi government will engage with the Uttar Pradesh government to implement anti-pollution measures at their bus depot near the national capital.

She made these remarks while inspecting pollution control measures at the Anand Vihar bus depot along with Environment Minister Gopal Rai. Highlighting the issue, Atishi said, "Anand Vihar, which lies on the Delhi-UP border, remains a hotspot where AQI levels are the highest. This area sees a large influx of buses from outside Delhi, and there is also the Kaushambi bus depot nearby. While Delhi



runs CNG and electric buses, the Kaushambi bus depot receives diesel buses. We plan to engage with the UP government to implement pollution control measures there as well.

Constructions by the NCRTC and RRTS has also contributed to pollution levels in the area, she said, adding the Delhi government is utilising all available resources, including 99 teams for dust control and over 315 mgms guns, to mitigate the issue.

**Majority healthcare workers feel their workplace is 'unsafe'**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More than half of the healthcare workers who participated in a survey feel that their workplace is "unsafe", particularly in state and central government medical colleges.

Led by experts from the Vardhman Mahavir Medical College (VMMC), Safdarjung Hospital and AIIMS, New Delhi, the study highlighted "significant gaps" in the security infrastructure within Indian healthcare settings. The "Workplace Safety and Security in Indian Healthcare Settings: A Cross-Sectional Survey" published in a recent issue of the journal 'Epidemiology International' underscored the urgent need for improving the prevailing safety and security measures in healthcare settings.

The survey is a collaborative effort of Dr Kartik Chadhar and Dr Jugal Kishore from the

The survey participants consisted of 869 (55.5 per cent) females and 697 (44.5 per cent) males. About one-fourth (24.7 per cent) of healthcare workers were from Delhi and around half of them were resident doctors (49.6 per cent), followed by undergraduate medical students, including interns (15.9 per cent).



VMMC and Safdarjung Hospital along with Dr Richa Mishra, Dr Semanti Das, Dr Indra Shekhar Prasad and Dr Prakalp Gupta from All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi.

The cross-sectional survey was conducted among 1,566 healthcare workers from diverse medical institutions across India using a pre-tested, self-administered online questionnaire, which assessed various dimensions of workplace safety. Logistic regression was used to find differences

among groups. The survey participants consisted of 869 (55.5 per cent) females and 697 (44.5 per cent) males. About one-fourth (24.7 per cent) of healthcare workers were from Delhi and around half of them were resident doctors (49.6 per cent), fol-

lowed by undergraduate medical students, including interns (15.9 per cent). Responses were also received from faculty members, medical officers, nursing staff, and other supporting staff. The majority of the respondents worked in government-run medical colleges (71.5 per cent). Half of the respondents worked in non-surgical departments (49.2 per cent) and one-third worked in surgical departments (33.8 per cent).

Results revealed that more than half (58.2 per cent) of healthcare workers feel unsafe at the workplace and 78.4 per cent reported having been threatened on duty, Dr Jugal Kishore, the corresponding author of the study said. Nearly half of the healthcare workers do not have a dedicated duty room while working for long hours or at night. The existing duty rooms are grossly inadequate in providing the basic amenities and services such as regular

The "Workplace Safety and Security in Indian Healthcare Settings: A Cross-Sectional Survey" published in a recent issue of the journal 'Epidemiology International' underscored the urgent need for improving the prevailing safety and security measures in healthcare settings.

cleaning, pest control, ventilation, room space, and air conditioning, Dr Kishore stated.

A staggering majority of healthcare workers expressed "deep dissatisfaction" with the existing security measures in health institutions across India, he said. Over 70 per cent felt security personnel were ineffective, and 62 per cent reported the emergency alarm system to be inadequate. Nearly half reported severe gaps in access control, surveillance, and security in high-risk areas like ICUs and psychiatric wards.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## A path to democracy

Amid Bangladesh's political turmoil, the possibility of general elections in 2025 presents an opportunity for renewal

After a long wait, the possibility of general elections taking place in Bangladesh in 2025 is now on the horizon. Bangladesh's Law Adviser Asif Nazrul has said the next election could be held in 2025 after completing the pre-election preparations, including the formation of a new Election Commission. Amid the escalating crisis in Bangladesh, there is growing pressure for a new general election to restore democratic order and bring stability. The possibility of holding general elections in 2025 has become a central topic of discussion in political circles. Many see the election as a necessary step to establish a legitimate government that can address the country's economic woes, restore law and order, and guide Bangladesh towards a more stable future. However, there are significant hurdles to overcome before an election can be held. The interim government, currently tasked with maintaining order, must establish a conducive environment for free and fair elections. This involves addressing concerns about electoral fraud, ensuring the safety of voters and candidates, and reforming the Election Commission, which has been criticised for its partisanship in recent years. International pressure, especially from the United States, and the European Union, is likely to play a role in pushing for transparent and credible elections. The international community's involvement may be instrumental in mediating dialogue among political factions and overseeing electoral reforms.



While the potential for a general election in 2025 offers a glimmer of hope, it is by no means a guaranteed solution. The path to stability will require a series of complex and delicate steps, including effective power-sharing arrangements, accountability for past political abuses, and economic policies aimed at alleviating the financial burden on citizens. The emergence of populist rhetoric and extremist groups could also pose threats to a peaceful electoral environment. Moreover, with Sheikh Hasina in exile and her Awami League party in disarray, a sizable section of Bangladesh's political milieu is likely to be away from the election process. Under Sheikh Hasina's leadership, the country experienced substantial economic growth. However, her tenure was also marred by accusations of authoritarianism, suppression of dissent, and manipulation of democratic institutions. The deterioration of democratic norms and crackdowns on opposition parties, including the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), exacerbated political polarisation and unrest. As Bangladesh teeters on the edge of a political precipice, the possibility of holding general elections in 2025 brings a mixture of hope and apprehension. The nation's future will largely depend on how the interim government manages the political transition and whether it can pave the way for a truly democratic process. The coming months will be crucial in determining whether Bangladesh can emerge from this turmoil with renewed democratic vigour or if it will remain mired in chaos and instability.

While the potential for a general election in 2025 offers a glimmer of hope, it is by no means a guaranteed solution. The path to stability will require a series of complex and delicate steps, including effective power-sharing arrangements, accountability for past political abuses, and economic policies aimed at alleviating the financial burden on citizens. The emergence of populist rhetoric and extremist groups could also pose threats to a peaceful electoral environment. Moreover, with Sheikh Hasina in exile and her Awami League party in disarray, a sizable section of Bangladesh's political milieu is likely to be away from the election process. Under Sheikh Hasina's leadership, the country experienced substantial economic growth. However, her tenure was also marred by accusations of authoritarianism, suppression of dissent, and manipulation of democratic institutions. The deterioration of democratic norms and crackdowns on opposition parties, including the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), exacerbated political polarisation and unrest. As Bangladesh teeters on the edge of a political precipice, the possibility of holding general elections in 2025 brings a mixture of hope and apprehension. The nation's future will largely depend on how the interim government manages the political transition and whether it can pave the way for a truly democratic process. The coming months will be crucial in determining whether Bangladesh can emerge from this turmoil with renewed democratic vigour or if it will remain mired in chaos and instability.

### PICTALK



Visitors at the Virasat Mahotsav 2024, an art and heritage festival, in Dehradun

## India-Canada relations sink over Khalistan issue



PARUL CHANDRA

As both countries grapple with domestic politics and external pressures, the ties are now at its most fragile point, threatening trade, security and people-to-people connections

Two of the world's leading democracies, India and Canada, are currently engaged in a rather unseemly, explosive diplomatic row over Ottawa's refusal to rein in Khalistani elements thriving on Canadian soil. New Delhi believes these elements, all Canadian nationals, have been allowed unfettered freedom, imperilling India's security interests. With Ottawa paying no heed to New Delhi's concerns, a traditionally close relationship nurtured over a long period now lies torn into shreds.

The spat with Canada could also impinge on India's geopolitical equations with members of the powerful intelligence-sharing 'Five Eyes' alliance. The Justin Trudeau-led government has approached the alliance and got the backing of the other four members - the US, UK, Australia and New Zealand - on its allegations linking the Indian government's "agents" to "criminal activities" in Canada, including the killing of Khalistani separatist Kuldeep Singh Nijjar in June last year. All these alliance partners have their eyes firmly set on the crucial Indo-Pacific. So does India. Surely, none would want the imbroglit to adversely impact their geostrategic alignment to counter China's aggressive expansionism in the region. If Ottawa's charges on the Indian government's involvement do turn out to be correct, New Delhi would have an egg on its face.

While covert operations to carry out hit jobs in foreign lands to take out elements inimical to a country's interests are nothing new, being caught with proof of overt involvement can prove to be a major embarrassment. It's noteworthy that the US, unlike Canada, has been far more discreet in its approach while seeking India's cooperation in investigating a plot to kill Khalistani separatist leader and its national Gurbatwant Singh Pannun, who leads Sikhs for Justice. The US strategy is driven in no small measure by its desire to not cause any major rift in bilateral strategic ties with India, even though it continues to put pressure on New Delhi on the issue. Trudeau, on the



other hand, is driven by his desire to woo for his domestic political gains a section of the Sikh diaspora who support Khalistan.

Discretion in such a sensitive matter, therefore, has been thrown to the winds. The Trudeau government's sovereignty concerns over the Nijjar killing, however, do not extend to alleged Chinese interference in Canadian federal elections both in 2019 and 2021. The eruption of the New Delhi-Ottawa diplomatic war was not unexpected, given the simmering tensions between the two for several years now over what the former believes is the Trudeau government's abject failure to rein in Khalistani separatists in Canada who pose a security risk to India. For New Delhi, what broke the camel's back this time around was Canada's contention that six Indian diplomats, including the high commissioner, were "persons of interest" in the ongoing probe into Nijjar's killing and its demand that their diplomatic immunity be revoked. Nijjar had been designated a terrorist by India for his separatist activities. New Delhi has repeatedly raised the issue of Khalistani elements having a free run in Canada in recent years only to have "freedom of expression" being thrown back at it by the Trudeau government. These elements have had floats depicting former PM Indira

IT'S NOTEWORTHY THAT THE US, UNLIKE CANADA, HAS BEEN FAR MORE DISCREET IN ITS APPROACH WHILE SEEKING INDIA'S COOPERATION IN INVESTIGATING A PLOT TO KILL KHALISTANI SEPARATIST LEADER GURPATWANT SINGH PANNUN, WHO LEADS SIKHS FOR JUSTICE

Gandhi's assassination in processions to mark the 40th anniversary of 'Operation Blue Star', and recently even published posters issuing death threats to senior Indian diplomats, stoking New Delhi's concerns. Trudeau's Liberal Party has thrived on support from the Sikh diaspora that exercises significant influence in some important parliamentary seats. A pro-Khalistan Canadian politician, Jagmeet Singh, who leads the New Democratic Party, has played a crucial role in enabling Trudeau's minority government to remain in power by signing a deal supporting it in no-confidence votes. Singh called off this deal last month but elections in Canada are slated to be held next year anyway if Trudeau's government can survive until then. New Delhi, in any case, will be happy to see the back of Trudeau. Now, with his government even threatening "sanctions" against India, it's fairly evident that Ottawa is willing to jeopardise even vital trade and economic ties with India. It halted negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in September last year as bilateral relations soured. Canada's own Indo-Pacific strategy had earlier recognised India as a "critical partner", seeking deeper trade and economic ties.

Bilateral trade was pegged at \$9.36 billion in 2023. The turbulence in ties can have a deleterious impact on trade and economic links. What could also take a hit are people-to-people ties, especially with Canada being a favoured destination for Indian students for higher education. An estimated 4.27 lakh Indian students are studying in Canada, helping its educational institutes earn much-needed revenue. Canada is also home to a huge Indian diaspora of 1.8 million - Trudeau will only alienate himself from them while allowing Khalistani radicals to flourish. Trudeau would do well to remember that it was Khalistani separatist elements who carried out the bombing of AI Kanishka Flight 182 in June 1985, killing 329 persons of whom a majority were Canadian citizens of Indian origin. Allowing radical elements to thrive for the sake of political expediency has never done any nation good. As two mature democracies who have often cited this fact as one that underpins their bilateral ties, both India and Canada need to pull back from the diplomatic war they are engaged in. A sour relationship can only cause further damage in the long run. (The writer is a senior New Delhi-based journalist who writes on foreign affairs; views are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### SECTION 6A STAYS VALID

Madam — The Supreme Court's judgment on the validity of Section 6A of the Citizenship Act on Thursday not only put an end to concerns about an old issue reviving, but it also shed light on numerous factors that can help shape the current debate. In this regard, the ruling confirms the methodology established in the Assam Accord to address the issue of illegal immigrants in Assam. The Supreme Court's five-member constitutional bench ruled Section 6A of the Citizenship Act statutory, clearing the door for the implementation of the 1985 accord reached by the Rajiv Gandhi government and the All-Assam Students Union (AASU). According to this agreement, by adding Section 6A to the Citizenship Act, those who came from Bangladesh before March 25, 1971, would be eligible for citizenship. Previously, this day was January 1, 1966. After the challenge to the constitutionality of this section of the Citizenship Act is dismissed, those who arrived in Assam from Bangladesh before March 25, 1971, will be permitted to petition for citizenship, but those who arrived after that date will be identified and deported. This ruling provided solace to all individuals who had arrived from other places and were living in Assam, feeling stuck in uncertainty. The verdict made it clear whose citizenship is safe, who can obtain citizenship, and who must be identified as illegal migrants and returned properly. In this sense, there is no room for ambiguity. Politics driven by immediate interests can be more harmful in this situation. The decision may have been made in the context of Assam, but the issue of illegal immigration is significant in many other locations.

Abhijit Roy | Jamshedpur

#### NEW JUSTICE STATUE UNVEILED

Madam—In a symbolic shift, a new statue of Nyay ki Devi (Lady of Justice) at the Supreme Court (SC) replaces the traditional blindfold (serves as a reminder of

#### Senior citizens get relief



The decision of the Group of Ministers to reduce GST on insurance policies (health insurance and life insurance) is certainly beneficial to many citizens who intend to have insurance cover for them or their families for meeting unexpected expenses of hospitalisation or even deaths. At the same time, the decision to recommend

a total waiver of GST on health insurance policies for senior citizens is definitely laudable. However, these recommendations will be put up in the GST Council meeting for a decision after October 30, which is too long a period. In fact, many of the health insurance policies involving senior citizens under group cover expire by 30th October itself, and they have to be renewed well in advance to continue the coverage. Therefore, the senior citizens, especially, are more concerned immediately and the waiver of GST as decided and recommended in the GOM meeting recently held, if implemented earlier, will certainly benefit the senior citizens who have to renew their policies by making premium payments.

K Durga Prasad Rao | Hyderabad

the ideals of fairness and justice that legal systems aspire to uphold) and sword with open eyes and the Indian Constitution, signifying an evolving justice system in India. Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud aims to reflect impartial justice and modernise the judiciary, moving away from colonial legacies towards constitutional values. The note-worthy element of this design is the replacement of the sword with a copy of the Indian Constitution. Generally, the sword has been associated with violence and disciplinary action, whereas the Constitution is a symbol of rights, equality, and fairness. This change represents the shift towards more emphasis on core values in justice and highlights how a judiciary must act as a protector of constitutional rights rather than functioning as a law enforcer. From now onwards, justice will be served to the "right" persons. No longer will it be impartial nor will punishments be enforced. Yes, changing the attire to a saree is a welcome step. As time progresses, the positive effects of this change will

become more evident. Bidyut Kumar Chatterje | Faridabad

#### GATISHAKTI BOOSTS CONNECTIVITY

Madam — PM Modi celebrates GatiShakti's success in streamlining India's infrastructure development for multimodal connectivity. PM Modi has praised the achievements of the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan for Multimodal Connectivity, which has significantly enhanced infrastructure efficiency over the past three years. Launched in October 2021, the initiative integrates various infrastructure schemes from different ministries and state governments, improving seamless movement of goods and addressing supply chain bottlenecks. The plan has identified numerous infrastructure gaps and aims to develop sustainable solutions, ultimately fostering entrepreneurship and innovation across India.

Jayanthi Subramaniam | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## The changing dynamics of Bihar politics

As Bihar prepares for the 2025 Assembly elections, Prashant Kishor launches his new party. The big question is, can it make a difference?

Prashant Kishor has entered Bihar politics with a clear message: his role is that of a guide, not a contender for power. "My work is like that of a potter who shapes the best with the right tools. We aim to bring forward the best people in society," he stated, dismissing speculations about his ambitions for the Chief Minister's post. He reiterated that his newly launched party, 'Jansuraj', will be run by its members, not him, and he would only contest elections if the party deemed it necessary. Kishor's move has stirred the political waters in Bihar. His party's announcement to contest the upcoming Assembly elections has sparked debates on its potential impact on major alliances, the NDA, and the India Alliance. A former election strategist for both PM Narendra Modi and Bihar CM Nitish Kumar, Kishor has not aligned with the Congress or the RJD. Some political analysts even suggest that his presence might benefit the BJP by weakening the RJD's support base, an idea that



gained traction following the rally and Muslim unity meeting in Patna. Despite his history with the BJP, Kishor has not held back from criticising Nitish Kumar's governance. The Janata Dal (United) (JDU), however, remains firm on its stance, with leaders affirming that Nitish Kumar is still Bihar's true leader. In a recent meeting, JDU's acting national president Sanjay Jha dismissed any doubts about Kumar's relevance, pointing to the party's

resilience despite various narratives circulating before the elections. Ahead of the 2025 Assembly elections, Kishor has strategically targeted the Muslim and backward caste communities, which represent a significant portion of the electorate—17.7 per cent and 36.1 per cent, respectively. He has announced plans to field more candidates from these communities and has emphasised inclusivity by appointing a Dalit as the party's working president.

This move has been seen as a counter to JDU's long-standing Mahadalit outreach.

Kishor has been preparing the ground for his political venture for the past two years, conducting a 'padyatra' across Bihar and engaging with the public through discussions in villages and towns. Drawing on the philosophies of Gandhi and Tagore, he has sought to resonate with the masses, though his stance on lifting the liquor ban has invited criticism for contradicting Gandhian ideals. The launch of 'Jansuraj' represents Kishor's effort to offer a new political alternative in Bihar. However, significant questions remain: can he address Bihar's pressing issues such as unemployment and crime? Will his strategies translate into a viable solution for the state's enduring challenges? As Bihar gears up for the next election, the answers to these questions will determine Kishor's political fate. (The writer is a senior journalist; views are personal)



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH





## FIRST COLUMN

### THE ART OF SAYING NO

Setting boundaries allows employees to focus on high-value tasks and protects their well-being



SAKSHI SETHI

In the modern workplace, professionals are often expected to handle a variety of tasks and responsibilities, making it easy to become overwhelmed. While many employees adopt a yes-boss mentality to stay in good favour or advance their careers, the ability to say no can be just as important. Learning to decline certain requests, combined with the effective use of delegation, is the key to managing time, preserving mental well-being and ensuring tasks that are completed efficiently and effectively. Looking at today's fast-paced and highly competitive work environment, learning to say no can be one of the most valuable skills for any professional. While the workplace often rewards the individual with a can-do attitude but the ability to refuse certain tasks or requests is equally essential to maintain productivity, well-being and professional integrity. There is often an underlying fear of being seen as uncooperative, damaging relationships with colleagues, or missing out on future opportunities.

The result of this is an overloaded schedule, which can lead to decreased productivity, poor work quality and even burnout. It can negatively impact both the individual and the organisation, as overstretched employees may struggle to meet deadlines or produce substandard work. The ability to refuse is not just about rejecting requests rather it's about setting boundaries that protect one's time and energy, ensuring that the most important tasks get the attention they deserve. Saying no to unnecessary or low-priority tasks allows professionals to focus on higher-value work, leading to better outcomes, a stronger contribution to the organisation and helps prevent individuals to maintain focus on their core responsibilities.



Despite its clear benefits, saying a no is often easier said than done. Many employees find it difficult to refuse tasks due to cultural or organisational pressures that equate being helpful with taking on as much work as possible. Some even fear that saying no could label them as difficult or unwilling to be a team player, leading to missed promotions or opportunities.

Moreover, individuals often grapple with personal barriers to saying no. Perfectionism, fear of conflict or a desire to please others can make it hard to set boundaries resulting in employees worrying that a simple refusal to additional tasks reflects their inabilities or lack of dedication towards the job. But in reality, saying no in the workplace brings several important benefits, both for the individual and the organisation.

Effective delegation can offer a constructive alternative when refusing a task outright is not an option for it allows work to be distributed across a team, which can increase overall productivity, help build confidence and foster a sense of ownership and responsibility within the team. It even helps concentrate on strategic tasks and high-priority responsibilities that require their attention and most importantly demonstrates trust in the abilities of individuals, which can improve team morale and encourage a more collaborative working environment.

While learning to say no and delegating effectively are two critical skills for success in the workplace. Saying no helps protect time and energy for the most important tasks, while delegation allows leaders to distribute work more effectively and empower others. By mastering the art of saying no and delegating, professionals can not only manage their workloads but also foster a more efficient and empowered team.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

## Indian immigrants to Canada bear brunt of diplomatic row



K S TOMAR

The fallout threatens to disrupt visa processes, immigration pathways, and opportunities for Indian workers and students in Canada



The fallout of the current diplomatic tensions between India and Canada, particularly in the wake of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's accusations and expulsions of diplomats by both countries, could have significant consequences for Indian citizens working, studying, or planning to immigrate to Canada. Trudeau's Liberal Party has been facing declining support, and his minority government has been kept afloat by the New Democratic Party (NDP), led by Jagmeet Singh, a prominent Sikh politician.

The NDP's support base includes a significant portion of Canada's Sikh population, and Trudeau may be attempting to retain their support by taking a tough stance against India, which is perceived by some Sikhs in Canada as being hostile to their interests. The deteriorating relations between the two countries may affect several key areas:

**Impact on Indian Workers in Canada:** Indians form a significant part of Canada's skilled workforce, especially in sectors like IT, healthcare, engineering and finance. Over the years, Canada has become a top destination for experienced professionals from India due to its immigration-friendly policies. Visa and Work Permit Issues: While the immediate impact on Indian workers in Canada has been limited, any prolonged diplomatic standoff could lead to delays in the processing of work permits, visa renewals and permanent residency (PR) applications. The processing times might increase, and stricter scrutiny could be imposed.

**Uncertainty for Future Migrants:** Potential immigrants or those awaiting work permits may face hurdles in terms of visa approvals. If relations continue to sour, Canada might impose tighter immigration controls on Indian workers, which could hamper the flow of professionals into the country.

**Impact on Indian Students in Canada:** There is large Indian Student Population in Canada as it has become a major destination for Indian students, with nearly 320,000 Indian students enrolled in Canadian universities as of 2023. The country's world-class education system, relatively easier immigration pathways



THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO MITIGATE THE FALLOUT IS THROUGH DIPLOMATIC DIALOGUE. BOTH GOVERNMENTS MUST FIND COMMON GROUND AND WORK TOWARDS DE-ESCALATION. DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS SHOULD PRIORITISE RESOLVING MISUNDERSTANDINGS WHILE PROTECTING THE INTERESTS OF CITIZENS ON BOTH SIDES

post-graduation, and diverse work opportunities have made it attractive for Indian students.

**Visa Delays:** The current diplomatic tension may lead to delays in student visa approvals or increased scrutiny of applications. While there is no immediate indication that Indian students will face outright rejections, the uncertainty could cause stress and delays in admission procedures, particularly for new applicants. Post-Graduation Work Opportunities: Many Indian students stay in Canada after completing their studies under post-graduation work permits (PGWP) and eventually apply for permanent residency.

The growing tension could complicate this process, making it harder for students to transition smoothly from education to employment.

**Impact on Immigration Pathways:** Canada's Express Entry programme, which has been highly favourable for Indian professionals and students seeking permanent residency, might slow down or become more stringent if the diplomatic rift deepens.

There could be longer processing times, more rigorous background checks, and even potential policy changes affecting Indian applicants.

**Family Reunification:** Indian citizens who have family members in Canada and are in the process of family reunification (sponsorship programmes) could face delays in their applications due to the diplomatic standoff.

**Trade and Bilateral Agreements:** Professional Mobility: If diplomatic tensions continue, professional exchanges, joint ventures, and corporate partnerships involving Indian and Canadian companies might slow down. This could reduce job opportunities for Indian professionals working for Canadian companies in sectors like IT, telecommuni-

cations, and consulting. Impact on New Immigration Streams: The Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which India and Canada had been discussing, could be put on hold.

This would affect initiatives meant to streamline immigration for Indian professionals and create pathways for smoother trade and employment relations.

**Solutions to Mitigate the Fallout:** Diplomatic Resolution: The most effective way to mitigate the fallout is through diplomatic dialogue. Both governments must find common ground and work towards de-escalation. Diplomatic channels should prioritise resolving misunderstandings while protecting the interests of citizens on both sides.

**Temporary Shift to Alternative Countries:** While waiting for the situation to stabilise, students and professionals might consider alternative countries such as the UK, Australia, or Germany, which offer similar educational and work opportunities for Indian nationals.

**Vote Bank Politics and the Sikh Community's Role in Canada:** Canada has one of the largest Sikh populations outside of India, with an estimated 770,000 Sikhs, making up about 2 per cent of the total Canadian population.

Many of these Sikhs are concentrated in electoral districts in British Columbia, Ontario, and Alberta. In some constituencies, Sikhs represent a significant voting bloc, which can influence election outcomes.

Upcoming Elections: With elections expected by 2025, Trudeau needs to consolidate his support among key communities. Given the current minority government status, he must rely on alliances, such as with the NDP, and maintain his standing in immigrant-rich constituencies, including those dominated by

Sikhs. His recent diplomatic actions appear designed to shore up this support by aligning himself with issues important to these groups. The Sikh community has historically supported the Liberal Party, particularly under Trudeau. Many high-profile Sikh leaders, including ministers in his cabinet, are from this community.

Thus, maintaining their support is crucial for the Liberal Party's prospects in the next election. **Khalistan Issue:** While not all Sikhs in Canada support the Khalistan movement, those who do have formed influential advocacy groups that have pushed the issue into Canadian politics. Trudeau's overtures to this section of the electorate have been interpreted as efforts to protect his vote base, especially as his government faces increasing political pressure ahead of future elections.

Experts say that Trudeau may also be positioning himself as a defender of Canadian sovereignty by alleging foreign interference, a move that could resonate with voters concerned about national security.

This fits with broader concerns in the West about foreign interference in domestic politics, even though India has categorically denied the allegations.

India-Canada ties are indeed at their lowest ebb following Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's accusation that Indian agents were involved in the killing of Khalistani leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar on Canadian soil.

This extreme diplomatic move, which has severely strained relations between the two countries, is seen as a combination of vote bank politics and Trudeau's handling of domestic pressures, especially in light of upcoming elections.

(Writer is a strategic columnist; views are personal)

## India's strides towards the design and component ecosystem in telecom

### The telecom sector is evolving from a service-led growth model to a robust manufacturing ecosystem

The telecommunications sector in India has grown to become the world's second-largest, contributing around 6.5 per cent to the nation's GDP and emerging as a key economic growth engine. While we take pride in this impressive growth, there is something even more exciting - the rise of the telecom manufacturing ecosystem. India's growth as a telecom equipment manufacturing destination can be attributed to the 'Make-in-India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiatives launched by the Government in recent years.



S P KOCHHAR

facturing at an additional incentive rate with an allocated sum of Rs 4,000 crores also provided a major boost to telecom manufacturing in India. As per the latest update by the Ministry of Communications, sales of telecom equipment have surpassed the Rs 50,000 crore milestone under the PLI scheme, with exports at about Rs 10,500 crore. During this

period, India exported mobile phones worth Rs 1.28 lakh crores and with 300 million units produced, it has emerged as the second-largest producer of mobile phones in the world. On the telecom equipment front, India has become almost self-reliant in antennae, Gigabit Passive Optical Network (GPON) and Customer Premises Equipment (CPE). As a result, India's status has turned from importing telecom equipment worth Rs 74,116.21 crore in FY 13-14 to exporting equipment worth over Rs 1.49 lakh crore in FY 23-24. Though we are still importing certain products, the gap between imports and exports has gone down significantly. Apart from fostering self-

reliance, indigenous manufacturing of telecom equipment national security concerns associated with telecom imports. Manufacturing has emerged as an important aspect of the telecom sector's contribution to the GDP through the creation of substantial employment opportunities across the value chain, from manufacturing to research and development. So far, telecom manufacturing has created more than 17,800 direct jobs and several indirect jobs. The Indian telecom industry is likely to attract investments in the areas of core competency and cutting-edge technologies; ensure efficiencies and create economies of scale, in turn, enhancing



exports and making India an integral part of the global value chain. Government's Push for 'Atmanirbhar' Under the government's 'Atmanirbharta Abhiyan', the Department of Telecom (DoT) aims to promote the ecosystem for research and development, transforming India into a glob-

al hub of technology development and telecom equipment manufacturing. The Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia recently announced the Government's ambitions to set up telecom manufacturing zones as the country expects more inflow of foreign direct investments (FDI). Prime Minister Narendra Modi too emphasised the need for "Design in India, Design for the World", calling for indigenous design capabilities and urging the citizens to create products that cater to both domestic and international markets. The Government has further established several task forces to ensure the smooth functioning of the telecom ecosystem. These include initiatives for

creating a component ecosystem, developing telecom chips from design to production, training skilled workers and designers, aggregating the demand for manufacturing from different departments and allocating them to eligible manufacturers, and optimising the use of test beds for product testing and certification. Following the Government's decision to allow 100 per cent FDI in telecom, the sector has attracted USD 39 billion in FDI for manufacturing, further boosting the momentum and solidifying India's role as a global telecom manufacturing hub. Thanks to these concerted efforts, India has been able to bring down the trade deficit in telecom from Rs 68,000 crores to Rs 4,000 crores, over the last

five years. Focus on design and creation of IP is crucial to fulfilling India's ambitions as a product nation as design elements add substantial value to products. To build a strong ecosystem for 5G, DoT has sanctioned 17 companies under design-led manufacturing within the PLI scheme. Further, global telecom equipment manufacturers like Cisco and Nokia have set up their manufacturing units in India, fostering world-class manufacturing prowess. These efforts, among others, emerge as a testament to the country's indigenous engineering and entrepreneurial capabilities, as well as manufacturing prowess. (The writer is Director General, COAI; views are personal)



IN BRIEF



EPFO net new member additions rise to 18.53 lakh

Retirement fund body EPFO's net new member additions increased 9.07 per cent to 18.53 lakh in August, compared to a year ago, according to payroll data released on Sunday. EPFO enrolled around 9.30 lakh new members in August 2024, representing an increase of 0.48 per cent from August 2023, a labour ministry statement said. This surge in new memberships can be attributed to growing employment opportunities, increased awareness of employee benefits, and EPFO's successful outreach programs, it stated. According to the provisional payroll data for August 2024 released by the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), there was a net addition of 18.53 lakh members in August 2024, representing a 9.07 per cent year-on-year growth. A noticeable aspect of the data is the dominance of the 18-25 age group, constituting a significant 59.26 per cent of the total new member additions in August 2024.



601 routes, 71 airports operationalised under UDAN

The civil aviation ministry on Sunday said as many as 601 routes and 71 airports have been operationalised under the regional air connectivity scheme UDAN, which was introduced eight years ago. UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) is aimed at enhancing regional air connectivity and making flying more affordable. In a release, the ministry said 601 routes, including helicopter routes, have been operationalised, and that around 28 per cent of these routes serve the remotest locations. "A total of 86 aerodromes -- comprising 71 airports, 13 heliports, and 2 water aerodromes -- have been operationalised, facilitating the travel of over 1.44 crore passengers across more than 2.8 lakh flights," it added. Meanwhile, the number of operational airports in the country has doubled from 74 in 2014 to 157 in 2024 and the aim is to increase the count to 350-400 by 2047.

'Renewable energy target may push solar equipment imports'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The country's target of installing 500 GW of renewable energy by 2030 may push solar equipment import bill to about USD 30 billion per year and increase dependence on Chinese goods, think tank GTRI said in a report on Sunday.

It said developing a self-reliant solar manufacturing industry in India will require significant investment to create an integrated supply chain, especially in areas like polysilicon and wafer production.

Without this, India may continue to face high import costs and struggle to meet its renewable energy goals.

India installed 15 GW of solar capacity in 2023-24, raising the total to 90.8 GW by September, compared to just 2.8 GW in 2014, it said.

To meet the government's target of installing 500 GW of renewable energy by 2030, India needs to significantly ramp up installations to 65-70 GW each year, with over 80 per cent of this target expected to come from solar power, according to the Global Trade



Research Initiative (GTRI). "This target seems ambitious, particularly given India's reliance on imports, which could push solar import to USD 30 billion annually," it said.

In 2023-24, India imported USD 7 billion worth of solar equipment, with China supplying 62.6 per cent.

China controls 97 per cent of global polysilicon production and 80 per cent of solar module manufacturing, making it difficult for India or any country to compete due to lower prices from China.

GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said while initiatives like the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme aims to boost local manufacturing,

impact is limited as it relies on large scale use of imported inputs.

The report said India's solar manufacturing industry is in early stages, with most projects relying on imported ready-to-use modules.

During the last fiscal year, ready-to-use solar modules imports reached USD 4.4 billion. The country also imported solar cells worth USD 1.9 billion and USD 1 billion worth of other essential parts such as inverters, and cables, junction boxes, transformers, and other electrical components needed for solar installations.

"Local production is import-dependent and mainly focuses on the final two

stages. 90 per cent of solar manufacturing in India involves assembling solar modules from imported cells with 15 per cent local value addition," it said.

It added that few Indian companies manufacture commercial scale solar cells from imported polysilicon or wafers that add 30-40 per cent value locally and no one produces solar cells from scratch using silica sands.

"To cut down on imports, India needs to produce solar cells starting from silica refining, which involves costly and energy-intensive polysilicon production and requires advanced technology," Srivastava said.

He added that cheap imports disrupt local pricing and the country has to also locally produce aluminum frames, glass, and other materials, which will require strong R&D efforts and government support.

According to the report, China is India's largest supplier, providing USD 3.89 billion worth of solar cells and modules, which accounts for 62.6 per cent of total imports.

'US's 'Freedom to Fail' crucial as India emerges as powerful economy'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A characteristic that sets apart the United States, world's largest economy, is its "Freedom to Fail" concept, and India closely aligns with this mindset as it positions itself as a burgeoning global economic leader, said private equity firm Black Dragon Capital's CEO Louis Hernandez Jr.

In an interview with PTI, Hernandez, Founder and CEO of Black Dragon Capital, emphasised that embracing failure can lead to groundbreaking achievements, especially in a country that is rapidly emerging as a global technology leader.

"I feel like the US's primary advantage is its 'freedom to fail'. It's not there in the education system or healthcare. It's just that in our country, it's okay to fail. And you'll still be celebrated if you are innovative and come up with new ideas. And I think India most closely matches that," he said, suggesting that India is beginning to adopt this mindset.

Hernandez, a former advisor to Infosys founder Narayana Murthy, said he believes that India's emerging economy,



combined with its robust educational framework, creates an environment ripe for technological advancements.

He noted that when he first engaged with the Indian market, it was primarily known for providing cost-effective technology solutions. Today, it stands as a "beacon of innovation", producing talent that leads major US tech companies, he said.

"India is growing faster and it's an emerging economy that emphasises education. And I think these ingredients create a country that will be leading in some time. The world is coming towards India's strengths," Hernandez said.

BSE, NSE to conduct one-hour Diwali 'Muhurat Trading' on Nov 1

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leading stock exchanges BSE and NSE will conduct a one-hour special 'Muhurat Trading' session on the occasion of Diwali on November 1, marking the start of the new Samvat 2081.

The symbolic trading session will be held between 6 pm and 7 pm, the stock exchanges said in separate circulars.

The session also marks the beginning of a new Samvat -- the Hindu calendar year that starts on Diwali -- and it is believed that trading during the 'Muhurat' or auspicious hour brings prosperity and financial growth for the stakeholders.

The market will remain closed for regular trading on Diwali, but a special trading window will be open for one hour in the evening. The exchanges announced that the pre-opening session will take place from 5:45 pm to 6:00 pm.

Market analysts said that Diwali is considered to be the ideal time to start anything new. Investors are said to benefit from trading during this session all through the year.

Since the trading window is only open for an hour, markets are known to be volatile. The focus might not be on profitability as much as it might be on the gesture, they added.

Automobile exports from India rise 14 pc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Automobile exports from India in the first six months of the current fiscal year rose 14 per cent year-on-year, led by gains in shipments of passenger vehicles and two-wheelers.

According to Siam data, the overall exports in the April-September period stood at 25,28,248 units, up 14 per cent as compared with 22,11,457 units in the year-ago period.

"Key markets like Latin America and Africa, which had slowed down for various reasons, have bounced back. This has been the main reason for exports coming back," Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) President Shailesh Chandra said.

He was replying to a query on the reasons for the bouncing back of vehicle exports in the April-September period.



Various African nations and other regions faced challenges due to devaluation of currencies. This impacted the vehicle shipments as the nations focussed on import of essential items.

Automobile exports declined 5.5 per cent in FY24 due to the monetary crisis in various overseas markets.

Overall exports stood at 45,00,492 units in the last fiscal year as compared with

47,61,299 units in FY23.

Total passenger vehicle shipments rose 12 per cent year-on-year to 3,76,679 units in the first half of the current fiscal year as against 3,36,754 units in the September quarter of FY24.

The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki led the vertical with shipments of 1,47,063 units, an increase of 12 per cent over 1,31,546 units in the year-ago period.

Hyundai Motor India exported 84,900 units, a drop of 1 per cent, as against 86,105 units in April-September period of the previous fiscal year.

Two-wheeler exports rose 16 per cent year-on-year to 19,59,145 units in the April-September period this fiscal year as compared with 16,85,907 units in the year-ago period.

Scooter shipments increased 19 per cent to 3,14,533 units while motorcycle exports rose 16 per cent to 16,41,804 units during the period under review. Commercial vehicle exports rose 12 per cent year-on-year to 35,731 units in the first six months of the fiscal year. Three-wheeler shipments, however, declined 1 per cent during the period to 1,53,199 units as compared with 1,55,154 units in the April-September period of the 2023-24 fiscal year.

Q2 earnings, global trends, key drivers for markets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Quarterly earnings from corporates, global trends, and trading activity of foreign investors will guide market sentiment this week, analysts said, adding that benchmark indices may face volatile trends.

"The upcoming release of Q2 results will be closely watched, providing insights into corporate performance. Meanwhile, the escalating tensions between Israel and Iran introduce a significant geopolitical risk, potentially leading to increased oil prices and market volatility. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) have been a key driver of the Indian market's performance, and their stance will depend on factors such as global economic conditions, and domestic political developments," said Praveesh Gour, Senior Technical Analyst, Swastika



Investmart Ltd. HDFC Bank on Saturday reported a 6 per cent increase in September quarter net profit to Rs 17,825.91 crore on a consolidated basis.

On a standalone basis, the largest private sector lender's post-tax net grew to Rs 16,820.97 crore during the reporting period, as against Rs 15,976.11 crore in the year-ago period.

"In the absence of any major triggers, market participants will focus on upcoming earnings for direction. First, they will react to the results of banking heavyweights such as HDFC Bank and Kotak Bank. Later, companies like ITC, Hindustan Unilever, BPCL, HPCL, and Ultratech Cement will also announce their earnings," said Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

Bajaj Housing Finance, Adani Green Energy, Bajaj Finance, One97 Communications, Zomato, Bajaj Finserv and Bank of Baroda would also announce their earnings this week.

Kotak Mahindra Bank on Saturday posted a 13 per cent growth in September quarter profit to Rs 5,044 crore, helped by performance of its subsidiaries.

On a standalone basis, the private sector lender's net profit for the quarter grew 5 per cent to Rs 3,344 crore, limited by a jump in provisions.

Reliance Infra's Rs 6,000-cr fundraising plan gets nod

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shareholders of Reliance Infrastructure have approved the company's plan to raise Rs 6,000 crore through preferential issue of shares and qualified institutional placement (QIP) route.

Both proposals have received shareholders' approval, with over 98 per cent voting in favour of the resolutions via postal ballot, the company informed in a stock exchange disclosure.

Reliance Infrastructure's board, on September 19, had approved a Rs 6,000-crore fundraising plan. Of this, Rs 3,014 crore was to be raised through preferential allotment of shares or convertible warrants, while Rs 3,000 crore will be raised by QIP.

UCO Bank recovery in bad loans through NCLT improves

PNS ■ KOLKATA

UCO Bank has recovered Rs 414 crore from 26 accounts through the NCLT mechanism during the second quarter of the current fiscal, an official said on Sunday.

Of the recovered amount, Rs 393 crore came from 14 accounts resolved, and Rs 21 crore from 12 under liquidation, he said.

"During the July-September quarter, Rs 414 crore was recovered from resolution and liquidation combined. Recovery through the resolution process during the period was Rs 393 crore, significantly higher than the year-ago figure of Rs 82 crore and the June quarter's Rs 34 crore," a senior bank official said.

Recovery under the National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd (NARCL) -- the government-backed bad bank -- during the quarter was negligible, with only one account worth Rs 4 crore resolved, he said.

As of September 30, 2024, UCO Bank had exposure to 238 accounts, referred to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) process, totalling Rs 18,163 crore, the official said.

By the end of September

2024, the lender had identified six accounts under NARCL with a total exposure of Rs 878 crore.

The Kolkata-headquartered bank maintained a 100 per cent provision coverage ratio across stressed assets referred to NCLT and NARCL.

The bank's gross NPA (non-performing asset) ratio decreased to 3.18 per cent for the September 2024 quarter, down from 4.14 per cent a year ago, reflecting improved asset quality.

The net NPA ratio year-on-year was reduced by 38 basis points to 0.73 per cent during the quarter, the lender said. Meanwhile, domestic advances grew significantly by 21.62 per cent year-on-year from Rs 1,42,953 crore in September 2023 to Rs 1,73,866 crore in September 2024.

The retail segment saw robust growth, particularly in home and vehicle loans, with advances rising 29.36 per cent year-on-year, the official said.

This growth was driven by an 18.98 per cent increase in home loans and a 38.66 per cent surge in vehicle advances. UCO Bank had posted a 50 per cent jump in its net profit to Rs 603 crore for the second quarter of the current fiscal.



Many firms see AI as key to competitive advantage

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A significant percentage of organisations see Artificial Intelligence as key to competitive advantage and said they have experienced a notable boost in productivity through AI integration, according to a new report.

According to the "Industry 5.0 and AI report", compiled by BML Munjal University, 44 per cent of organisations have experienced a significant boost in productivity through AI integration.

Additionally, 21 per cent reported that AI can play a pivotal role in driving innovation, enabling the development of new products, services and business models, particularly in sectors like finance, health-

care, manufacturing and marketing.

"Approximately 33 per cent of organisations focus on product development, while 29 per cent leverage AI for customer service through chatbots and robotic process automation (RPA). Marketing teams, representing 19 per cent of businesses, utilize AI for trend analysis, while 13 per cent apply AI to improve supply chain management. Financial planning, though less prominent (6 per cent), benefits from AI's efficiency-boosting capabilities," the report added.

Based on responses from 1,000 professionals and in-depth interviews with 50 industry experts, the report highlighted a significant shift in how businesses are integrat-



ing AI into their strategies.

While AI has delivered numerous benefits, the report also highlights some key challenges.

Around 34 per cent of organisations face a critical shortage of AI-trained personnel which hinders their ability to fully leverage AI's poten-

tial. This skills gap highlights the need for better AI education and continuous learning programmes. In fact, 31 per cent of organisations have started mentorship initiatives to help develop talent," the report said.

AI's impact varies by sector; in mergers and acquisitions, 28

per cent have seen benefits in personalized campaigns, but data privacy remains a hurdle for 22 per cent. IT and augmented reality sectors report enhanced productivity (44 per cent) but struggle with talent shortages.

"In finance, AI improves risk management, though 18 per cent face regulatory challenges. Healthcare has seen advancements in diagnostics, yet ethical concerns remain significant for 18 per cent of professionals. In manufacturing, 23 per cent recognize process optimization benefits from AI, but 21 per cent struggle with legacy system integration," it said.

Qualitative interviews with industry professionals reveal that transparency in AI decision-making is crucial, with 21

per cent expressing concerns about the "black box" problem.

"There are also ethical concerns, with 20 per cent of respondents mentioning algorithmic bias and 22 per cent expressing worries about data privacy. These issues show the need for responsible AI governance, prompting 38.3 per cent of organisations to adopt ethical AI guidelines to ensure transparency," it said.

According to Pratik Modi, Dean School of Management, BML Munjal University, AI enhances human-machine collaboration.

"As organisations embrace this new era, the report's findings offer a roadmap for integrating AI while prioritizing ethical standards and fostering human creativity," it said



# GAME ON! UORFI BRINGS BOLD ENERGY TO PLAYGROUND S4

Amazon MX Player has welcomed the dynamic Uorfi Javed as an additional mentor in *Playground S4*. Renowned for her daring fashion statements and bold social media persona, Uorfi's entry is set to shake up the aspects of the show, introducing new challenges that will push contestants beyond their comfort zones. As they already face intense competition under the

mentorship of powerhouses Munawar Faruqui, Elvish Yadav, Mythpat and Mortal, Uorfi's arrival promises to inject even more creativity and excitement, adding an exhilarating twist to the competition. Expressing her enthusiasm for her new role, Uorfi shared, "It's exciting to take on the role of mentor! Last year around, I did visit *Playground* and the energy

and vibe were something different! I am eager to guide the budding gamers on their journey. This show is all about creativity, individuality and breaking the mold and I can't wait to see how they step out of it. My goal is to inspire them to express themselves authentically and stay true to themselves, both in gameplay and personal styles. Let the games begin!"



## Ekta Kapoor, mother Shobha face POCSO charges over *Gandii Baat*

Producer Ekta Kapoor and her mother, Shobha Kapoor, are facing legal issues. They have been charged under the POCSO Act for reportedly depicting inappropriate scenes with underage girls in an episode of the web series *Gandii Baat* by ALT Balaji. The matter pertains to season 6 of the online show. Mumbai Police has filed a case against Balaji Telefilm Limited, Ekta Kapoor and her mother, Shobha Kapoor, at MHB police station in Mumbai for offenses under sections 295-A of IPC, IT Act, and sections 13 and 15 of the POCSO Act. The complaint states that minor

girls were shown in explicit scenes in this series, which aired on Alt Balaji from February 2021 to April 2021. Yet, this contentious episode is not available for streaming on this app at the moment. Meanwhile, Ekta's sequel to the drama film *Love, Sex aur Dhokha* was premiered in cinemas on April 19. Dibakar Banerjee directs the film titled *LSD 2*. The team uses a thought-provoking poster to present the audience with the harsh truth of our society's obsession with technology, showing a couple experiencing both deep connection and disconnection with technology at the same time.

## STAR-STUDED KARWA CHAETH

Delhi witnessed a star-studded affair as Bollywood's leading ladies, Parineeti Chopra, Kriti Kharbanda and Kiara Advani, flew down to the capital to celebrate *Karwa Chauth* with their husbands. The festival, which celebrates marital love and devotion, was made even more special with the presence of these glamorous actresses. Kiara Advani arrived in style, exuding a powerful boss lady vibe in a sleek pants suit to celebrate *Karwa Chauth* with her husband, Sidharth Malhotra. Her commanding presence and impeccable fashion sense were on full display, showcasing her as a true style icon. Kriti Kharbanda was accompanied by her husband, Pulkit Samrat, as they recently tied the knot, making this their first *Karwa Chauth*. The couple looked effortlessly stylish, with Kriti donning a white graphic tee paired with straight-fit pants, while Pulkit sported a charcoal grey graphic tee and light blue denim. Their coordinated yet casual outfits reflected their easygoing and fashionable personalities, making them a standout pair. Parineeti Chopra, who had



also recently tied the knot with Raghav Chadha, was seen glowing in an all-black traditional suit. Her simple and sophisticated look turned heads as she stepped out, embodying elegance and confidence. The excitement was palpable as these Bollywood divas made their way through the airport, hinting at the buzz and anticipation surrounding their *Karwa Chauth* celebrations. As these Bollywood divas celebrated the festival with their husbands, they not only upheld the traditions but also inspired many with their dedication and love.

## B'wood wife Seema Sajdeh reveals new romance!

Fashion designer Seema Sajdeh, known for her appearance on the Netflix series *Fabulous Lives of Bollywood Wives*, is currently in a relationship with businessman Vikram Ahuja. The 47-year-old was in a marital relationship with actor Sohail Khan, brother of superstar Salman Khan, for a period of 24 years prior to their decision to seek a divorce. In the final episode of the third season of her Netflix series, Seema announced that she has found a new relationship with Vikram, her former fiancé prior to marrying Sohail in 1998. Even though Vikram doesn't appear on camera, he assists Seema in arranging her new house after she moves from Worli to Bandra. The designer refers to the entire situation as a 'circle of life' and expresses her appreciation for discovering love once more with Vikram. In the same show, she is observed talking about her bond with her older son, Nirvaan Khan. Seema informs Nirvaan that she has

truly progressed in her life and has begun dating someone. The 23-year-old reassures her that he is completely okay with it and just wants her to be happy. Nirvaan informs his mother that at some stage in her life she will need to let go and he simply hopes for more joy for her. In earlier episodes, the rest of the *Bollywood Wives*—Bhavana Pandey, Maheep Kapoor and Neelam Kothari—are shown talking about Seema keeping a secret from them. The women attempt to inquire if she has begun seeing someone new and Seema informs them that she will discuss her relationship when the timing is appropriate. Surprisingly, Gauri Khan and other women talk about Seema's love story in an episode and poke fun at her bravery for eloping with Sohail at 22. Seema informs them that she had the courage to go after her desires at that time and didn't hesitate at all. It is thought that Vikram is the identical man she abandoned when she ran off with and wed Sohail in 1998 after becoming engaged to him. After a long time, she has finally reunited with him again. At the moment, the third season of the series, known as *Fabulous Lives vs Bollywood Wives*, is being streamed on Netflix. It brings in three new women from Delhi—Riddhima Kapoor Sahni, Kalyani Saha and Shalini Passi—to compete with the original Bollywood wives.

## SHIA LABEOUF AND FKA TWIGS EMBROILED IN ABUSE LAWSUIT

In 2020, Shia LaBeouf, known for his role in *Transformers*, faced a lawsuit that could damage his career after his ex-girlfriend and singer FKA Twigs accused him of physical and sexual abuse. After four years, he made his first appearance on a red carpet with other controversial actors like Jon Voight and Dustin Hoffman in Francis Ford Coppola's ensemble directorial *Megalopolis*. Making his comeback at the 2024 Cannes Film Festival in France, the Hollywood actor once again found himself in trouble months afterwards. In a widely publicised incident in Scotland, LaBeouf was filmed confronting a group of men outside a pub in Edinburgh towards the end of August. Briefly positive news about the *Fury* actor has once again been overshadowed by reports of his legal dispute with his ex-girlfriend FKA. According to a report, the 38-year-old actor has responded to his ex-partner's accusations by strategically prolonging her ongoing absence for deposition regarding their alleged abusive relationship between 2018 and 2019. They encountered each other while working on the movie *Honey Boy*.



### FUN

#### ARCHIE

#### CALVIN AND HOBBS

#### GARFIELD

#### REALITY CHECK

#### SPEED BUMP

#### CROSSWORD

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#### GINGER MEGGS

#### SUDOKU

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Rules

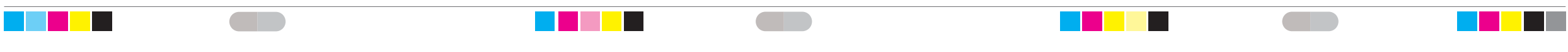
- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

#### ACROSS

- 1 Begins
- 3 A worshipped statue
- 7 Keep a pet bird in this
- 8 Yells
- 10 A citizen of Israel
- 13 Took no notice of
- 16 People invited
- 17 A large public building for meetings, functions
- 18 One third of twenty-seven

#### DOWN

- 1 Umwell
- 2 A month
- 4 A musical instrument played with sticks
- 5 Use your ears
- 6 Opposite of deep
- 9 Badly behaved
- 11 We need this gas to stay alive
- 12 Leave
- 14 Very unkind
- 15 Potters use this





# Vijayawada

the pioneer

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Monday  
October 21, 2024

## DESERT ROOTS BUT GLOBAL BEATS!

WITH THEIR UNIQUE BLEND OF DESERT BLUES, ROCK AND AFRICAN RHYTHMS, TAMIKREST HAS BEEN CAPTIVATING AUDIENCES WORLDWIDE WHILE CHAMPIONING ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION. IN THIS EXCLUSIVE CONVERSATION WITH THE PIONEER, THE RENOWNED TUAREG BAND FROM MALI, SHARES THEIR INSPIRING STORY OF HARMONISING MUSIC AND SUSTAINABILITY

SHIKHA DUGGAL  
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Since their beginning, band *Tamikrest* has placed a strong emphasis on sustainability. The band hopes to demonstrate how events like theirs may strike a balance between environmentally friendly activities and significant, life-lasting experiences! This is a significant step in the ongoing dedication to protecting the environment while honouring music and culture. These Tuareg musicians aim to invite Green Seekers to re-establish their connection, enjoy the genuine experiences of nature and practice mindful living in order to create a more colourful and peaceful future. "We are already struck by the festival's presentation of a diverse range of performers and musical styles. We have always enjoyed working with artists from all backgrounds and styles! Furthermore, being members of the minority in each of the five countries where the Kel Tamasheqs (the Tuaregs' true name) reside—Algeria, Mali, Niger, Libya and Burkina Faso—we find resonance in the festival's focus on performers from cultural minorities." Ousmane Ag Mossa, the main songwriter, shares this inexpressible experience; the band was formed in the Kidal desert region.

For those who don't know, they sing in 'Tamashek' while fusing Western rock and pop elements with traditional African music. So, it has always been about finding new sounds and providing a venue. Band members provided evidence for this by saying, "Being in such a harsh environment—the largest and driest desert in the world, the Sahara Desert—our ability to maintain a connection to nature is vital to our survival. Since the Sahara Desert is one location where climate change is most noticeable, it goes without saying that our connection to and protection of nature is very important to us. However, we don't often discuss it on stage. We briefly discuss our way of life and surroundings. People will go seek out the facts on their own if they are moved or piqued. Everything is available on the internet."

As their relationship progresses, they notice that a growing number of today's varied audiences are clearly moving toward mindful living. Nestled in the picturesque region of Arunachal Pradesh, the festival presented an exceptional lineup, immersive experiences, farm-to-table food and environmentally aware programs for them.

The leader of the band continues, "I think that the original wellspring is where all human cultures have their roots. Therefore, no matter where your audience is from, if you are firmly rooted in your heritage, your message will speak to them all. We have always sought to convey our cultural legacy while bringing it into contact with other cultures and the modern world, no matter where we have lived."

Electric guitars, youyous, bass, drums, djembé and other percussion instruments are what define their sound! What actually thrills them about playing in a place like Ziro Valley? People respect cultural expression and are surrounded by nature, which is what excites them the most. We hear one of them say! "First of all, learning about a new nation, area, or culture is always a wonderful pleasure. In this place, nature truly is the antithesis of what we are used to. It is humid, extremely green and not overly hot or cold. With all these rice fields around the festival location, it is very gorgeous. It is quite amazing how different artists from all over the world and India are blending their cultures together. We are very grateful for all of this."

The musicians of *Tamikrest* were all in their early twenties when the group was established in 2006. They are native to the area surrounding the northern Mali city of Kidal. They all went to the Les enfants de l'Adrar school, which was supported by European foundations and located in Tinzwaten, a tiny oasis in the middle of the desert. So, "You can only imagine how important water is to the 'Kel Tamasheqs'. In an area where it is exceedingly uncommon. It takes us frequently 10 to 20 kilometers or more to find water. Thus, for us, protecting the environment goes beyond simple morality. It is essential to our survival as a whole. There is an adage that goes, "Water is life, milk makes us live" (Aman Iman, Akh Issouf).

"The Saharan regions have a great impact on humans as well as the setting in which we play. We perform a different show in the middle of nature than we do at an indoor festival in Berlin in front of 5,000 stoners. We began with a few pieces performed on acoustic guitar for this reason. The assouf, our music, has a deep connection to the heart, soul and emotions. We so genuinely desired to enjoy this moment with the natural world. Because of this mood, we actually altered the set list mid-concert in order to play more introspective and tranquil pieces. Nothing stays the same all the time.



If not, we turn into robots," shares *Tamikrest's* leading band member.

The civil war that raged in their country between 1990 and 1995 affected their early years. Throughout their struggle for independence, the Tuareg lost a great deal of friends and relatives. In 2006, when fresh riots broke out, Ousmane Ag Mossa and his buddy Cheick Ag Tigla chose to use music to draw attention to the Tuareg cause

rather than using force. And now for the twist! "From what we have observed, India is a nation where tradition-based modernism is the foundation for the future. Thus, I believe that the audience is prepared to hear a wide range of topics. And the enthusiastic response we got from the Ziro Fest attendees proved that. It was really heated. Seeing that our music is enjoyed in Australia or Japan, as well as in Chile, Canada, Europe,

or Africa, inspires optimism for the future. This includes India. All around the world, good-willed people can communicate and show appreciation for one another."

In addition, when they were younger, they performed songs by the Tuareg band Tinariwen, who in the 1980s had already blended western rock music with traditional African music under the name Kel Tamashek. The members of *Tamikrest* were introduced to bands and performers such as Jimi Hendrix, Bob Marley, Pink Floyd and Mark Knopfler through the internet and mp3 culture, which had an impact on the creation of the unique *Tamikrest* sound. Thus, "Music is a vector for us, similar to books, poetry and movies. We strive to communicate values that are important to us. We also work to increase public awareness of the issues and suffering experienced by our people, who have been denied their own land to live freely and independently for more than 60 years due to discrimination and conflict. Of course, living freely and controlling our own fate is what we want if we want independence. However, it's also necessary to prevent foreign corporations from purchasing our desert, our beloved desert and destroying it while destroying the local inhabitants. As is the situation, for instance, in Arlit, where uranium mining contaminates soils, wells and other areas."

*Tamikrest's* openness and cross-cultural interactions are truly essential to who they are. They have incorporated Indian tabla (*Chatma*) and European classical violin (*Toumastin*) into their music. Or on the traditional Japanese musicians' most recent album, *Tamotait!* You never know what may come of an interaction, but they were really interested in the musicians they heard and spoke with at the festival site or hotel. Providing us with a thought-provoking story, "I have always been a huge fan of Ibrahim, the main guitarist for *Tinariwen* and his poetry as well as the poetry of people like Japonais, a former member of *Tinariwen* who is now deceased. I aspired to represent my people's interests as a diplomat when I was a teenager. But under the 1990s Mali school system, learning was incredibly difficult for a 'Kel Tamashek'. We were able to unite these two passions during music. The guitar and the Kel Tamasheqs' defense. We are able to communicate with individuals and the media who are unable to learn about what is occurring in the desert because of our music. Right now, there is a conflict going on in Azawad, close to the Algerian border. The

encampment of shepherds and refugees who have escaped the fighting farther south is being attacked by the Wagner group and the Malian armed forces. Additionally, there are bandits, traffickers, terrorist groups who traverse our country, etc. There, things get harder and riskier all the time. Particularly for women, kids and senior citizens..." Still, he frequently spends a few days in the desert by himself. Then he returns carrying a theme, a tune. It will motivate him to compose a text! The band then collaborates on it with the other members of the ensemble. Frequently, it's with their bassist, Cheikh, a childhood friend. The rehearsals follow. However, after 2012, when absolute violence returned to their nation, rehearsals have become extremely difficult.

However, "Ibrahim from *Tinariwen* is undoubtedly our greatest influence. His voice is so deep and his guitar is so wonderful. I also enjoy Turkish music a lot and the ney flute in particular. Generally speaking, we enjoy learning about new musicians and musical genres (like Dr Ramprasad, whose Carnatic singing really struck me). Rather than trying to emulate other artists, we aim to allow their influence to seep into our own work. Thus, things occur organically."

There have always been multiple uses for music. It has the power to express the indescribable and the invisible, yet it may also unite people or raise the spirit. According to Ousmane, events like Ziro, which showcase a wide variety of performers from many cultural backgrounds, are ideal for fulfilling these functions. Not only do tradition and modernity coexist there, but they also witnessed the coexistence of generations, nations and cultures. That seems like a lot already to him.

"We sincerely hope to spread the word about our people and preserve our culture and language, which is why we value singing in our native tongue, the 'Tamashek', wherever we are graciously invited. More specifically, *Tamotait!*, our previous album, was released in March 2020. Currently, we are working on a new record. Just as Earth was about to stop, Corona immobilised it. Its life was therefore not what it should have been. And we want to be able to offer our upcoming record a better start in life."

It was a wonderful pleasure for us to talk with the band *Tamikrest*, who are leading the way in a field where music and environmentally aware living come together to produce an immersive and powerful experience that promotes deep relationships with nature!

### EVENT COVERAGE

## A night of 'Nagamese' flavours in Hyderabad

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The Tribal Exotica event at The Sicca Bar, located in The Park, Somajiguda, was an evening that brought a fusion of cultural flavours and drinks to Hyderabad.

Collaborating with the House of Suntory, the event featured signature cocktails and Nagamese starters, providing a taste of the northeastern palette. The food was like taking a trip straight to the hills of Nagaland—whether or not your palate was ready for the ride! One of the stars of the menu, Smoked Chicken with Bamboo Shoot, brought tender chicken pieces slow-cooked in fermented bamboo shoots, delivering a sour, tangy punch that paired well with the smokiness—though perhaps a bit too earthy for my taste buds. Then there was the Boiled Bamboo Shoots with Ghost Pepper Dip, a seemingly innocent dish that turned into a fiery affair, thanks to the famous *bhut jolokia* (ghost pepper) chutney on the side. One bite and I knew: Naga spice is not for the faint-hearted! Of course, no *Nagamese* spread is complete without Smoked Pork with Bamboo Shoot, where tender pork and sour bamboo shoots once again took center stage. Flavourful, yes, but between the smoke and sourness, let's just say my palate wasn't quite ready for the wilderness! As for the Naga Chicken Curry, fresh herbs and fiery chilies brought boldness to the plate, while *Axone* (Fermented Soybean) *Salad* packed a pungent punch—its strong flavor hitting you right from the first bite. These dishes stayed true to their roots, offering an authentic taste of Nagaland's culinary soul, though I have to admit, authenticity can sometimes be an acquired taste. For me? Perhaps a bit too authentic, but perfect for those who can appreciate bold, unfiltered flavours! Tanvi Dandekar, the portfolio advocate for the House of Suntory, took charge of the bar, curating a unique cocktail menu that highlighted the elegance of Haku.

The featured drinks included the crisp and refreshing Haku Soda, the vibrant Yugen Highball, a perfect balance of yuzu puree and lemon juice and the Haku Lychee Martini, delicately blended with triple sec, lychee and orange blossom. For something more adventurous, the Haku Lavender Citrus mixed with green tea offered a herbal twist, while the Haku Miso Caramel Espresso Martini provided a rich, savoury-sweet experience.

The ambiance at the event was like stepping into a hidden gem—a snug, intimate space bathed in soft, golden light that seemed to wrap everyone in a warm embrace. The cozy, dim-lit atmosphere created a sense of exclusivity, as though the evening had been crafted just for the select few who wandered in. Every corner flickered with a gentle glow, casting long shadows that made the compact space feel even more inviting, almost like a secret den for the night's adventurers. For those craving a breath of fresh air, the open-air section outside enticed, offering a peaceful escape where guests could step out, sip their cocktails and let the cool city breeze brush away the heat of the evening. The sounds of the city hummed in the distance, but within the event's bubble, time slowed as flavours mingled and conversations flowed.

### MANAGING INHERITED DISEASES:

## Crucial role of family history in heart health

Congenital heart disease (CHD) is the most common type of birth defect, affecting nearly 1% of all live births worldwide. It refers to structural problems of the heart that develop during fetal development. While environmental factors, maternal health conditions and other unknown causes can contribute to CHD, one of the most significant risk factors is family history and genetic inheritance. Understanding the role of family history and inheritance patterns can provide valuable insights into the diagnosis, prevention and management of congenital heart disease.

#### Genetic basis of CHD

CHD can arise due to genetic mutations, chromosomal abnormalities, or multifactorial inheritance, which is a combination of genetic and environmental factors. When CHD runs in families, it suggests a potential hereditary component. Various forms of inheritance patterns are observed in familial cases of congenital heart disease, each influencing the likelihood of the condition appearing in future generations.

#### Inheritance patterns in CHD

**Single-gene mutations:** Some forms of CHD are caused by single-gene mutations, meaning that an alteration in one specific gene can result in a heart defect. These mutations can be inherited in an autosomal dominant or autosomal recessive manner.

**Autosomal dominant inheritance:** In this case, only one copy of the mutated gene is required for the disease to manifest. If a parent has a congenital heart defect due to an autosomal dominant mutation, there is a 50% chance of passing it on to their offspring. Some well-known CHDs associated with autosomal dominant inheritance include Noonan syndrome and Holt-Oram syndrome, which can lead to structural defects in the heart.

**Autosomal recessive inheritance:**



In autosomal recessive inheritance, both parents must carry a copy of the mutated gene, even if they do not have the disease themselves. If both parents are carriers, there is a 25% chance that their child will inherit the condition. Though rarer than autosomal dominant inheritance, certain forms of CHD like Ellis-van Creveld syndrome can be inherited in this manner.

#### Chromosomal abnormalities:

Structural heart defects are often seen in individuals with chromosomal abnormalities such as Down syndrome (trisomy 21), Turner syndrome (monosomy X), or DiGeorge syndrome (22q11.2 deletion syndrome). In such cases, the risk of recurrence in future pregnancies depends on whether the chromosomal abnormality is inherited or occurred spontaneously. Chromosomal defects may be passed down in a family, but more often they occur as sporadic events.

**Multifactorial inheritance:** In many cases, CHD is the result of multifactorial inheritance, which involves a combination of multiple genetic mutations and environmental influences. This means that while genetics play a role, factors

such as maternal diabetes, obesity, smoking, and certain infections during pregnancy can increase the risk of the baby developing a heart defect. In families where multiple members have CHD, the likelihood of future generations being affected is higher, though predicting this risk is more complex than with single-gene mutations.

#### Importance of family history in CHD

Family history is a critical factor in assessing the risk of CHD in newborns. When a parent or sibling has a congenital heart defect, the likelihood of recurrence in subsequent children rises, with the risk varying based on the specific type of defect and the inheritance pattern. For example, if a parent has a CHD, their offspring have a 2-15% chance of being born with a similar defect, depending on whether the defect was isolated or part of a syndrome.

Healthcare providers often recommend genetic counseling for families with a history of congenital heart disease to assess their risk factors. Genetic testing may also be offered to identify specific mutations or chromosomal abnormalities that could increase

the likelihood of CHD in future pregnancies.

#### Advances in genetic research and screening

Over the past decade, advances in genetic research have significantly improved our understanding of the inheritance patterns in congenital heart disease. Innovations such as next-generation sequencing (NGS) and chromosomal microarray analysis (CMA) allow for the identification of genetic mutations and chromosomal abnormalities that were previously undetectable. These techniques enable early diagnosis and better risk prediction for families with a history of congenital heart disease.

Prenatal screening methods, such as fetal echocardiography, can help detect heart defects during pregnancy, allowing families and healthcare providers to prepare for necessary medical interventions after birth. In addition, genetic testing of both parents and the fetus can help in identifying specific risks and planning for the care of the newborn.

The role of family history and inheritance patterns in congenital heart disease cannot be overlooked. Genetic factors significantly contribute to the development of heart defects, and understanding the inheritance patterns allows for better risk assessment and management. For families with a history of CHD, genetic counseling and prenatal screening are essential tools that can help identify risks and provide peace of mind. As research continues to uncover more about the genetic underpinnings of CHD, the potential for early intervention and improved outcomes for affected children grows.

By gaining a deeper understanding of how CHD is inherited, healthcare professionals can work more effectively with families to reduce the burden of congenital heart disease and offer personalised care based on individual genetic profiles.

(The author, Dr. Aravind Badiger, is a Technical Director at BDR Pharmaceuticals.)



# New Zealand win by Eight wickets for first Test win in India in 36 years

PTI ■ BENGALURU

New Zealand survived a hostile Jasprit Bumrah spell to foil India's attempt to add a final-day twist to an absorbing series-opener, slaying the cricketing giants at home by eight wickets and ending a 36-year long wait to taste Test success in the country, here Sunday. This is Kiwis' first Test win on the Indian soil after the John Wright-led outfit towelled India by 136 runs at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai, way back in 1988. Even hunting a modest 107 on the fifth day against a world-class attack could be nerve, and New Zealand did that after some initial scares. Will Young (48 not out) and Rachin Ravindra (39 not out) fuelled their chase with a 75-run stand for the third wicket, handholding their side a 1-0 lead in the three-match series. However, the Indians will not be an entirely despondent lot despite the defeat as they showed admirable spunk to

claw back from the depths of getting bowled out for 46 in the first innings. They will need to build on it and pretty quickly too as the second Test at Pune starts on October 24. The Rohit Sharma-marshalled side will also have to think deeply about retaining Sarfaraz Khan, who made a 150 in the second dig, as Shubman Gill is poised to return after recovering from a stiff neck. The other point they will moot long is whether to go back to the three-pacer strategy or continue three spinners, a move which backfired here spectacularly, in Pune. New Zealand victory did not come without its share of drama once the day's play started at 10.15am, a wet outfield pushing back the proceedings by an hour. Bumrah (2/29), operating from the dressing room end, found appreciable movement and Tom Latham fell in his first over of the day itself for



his overnight naught. Latham was behind the ball to cover the in-dipper but it swung back further to thud on to his pads as umpire Michael Gough raised his finger after vociferous appeal from the

bowler and the crowd. The New Zealand captain reviewed the decision more in hope than in conviction and the DRS confirmed his worst fears as well, and he had to walk back.

India might just have felt the absence of a third pacer as both Bumrah and Siraj found movement and carry to trouble the Kiwi batters under a largely overcast skies. Kuldeep Yadav, who gave

away 26 runs in three overs, had replaced Akash Deep in the eleven for this Test after India went with a three-pronged pace attack against Bangladesh recently. Devon Conway, the other

overnight batter, was shaky throughout his stay and would consider himself fortunate to have found a last-minute edge on a Bumrah skidder that otherwise would have trapped him plumb in front. But as luck would have it, the ball beat the gully fielder and raced to the fence. However, the left-hander eventually reached the road's end when Bumrah, operating from around the stumps, caught him right in front of the wicket with another one that skidded and swung back into him. The on-field umpire did not relent but the DRS upheld India's appeal to send Conway (17) back. New Zealand were 35 for two at that point, and one would say the match in balance as a couple of more strikes could have left the cat among the pigeons. But Young and Ravindra, the first-innings centurion, found some solidity to resist the Indian charge.

Once the sun came out for a while, the ball-movement was much more predictable and the Kiwi batters used favourable conditions to rack in a few boundaries to ease the pressure. Ravindra Jadeja, who started with a no-ball, too did not make much of an impression, conceding 14 runs in his first two overs. There was not much on the Chinnaswamy pitch for him to exploit either as the 22-yard track did not disintegrate on the final day, courtesy rain and cooler climes here. With the margin getting reduced alongside each run, the New Zealand batters became more daring and brought out their shots from the shelf, such as a clean hoist over mid-wicket for a six off left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep. The defining moment came when Will Young turned Jadeja for two to collect the winning runs as Kiwis dressing room turned into a hub of celebration.

## India U17 squad picked for Asian Cup Qualifiers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India U17 men's national team head coach Ishaq Ahmed, on Sunday, named a 23-member squad for the AFC U17 Asian Cup 2025 Qualifiers to be held in Thailand from October 23-27. India are placed in Group D, where they will meet Brunei Darussalam (October 23), Turkmenistan (October 25) and hosts Thailand (October 27). There are 10 groups in the qualification phase, from which the group winners and five best second-placed teams will join hosts Saudi Arabia at the AFC U17 Asian Cup 2025. Goalkeepers: Aheibam Suraj Singh, Rohit, Nandan Roy. Defenders: Karish Soram,

Mohamed Kaif, Chingtham Renin Singh, Brahmacharimayum Sumit Sharma, Thougamba Usham Singh, Yaipharemba Chingakham, Jodric Abranches. **Midfielders:** Abdul Salha Sheergojri, Ahongshangbam Samson, Kh Azlaan Shah, Levis Zangminlin, Mahmud Sami, Manbhakupar Malngiang, Md Arbash, Ningshoukhongjiam Rishi Singh, Vishal Yadav, Ngamgouhou Mate. **Forwards:** Bharat Lairenjam, Prem Hansdak, Henneichung Lunkim. Head coach: Ishaq Ahmed; Assistant coach: Ramachandran Govindaraju Mileswamy; Goalkeeper coach: Zakeer Hussain Mohammed Strength and conditioning coach: Chelston Pinto.

## That day belonged to Nadeem: Neeraj on Paris Olympics javelin final

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Star Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra says nothing went wrong in his silver-winning performance in the Paris Olympics final earlier this year and Pakistani Arshad Nadeem emerged champion as the "day belonged to him". Chopra became the first Indian track-and-field athlete to win two successive Olympic medals by clinching a silver with a throw of 89.45m on August 8, but the day belonged to Nadeem, who destroyed the field with a new Olympic record effort of 92.97m for his country's maiden individual gold at the showpiece. "Nothing was wrong, everything was right. The throw was also good. Getting a silver (medal) in the Olympics is also not a small thing. There was disappointment. But, I feel that the competition was very

good, and it was tough," Chopra told PTI in an interview. "The gold medal is won by the person to whom the day belongs to. That day was (Arshad) Nadeem's day." Chopra was in Lucknow on Saturday to inaugurate Under Armour's larger, new format brand house store at the Phoenix Palassio Mall. He brushed aside any notion of India-Pakistan rivalry in javelin throw competition replacing the same seen in cricket and hockey. "In javelin, there are no two teams (playing against each other), but there are 12 athletes from different countries, who are competing with each other. I have been competing with Nadeem since 2016, and it is for the first time that he has won," said the 26-year-old athlete from Khandra village in Haryana's Panipat district. "He (Nadeem) is a nice



person, speaks in a good manner, gives respect, so (I) feel good." Chopra said it was a sudden moment when he picked up the javelin for the first time in his life when he was boy. "It (taking up javelin throw) was a sudden moment. I did not know anything about it. When I went to the ground, at that time, it was decided," said

Chopra, who had picked up the javelin for the first time in 2011. Asked what is required the most by a javelin thrower --- strength, stamina, mental endurance ---, he said, "It is the combination of all these things, and one thing will not work. And, with all these things combined, the person who will have the best

technique will perform good." Chopra, who had visited Lucknow earlier as well, said, "I had come to Lucknow earlier in 2012 to play, and after Tokyo Olympics, when I was asked to come by the Chief Minister. This is my third visit (to Lucknow). "There is a lot of difference (between the earlier Lucknow and the current Lucknow). At

that time, I was quite young, and do not remember things much. "At that time, I had come by train. Now, a good airport has been built. Good mall has been built. And, it is for the first time that I am able to see the city so much by travelling. I felt very nice," he said. Chopra also had tea at a famous outlet ("Sharma ke Chai") in Lucknow's Lalbagh area, and took selfies with people. Giving a piece of advice to the youth, Chopra said, "To the youth, I would say that they should not assume in the starting itself that they would be bagging medals. They should exercise patience, because sports consume a lot of your time. "Your body needs time to grow, your muscles become strong in a good manner. Have patience, and work on your techniques."

## Juyal's unbeaten century, Rinku's fiery 89 keep UP in game vs Haryana

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Young skipper Aryan Juyal continued his fine form to slam an unbeaten century, while Rinku Singh smashed a brisk fifty as Uttar Pradesh reached 267/6 in reply to Haryana's 453 in their Ranji Trophy Group C match here on Saturday. Rinku hit 89 off 110 balls with 10 fours and three sixes, scoring 25 off 20 balls against Yuzvendra Chahal, who went wicket-less in 11 overs for 57 runs. Juyal, who missed a century by eight runs in their last match against Bengal, got to his fourth first class hundred and was unbeaten on 118

from 196 balls (13x4, 1x6) as UP cut their deficit to 186 runs on the third day. On a forgettable day for Chahal, Aman Kumar, Harshal Patel and Jayant Yadav bagged two wickets apiece for Haryana. Earlier, Chahal added 10 runs to his overnight total before Haryana's innings ended at 453 with Shivam Sharma dismissing the India leg-spinner to return figures of 4/95. At Mullanpur, opener Jaskaranvir Singh Paul shone with an unbeaten 117 on debut, leading Punjab to a commanding position against Madhya Pradesh. Building on their 70-run first

innings lead, Punjab posted 265/3 at stumps on day four, extending their overall lead to 335 runs. Jaskaranvir's patient 273-ball knock, studded with nine fours and one six, was instrumental in keeping MP's attack comprising Avesh Khan, Kumar Kartikeya, and Kulwant Khejroliya at bay. He forged a solid 109-run opening partnership with Abhay Choudhary (46 off 129 balls) before two quick wickets fell. Anmolpreet Singh then provided valuable support with a brisk 72 off 108 balls (7x4), helping Punjab consolidate their position.

**Brief Scores**  
**In Lucknow:** Haryana 453; 191.2 overs (Himanshu Rana 114, Dheeru Singh 103, Ankit Kumar 77, Sumit Kumar 61, Yuzvendra Chahal 48; Shivam Sharma 4/95, Vipraj Nigam 3/129, Yash Dayal 2/56). Uttar Pradesh 267/6; 70 overs (Aryan Juyal 118 batting, Rinku Singh 89). **In Mullanpur:** Punjab 277 and 265/3; 90 overs (Jaskaranvir Singh Paul 115 batting, Anmolpreet Singh 72, Abhay Choudhary 46). Madhya Pradesh 207. **In Alur:** Kerala 161/3; 50 overs (Rohan Kunnummal 63, Sachin Baby 23 batting) vs Karnataka.

## Djokovic tops Nadal before Sinner beats Alcaraz for title at the Six Kings Slam exhibition

AP ■ RIYADH (SAUDI ARABIA)

Jannik Sinner beat Carlos Alcaraz 6-7 (5), 6-3, 6-3 for the championship in the Six Kings Slam exhibition Saturday after Novak Djokovic topped Rafael Nadal 6-2, 7-6 (5) in the third-place match. While Sinner and Alcaraz probably have plenty of future matchups in store, Djokovic and Nadal may have been playing for the final time in one of tennis' great rivalries. Djokovic won the match between rivals who have combined for 46 Grand Slam singles titles. Nadal, who won 22 Slam titles, is planning to retire after playing for Spain next month in the Davis Cup. They shared a warm embrace



at the net after Djokovic's victory. He also beat Nadal in the Olympics and had a 31-29 lead in their head-to-head. "The last dance was an epic one," Djokovic wrote on social media. "And of course emotional. I'll cherish our rivalry forever, (at)rafaelnadal. Tennis will miss you." Sinner then emerged with a victory over Alcaraz in a matchup between the winners of all four major titles this season. The top-ranked Sinner, who had lost all three meetings this season, collected \$6 million for the

win. "Until now, every match was very, very good, but we will always hope this rivalry will last as long as possible," Sinner said. Alcaraz beat the Italian on Oct. 2 to win the China Open in Beijing, along with semifinal victories at the French Open and Indian Wells. The Spaniard has a 6-4 lead in their head-to-head on Tour. "I will try to do my best every day ... To hopefully make this rivalry better and better over the years," Alcaraz said. Alcaraz defeated Nadal and Sinner topped Djokovic in the previous round of the exhibition event that awards money but not ATP ranking points in Saudi Arabia's latest foray into tennis.

## Arsenal stunned by Bournemouth and Garnacho sparks Man United comeback

AP ■ MANCHESTER (ENGLAND)

Arsenal blew the chance to go top of the English Premier League after a shock 2-0 loss to Bournemouth on Saturday. In one of the biggest upsets of the burgeoning season, 10-man Arsenal lost for the time. Mikel Arteta's team finished runner-up in the last two years and could have leapfrogged leader Liverpool and defending champion City in second place with a win at Bournemouth. But Arsenal's chances were hit after William Saliba was sent off in the first half at Vitality Stadium. Bournemouth took full advantage with Ryan Christie scoring in the 70th minute and Justin Kluivert converting a penalty nine minutes later. Third-placed Arsenal is a point behind Liverpool and level with City, having played a game more than its rivals, who are both in action on Sunday. Meanwhile, Manchester United picked

up only its third league win by beating Brentford 2-1. Fourth-placed Aston Villa tightened up the top of the standings by moving to within a point of Liverpool and level with Arsenal after beating Fulham 3-1. Brighton was three points off the pace after winning at Newcastle 1-0. Tottenham scored three times in eight minutes in a 4-1 win over West Ham. Garnacho stunner Alejandro Garnacho scored from a brilliant volley as United fought back to beat Brentford. The Argentina international fired home from a tight angle when connecting with Marcus Rashford's cross just after halftime. It sparked a comeback that saw Rasmus Hojlund hit the winner and ease the pressure on manager Erik ten Hag. "In this team you see its togetherness and there is a fighting spirit," Ten Hag said. "And today we add some determination to score goals and that is what we needed." United was reeling from its



worst season start in the Premier League era heading into Saturday's game and it looked like being another disappointing day for Ten Hag, who was angered when

Ethan Pinnock opened the scoring for Brentford in a contentious circumstances in first-half added time. United defender Matthijs de Ligt was ordered off for

medical attention on his bleeding head from a collision. It left the home team down a man as Brentford prepared to take a corner and Pinnock headed

over the line in the fifth minute of added time. United responded quickly after the break thanks to Garnacho's goal in the 47th. Hojlund flicked past

Brentford goalkeeper Mark Flekken for the winner in the 62nd. "We don't score enough, we are not clinical enough. But today we scored two brilliant goals," Ten Hag said. "It's only one win, but it can help us." Villa rises Villa was up to fourth after coming back from going a goal down at Craven Cottage when Raul Jimenez fired Fulham in front in the fifth minute. Morgan Rogers quickly leveled four minutes later and Ollie Watkins made it 2-1 in the 59th. An Issa Diop own goal in the 69th completed the scoring. Southampton collapses Leading 2-0 after 28 minutes at St Mary's Stadium, last-placed Southampton looked on course for its first league win. Leicester had other ideas. Second-half goals from Facundo Buonanotte, Jamie Vardy from the penalty spot, and Jordan Ayew secured an unlikely comeback that left Southampton rooted to the bottom of the table and moved Leicester six points

clear of the relegation zone. Also, Everton won at Ipswich 2-0 to move five points above the relegation zone. Brighton flying Brighton's impressive start under coach Fabian Hurlzeler continued with the win at Newcastle. Hurlzeler, born in Texas, has made his presence felt in England's top flight following his appointment in the offseason. Hurlzeler is also working wonders with Danny Welbeck, who scored in the 35th at St James' Park, his fifth goal of the season. Spurs comeback Tottenham trailed to Mohammed Kudus' 18th-minute goal at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium but powered back with a brilliant second-half performance. Dejan Kulusevski leveled in the 36th and after the break the home team took control. Yves Bissouma struck in the 52nd and Alphonse Areola scored an own goal three minutes later. Son Heung-min added a fourth on the hour mark.



# SUSTAINING 25 YEARS IS NOT A JOKE; IT'S A BIG GIFT: AJAY

SURESH KAVIRAYANI  
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Ajay has been known for the different personas, be it character, lead or the villainous roles, most notably the beloved 'Titla' character in Rajamouli's *Vikramarkudu*. Lately, he had also worked on projects like *Mathu Vadalara 2* and *Devara*. Now, he will be seen playing a prominent character in *Pottel*, which is going to release on October 25.

"After playing the character Titla, this is going to be the best one I will be doing," said Ajay.

The actor further said that though he has done many films after *Vikramarkudu*, in *Pottel*, he has got a character that showcases multiple shades. "When director Sahith narrated the story, I took it up casually. But once he completed the narration, I decided that I should not miss this role. The Titla character is rare and doesn't come along regularly, but I felt this *Pottel* character gives me happiness as an actor," said Ajay about his role.

Ajay explained that the story of this film revolves around education. "A father wanted to provide a good education for his daughter, so how he struggled for it is the narration. Though it's message-oriented, the director narrated it in a more commercial way. If you narrate it in a preachy way, people won't watch it. That's what I liked and there are many elevated scenes where the audience will clap," he said.

Ajay mentioned that he worked hard for this



film. "I had to get the language because the story is set in the 1980s in interiors, so I did homework during dubbing to get the right slang. Another challenge was for the 'Pothuraju' get-

Ajay is known for his character and villainous roles, especially the popular 'Titla' in Rajamouli's *Vikramarkudu*. The actor is now comparing his upcoming role in *Pottel* with Titla!

up. There are some superstitious scenes for which I had to take references from people for 'Pothuraju'," he said.

The actor has almost completed 25 years in the industry. "Sustaining this long is not a joke and that itself is a big gift. I am still busy with multiple films in different languages. Every film is new and I have to put a lot of effort and energy into every character. I don't take any role lightly, as I want to give my best, whether it's a small or big one," said Ajay.

The actor started his career with small roles, and then Rajamouli gave him a big opportunity as a villain in his *Vikramarkudu* film. "After that, I did a couple of films as a lead actor, then I had one scene in a few films and then again I got into good roles. It hasn't been easy for me, as I struggled a bit. There were a lot of ups and downs in my career, but I'm still here and that makes me happy," said Ajay about his entire film journey.

The actor said that he has done many films, but only a few have given him satisfaction. "The Patel role in *Pottel* is one of them because this role has aggression, cunningness, villainy and

many other shades," said Ajay. He added that he is now more selective and not accepting whatever comes his way. "Once you reach a certain level, you have to choose your films and I am doing the same," he said.

The actor is very close to director Koratala Siva, whom he considers a well-wisher. "I asked Siva Garu to watch this film and he saw it during the release time of *Devara*, even though he was busy with that film. He liked it and appreciated the film," said Ajay. Another director, Sandeep Reddy Vanga, also watched the film. "I wasn't there, but Sandeep appreciated the film very much and he even said that the film would definitely win many awards," said Ajay.

Talking about his upcoming films, he said that he is doing the Hindi film *Singham Again*. "It's a huge star cast and I played a small role in it. *Pushpa 2* is coming and I have signed another film, which is a remake of *Garudan*," said Ajay. He also signed a Malayalam film and a couple of Tamil films.



## Rocking Rajesh turns lead actor with *KCR*

Rocking Rajesh has been popular with his comedy show *Jabardasth*. Having played comedic roles in films earlier, he has now taken up the role of the lead actor in the upcoming film *KCR: Keshava Chandra Ramakanth*. It is worth noting that Rajesh is not just producing the film but also taking on the roles of screenwriter for this project.

The film has Anji donning the hat of a director and also the cinematographer. "I

wanted to show this film at film festivals," said Rajesh about the film, adding that he has been grateful for the support that he has received.

"After I wrote this story, I had narrated it to a few producers, but they asked me to direct the film with their sons. I wanted to do the film with actor Srikanth's son. Later, I decided to produce this film," said Rakesh, explaining why he entered into production. Talking about the title of the film *KCR*,

Rakesh said that the protagonist's name is *Keshava Chandra Ramakanth*, aka *KCR*. It is interesting to know that Rakesh is also a huge admirer of BRS Leader K Chandrasekhara Rao. "This is not a political film or aimed at any political party; this story tells about the Telangana cult," said Rajesh.



## Naga posts picture with his bride-to-be

Akkineni Naga Chaitanya is soon to get married to actress Sobhita Dhulipala. While the official announcement of the wedding date is pending, a source has revealed that the marriage is scheduled to take place in the first week of September in Hyderabad. The engagement ceremony took place in Hyderabad on August 8 discreetly, with no announcements about the wedding date.

Meanwhile, Naga Chaitanya posted a picture with his would-be wife Sobhita on his social media page and said, "Everything Everywhere all at once (sic)," said the actor in his caption.

Additionally, it was disclosed that a minor event took place at Sobhita's residence in Visakhapatnam. Typically carried out in South India, this traditional ritual marks the beginning of all wedding preparations. It was named *Muhurtapu Raata* or *Pandiri Raata* by them. Before beginning the marriage preparations, they invoke the blessings of Lord Vigneswara to ensure a smooth ceremony, starting first with the *Pandiri Raata*.

Following this, they can proceed with marriage preparations such as printing invitations and purchasing necessary items. This indicates that the wedding will take place shortly, with the insider disclosing that it is scheduled for the beginning of September.

## Sunny Deol, Gopichand Malineni film titled *Jaat*



Telugu filmmaker Gopichand Malineni is helming a movie with Bollywood star Sunny Deol in the lead role. Mythri Movie Makers are behind the production of this film. Following the success of *Gadar 2*, Sunny Deol is starring in this movie, which is said to be an action-packed film.

Currently, the filming of this movie is taking place in Hyderabad. Director Gopichand has a great opportunity ahead as he embarks on creating a Hindi movie with a Bollywood actor. Sunny Deol also celebrated his birthday on the film set recently.

Now, the makers have revealed that the name of this movie will be *Jaat*. The film's first look poster was revealed by the makers in celebration of Sunny Deol's birthday. It indicates that the movie contains many action-filled settings. The poster displays Sunny Deol in a strong and dramatic character, giving viewers a glimpse of what to anticipate in this action-packed movie.

It also demonstrates that the movie contains numerous action sequences that are larger-than-life and will redefine the genre. *Jaat* stars Randeep Hooda, Vineet Kumar Singh, Saiyami Kher and Regina Cassandra in important roles. Thaman is in charge of the music.

## 'I am planning to refer Shiva and Nithin in my future projects'

Sudheer Babu praised the upcoming film *Narudi Brathuku Natana* set to be released on October 25. Shiva Kumar and Nithin Prasanna have been cast as the main actors in this movie, which is being directed by Rishikeshwar Yogi. TG Vishwaprasad, a well-known producer, is introducing the movie.

"I met TG Vishwa Prasad ten years ago, before he entered the industry. His passion for cinema is remarkable. I've seen the trailer of *Narudi Brathuku Natana* and both Shiva and Nithin delivered intense performances," said Sudheer Babu at the pre-release event of this film.

On this occasion, Sudheer Babu promised that he would suggest both

of these actors for another film. "I am planning to refer these two actors in my future projects for good roles," said Sudheer Babu. He also appreciated director Rishi for his authentic job. "I auditioned for major films like Krishna Vamsi's film and also *Baaghi* and it's the smaller and medium films that keep the industry thriving. This film is fresh and unique," said Sudheer Babu.

"You can't make films without passion and money. In the beginning, I produced a few films that were showcased on an international stage but couldn't be released theatrically. *Narudi Brathuku Natana* film team reminds me of those early days, which is why I decided to help them," said TG Vishwaprasad.



## BALAYYA'S UNSTOPPABLE WITH CHANDRABABU NAIDU

Balakrishna's *Unstoppable* is a well-liked series. Preparations are underway for the upcoming fourth season of this talk show and they have already filmed two episodes featuring Dulquer Salman and Allu Arjun.

The series began streaming on October 25 and the initial episode was filmed featuring none other than N Chandrababu Naidu, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh.

This is not the first instance of Chandrababu Naidu appearing on this talk show, as he has appeared on it before. He is making his second

appearance while filming is taking place at a private studio in Hyderabad. The Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh had travelled from Vijayawada to Hyderabad specifically to film this special episode about him. Season 4 is set to kick off with the Chandrababu episode on October 25.

There are news reports suggesting that Pawan Kalyan, the Deputy CM of AP, might also be seen on this talk show. Actor Ram Charan is scheduled to attend the show because his movie *Game Changer* is set to release on January 10, coinciding with the Sankranti festival.