

QUOTE OF THE DAY
 After receiving reliable information, the SOT and Excise officials raided the farmhouse. The officials were conducting routine searches. No event permission was taken from the Excise Department for holding the party at the farmhouse. Officials found that the liquor party was held without permission. Non-duty-paid liquor (foreign liquor) was seized by the SOT and Excise officials. Duty-free bills were not shown for the imported liquor.
 — Jupally Krishna Rao, Prohibition and Excise Minister P4

Modi: Make India a global animation powerhouse
 5

HINDUSTAN ZINC TO DOUBLE PRODUCTION CAPACITY: CEO
 8

'KA to have climax like NO-OTHER'
 P12

DON'T MISS...
Nellore to have airport soon...

Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development, P Narayana, announced that an airport is set to be established in Nellore soon. He disclosed this to the district residents during a review meeting at the Nellore Collectorate, which was attended by State Endowments Minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy, MLAs Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy and Kotamreddy Srihar Reddy, Collector Anand, and JC Karthik. Dr. Narayana highlighted the necessity of the airport, noting that it would bring significant...
 -PAGE: 4

Peace possible in Bengal only...

Asserting that peace can be established in West Bengal only when cross-border infiltration stops, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday exhorted the people of the state to bring in change in the 2026 assembly elections. Inaugurating a new passenger terminal building and a cargo gate 'Maitri Dwar' at Petrapole land port bordering Bangladesh, Shah said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to the development of West Bengal. "Bring in change in West Bengal in...
 -PAGE: 5

Regulatory changes to provide...

Regulatory changes like amendment in the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code and standardization of bond wordings would give a fillip to newly introduced product underwritten by general insurance companies, called surety bonds, experts said. This product launched in 2022 is going to play a crucial role in supporting India's infrastructure development and heavily reduce reliance on bank guarantees for project finance. As a result, banks can focus on other productive sectors for lending...
 -PAGE: 8

Indian batters were exposed...

Former New Zealand pacer Simon Doull attributed India's shocking series defeat to their batsmen's inadequacies against spin bowling but he was not ready to write off underwhelming star batter Virat Kohli. Left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner grabbed 13 wickets as the Kiwis walloped India by 113 runs in the second Test here on Saturday to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. "There's a misconception that Indian players are better players of spin. I think they've had better spinners and they've...
 -SPORTS

3 IAS officers joining AP cadre from TG get postings

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 Three IAS officers from the Telangana cadre, who recently joined the Andhra Pradesh cadre, received their postings on Sunday. Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad issued orders confirming these appointments. K Amrapali has been designated as the Vice Chairperson and Managing Director of the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation, and she will also take on the full additional responsibilities of CEO of the AP Tourism Authority. A Vani Prasad has been appointed as the Principal Secretary of the Labour Department, while MM Naik has been relieved of his additional duties in that department. Vakati Karuna has been appointed as the Commissioner of Health and Family Welfare, with additional responsibilities as the Director of the National Health Mission. G Vanimohan, the Commissioner of the Archaeology and Museum Department, has been transferred and appointed as Chief Secretary of the Department of Services in the General Administration Department. An order has also been issued to relieve Pola Bhaskar, who has been handling those responsibilities.

LOKESH UNVEILS AP'S FOCUS AREAS
Development, decentralisation, SoDB

Says CM Naidu has introduced six new policies aimed at attracting investment

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 Education, IT, and Electronics Minister Nara Lokesh announced that the Andhra Pradesh government is actively promoting development decentralization and enhancing the Speed of Doing Business (SoDB), aiming to create 20 lakh jobs for youth in the next five years. He noted that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu recently unveiled six new policies aligned with this vision. Minister Lokesh, who attended a roundtable with industrialists organised by the Consulate General of India in San Francisco, shared AP's rapid strides in investment and industrial growth. Highlighting recent developments, he pointed to the successful launch of Kia Motors as an example of AP's investor-friendly climate. The state, he said, benefits from India's second-largest coastline and has plans for four new ports, positioning it strategically for business and trade. The government's regional development plans include designating the Kurnool district as a "Drone Valley" and transforming the Chittoor and Kadapa districts into a major electronics hub. Currently, AP produces 25% of

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- The State govt aims to develop Kurnool as a 'Drone Valley' and turn Chittoor and Kadapa into major electronics hubs.
- AP produces 25% of India's cell phones and 50% of air conditioners, showcasing its manufacturing capabilities.
- Development projects worth \$5 billion are set to begin in the capital region, with Amaravati's construction starting in December.
- The State govt is also focusing on sectors like aqua exports, petrochemicals, and green hydrogen.
- A civil aviation university and data centre will be established in Visakhapatnam, the financial capital of the State.
- Minister Lokesh urges US industrialists to invest in AP to support comprehensive development efforts.



Fans greet Lokesh in US

VIJAYAWADA: Minister for Education, IT, and Electronics, Nara Lokesh, is currently on a tour of the United States to attract investments. Amidst his busy schedule of meetings with industrialists in San Francisco, he took time to connect with his fans. Lokesh took the opportunity to greet them warmly and inquire about their well-being. On the second day of his tour, Minister Lokesh held several in-person meetings with industrialists. He had one-on-one discussions with notable figures, including Google CTO Prabhakar Raghavan, General Atomics CEO Dr. Vivek Lal, Neotribe Ventures Founder Kittu K, General Catalyst's MD Neeraj Arora, iSpace President Rajesh K, CFO Prasad Papudesi, former Google official Sarin Suvarna, and representatives from various companies. During these meetings, Minister Lokesh outlined the new industrial policies and incentives introduced in the state.
 Continued on Page 2

'PALLE PANDUGA' WORKS
No compromise on quality of works: Dy CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, K Pawan Kalyan, has emphasised the need for maintaining high quality and transparency in ongoing rural development projects under the Employment Guarantee Scheme. The Deputy CM highlighted the importance of effectively using funds received from the 15th Finance Commission and the Employment Guarantee Scheme provided by the Union government, calling for practices rooted in transparency and accountability. Officials carried out quality inspections of development works across 13,326 panchayats throughout Andhra Pradesh. During a review session on Sunday, Pawan Kalyan met with Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Commissioner Krishna Teja, Employment Guarantee Scheme officials, and engineering representatives. He outlined the 2024-25 development targets, including the construction of 3,000 km of cement roads, 500 km of BT (Bitumen Tar) roads, 22,525 Gokulams (animal shelters), 25,000

AP Cabinet meet on November 6

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet meeting, chaired by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, is scheduled for November 6, at 11:00 a.m., at the AP Secretariat in Velagapudi, Amaravati. Chief Secretary to the Government Neerabh Kumar Prasad has issued an urgent note regarding the meeting. The Chief Secretary has notified all Secretariat Departments that the Council of Ministers will meet on Wednesday. Special Chief Secretaries, Principal Secretaries, and Secretaries of all departments are directed to submit their proposals in the prescribed format, with three signed copies each per the Cabinet Handbook. Following the broadcast, the BJP conducted a membership registration event as part of its nationwide drive, which is organised every six years.
 Continued on Page 2

Rammohan Naidu launches 2 new Vizag-V'wada flights

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM
 Union Minister of Civil Aviation, K Rammohan Naidu, inaugurated two new flights between Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada at Visakhapatnam International Airport on Sunday. Operated by IndiGo and Air India Express, these new services represent a significant move to strengthen air connectivity in the region. Minister Naidu stressed that "Connectivity is essential for any region's development, and the Ministry of Civil Aviation is making all efforts to enhance air connectivity from Andhra Pradesh's cities to the rest of India and beyond." Addressing the gathering, Minister Naidu highlighted the collaborative efforts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan in advancing Andhra Pradesh's development. "Our vision is to make



At least 50 flights receive bomb threats; 2 diverted

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
 At least 50 flights operated by Indian airlines received bomb threats and two of them were diverted on Sunday, according to sources. In 14 days, more than 350 flights operated by the Indian carriers have received hoax bomb threats. Most of the threats were issued through social media. Akasa Air on Sunday said 15 of its flights got security alerts and after thorough inspections, all aircraft were released for operations. The sources in the know said IndiGo received threats for 18 flights and Vistara for 17 flights. At least two IndiGo flights were diverted following threats. Its flight 6E 133 (Pune to Jodhpur) was diverted to Ahmedabad and 6E 87 (Kozhikode to Dammam) was diverted to Mumbai, an official said. According to an IndiGo statement, the flights that received security-related alerts include 6E 11 (Delhi-Istanbul), 6E 92 (Jeddah-Mumbai), 6E 112 (Goa-Ahmedabad), 6E 125 (Bengaluru-Jharsuguda), 6E 127 (Amritsar-Ahmedabad) and 6E 135 (Kolkata-Pune). Among others are 6E 149 (Hyderabad to Bagdogra), 6E 173 (Delhi to Bengaluru), 6E 175 (Bengaluru to Delhi), 6E 197 (Raipur to Hyderabad), 6E 248 (Mumbai to Kolkata), 6E 277 (Ahmedabad-Lucknow), 6E 312 (Bengaluru to Kolkata), 6E 235 (Kolkata-Bengaluru) and 6E 74 (Riyadh-Mumbai). Union Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu on Sunday said the Centre is mulling steps to ban perpetrators, who resort to hoax bomb threats, from flying. The minister also said besides taking support from international agencies, law enforcement wings and the Intelligence Bureau to prevent these fake threats, the union government is also mulling to amend two Civil Aviation Laws. Against the backdrop of a spate of hoax bomb threats to airlines, the IT Ministry has asked social media platforms to observe due diligence obligations and promptly remove or disable access to misinformation within the strict timelines prescribed under IT rules.
 Continued on Page 2

VMC bags 'PRAISE' award

MA & UD Minister to present the award to Commissioner Dhyana Chandra
PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



The Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) has been honoured with the state-level "Performance Recognised for Access to Financial Inclusion and Street Vendors Empowerment" (PRAISE) award for 2023-24. This prestigious award is part of the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana National Urban Livelihood Mission (DAY-NULM) and recognises the VMC's outstanding efforts in financial inclusion and street vendor empowerment. The VMC has won this award in the Mega and Million Plus Cities category, highlighting its significant contributions towards enhancing the livelihoods of the urban poor, improving financial access, and supporting street vendors in the region, thereby promoting economic stability and growth. The award will be presented by the Minister for Municipal Administration & Urban Development, P Narayana, at an event at the Tummalapalli Kalakshetram in Vijayawada on October 29.
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 Continued on Page 2

Monday Mirchi

MINISTERS' PATIENCE RUNS THIN AS CS PLAYS BUDGET CARD TO DELAY PROJECTS

When the cash-strapped chief is perforce counting small change to run the state administration, won't his lieutenants be scared to put before him spending proposals related to hastily announced schemes? The trickle-down effect will in fact blight the chances of even less intimidating proposals. The grapevine has it that Telangana Ministers are growing increasingly frustrated with the Chief Secretary, who seems to have made a habit of citing budgetary constraints even for projects that do not require immediate funding. According to insider whispers, the Chief Secretary has been dipping into budget estimates in such a manner as to spook Chief Minister Revanth Reddy with potential financial implications, thus throwing cold water on several initiatives. Ministers, having lost hopes of smoother coordination with her, are understood to be counting down the days left for her tenure to end. And, that *manchi roju* (for them) would be in April. Some of them are suggesting that her reluctance perhaps stems from her approaching retirement.

NONE IN BABUDOM DREAMS THE RED BOOK THESE DAYS

There was a time in the recent past, particularly just before and immediately after the elections, when babus dreaded being listed in the 'Red book' professedly maintained by powerful politicians to exercise influence or subtle pressure over 'partisan' officials (read it as those not supporting their party). In fact, it was trendy to refer to the 'Red book' during the campaign pitch. But the overuse of the intimidating phrase currently in Telangana's political circles, with Congress and BRS leaders now going tit for tat, seems to have taken the sting out of it. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, taking a leaf out of Telugu Desam Party national general secretary Nara Lokesh's campaign tactics, recently declared that he had been jotting down the names of certain officials for future reference -- a move that seems to have spurred Bharat Rashtra Samithi working president KT Rama Rao to urge citizens to 'take note of the officials'. Congress leaders, however, were quick to counter, pointing fingers at officials like Prabhakar Rao, Bhujanga Rao, Tirupathanna, Radha Kishan Rao,

and Praneeth Rao, while drawing attention to the infamous phone tapping case. What about the responses of listed bureaucrats? Well, they are not exactly quaking in their boots. Insiders laugh it off, saying 'Red book antics' have lost their shock value. These days the 'identified' officials crack jokes over entries in the once-dreaded book. Seriously, no official takes these threats seriously.

HAVING TIGHTENED GRIP OVER IPS, REVANTH EYES IAS AMID BABUDOM RUMBLINGS

With the recent public display of disaffection by a section of the uniformed gentry reflecting Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's tightened grip over IPS officials, a birdie has suggested to yours truly that the Chief Minister may not take long to see IAS circles also fall in line. This probability is no longer whispered in bureaucratic corridors, but articulated with appreciable vehemence. For, many of them are simmering over the curious silence of the IAS Association over the recent controversial remarks by some Congress leaders. This silence, they aver, speaks volumes. Some see this as an early warning sign of shifting loyalties on the part of those who cannot resist Revanth's sway. Others, having witnessed many bureaucrats being questioned in the Kaleshwaram or other probes, are looking helplessly at the broader IAS community, which is watching closely, wondering if the wind is about to change direction or will they be swept along.

WILL DRAMA OVER CROSS-BORDER POSTINGS UNFOLD POST DIWALI?

In bureaucratic circles, the buzz currently is all about those officials who recently landed in Telangana from Andhra Pradesh, courtesy Department of Personnel and Training's directive. These officials are right now sitting pretty without postings, whetting curiosity and wearing resentment on their sleeves. It is understood that their appointments might materialize after Diwali. But there is a twist in the tale. The larger question for the powers that be is: Can these officials be entrusted with plum assignments, considering they are here against their wishes? Let us wait for the drama to unfold; it is bound to be a hit beyond borders.

--Yours truly



2 youths drown in River Krishna

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Two youths drowned in the Krishna River at Sitanarayam, near here, on Sunday.

According to the police, a group of five youths from New Rajarajeswari Pet and Arunodaya Colony went to the river for a swim. They entered the water at the Sitanarayam Railway Bridge.

While swimming, they slipped and drowned.

The deceased have been identified as Hemanth Kumar and Gudivada Durga Prasad.

Their bodies were retrieved from the river and sent to the GGH in Mangalagiri for post-mortem.

The Tadepalli police have registered a case.

Vizag MP calls for detailed report on industry challenges

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Visakhapatnam MP M Sribharat has called for a comprehensive list of challenges faced by industrialists to bring them to the attention of concerned ministries, intending to facilitate effective government solutions for sustainable industry growth. He made these remarks at an event organized by the Vizag Development Council, AP Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and Tours and Travel Operators of AP, which convened industry stakeholders and potential investors. "Only through detailed feedback can we address these issues efficiently at the ministerial level," Sribharat stated.

The event also featured the Chairman of the 20-Point Programme and Good Governance, Lanka Dinakar, who discussed Andhra Pradesh's strides in renewable energy, stressing that Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has placed a high priority on this sector. Dinakar encouraged entrepreneurs to contribute to the state's 'Swarandhra@2047' vision, highlighting North Andhra's critical role in the state's economic growth. "Collaboration between state and central governments is



crucial for advancing our growth trajectory," he added. Dinakar further emphasized Visakhapatnam's strategic importance as Andhra Pradesh's financial hub, likening its role to Mumbai's in India. He appealed to successful industries to support smaller, struggling units, promoting a healthier business ecosystem. "Infrastructure development not only benefits large sectors but also opens avenues for smaller industries, thus accelerating economic growth," Dinakar observed.

O. Naresh Kumar, Chairman of the Vizag Development Council, highlighted the necessity of an investor-friendly environment to foster industrial growth

in Andhra Pradesh. According to Kumar, the event's purpose was to bring entrepreneurs' challenges to the forefront and collaboratively develop a strategic action plan. "An investment-friendly climate is essential for industrial progress," he noted.

Highlighting the maritime sector's job potential, AP Maritime Board Chairman Damacharla Satyanarayana announced that 4.5 lakh of the planned 20 lakh jobs for youth will come from maritime opportunities, reflecting its significant role in the state's economic agenda.

Chairman of AP Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC) N. Balaji reiterated the corporation's commitment to

addressing stakeholder concerns and promoting tourism growth. "We are open to feedback and dedicated to strengthening tourism, which has been neglected in recent years," he said.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of the AP MSME Development Corporation, T. Siva Sankara Rao, discussed a new MSME policy designed to address previously overlooked aspects, aiming to drive sector growth and resilience. The event attracted various industry leaders, including Tours and Travels Association of AP President K. Vijay Mohan and AP Adventure Association President Tarun Kakani, who contributed to discussions on investment opportunities in Andhra Pradesh.

Vijayasai flays Sharmila for bid to weaken Jagan's leadership

PNS ■ TIRUPATI/HYDERABAD

YSRCP national general secretary V Vijayasai Reddy accused Sharmila of collaborating with CM Chandrababu Naidu in a bid to weaken YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's leadership, suggesting her actions go beyond a property dispute and are aimed at preventing Jagan's re-election as Chief Minister. He highlighted the contradiction of Congress opposing the NDA at the national level, yet Andhra Pradesh PCC President Sharmila seemingly aligning with NDA interests.

Speaking to the media at Somajiguda Press Club in Hyderabad, Vijayasai Reddy questioned if Sharmila is disregarding Jagan's efforts to support the public, citing initiatives like assistance to over 1.5 crore families, financial aid for 80



lakh women, and help for more than 40 lakh mothers. He alleged that Naidu is using Sharmila to sway women against Jagan, but expressed confidence that the public would see through this. He urged Sharmila to reflect on her partnership with Naidu, whom she had previously accused of involvement in her father YS Rajasekhara Reddy's tragic death, questioning if she has truly forgotten past issues or is

overlooking them for personal benefit.

Vijayasai Reddy also raised suspicions about how Sharmila's letter to Jagan ended up with Naidu, hinting at possible collusion. He suggested that Sharmila is being used by Naidu, who has been unsuccessful in fulfilling his promises, to distract the public and create negativity around Jagan, especially among women. He condemned TDP and its media for their continuous attacks on Jagan, calling Sharmila's role in this disapproving. He further alleged that, influenced by Naidu, Sharmila secretly transferred shares that Jagan had given her, aiming to damage his reputation and revoke his bail, suggesting this as part of a larger plan to keep Jagan from retaining power.

At a separate press confer-

ence in Tirupati, YSRCP spokesperson and former TTD Chairman Bhumana Karunakar Reddy criticized Sharmila for being part of a conspiracy led by Naidu to tarnish YS Rajasekhara Reddy's legacy and harm her brother Jagan politically. He stated that Naidu, unable to directly counter Jagan's influence, is using Sharmila to create negativity around a leader who has won public support through his honest leadership and welfare schemes.

Bhumana praised Jagan's dedication to truthfulness, pointing out that Jagan has avoided making false promises just for the sake of power. He advised Sharmila to reflect on her actions, noting that Jagan had generously shared 40% of his assets with her, a move even supported by his wife, Bharati.

VMC bags...

Continued from Page 1

In a press release on Sunday, VMC officials stated that Commissioner HM Dhyanaachandra will receive the award from Minister Narayana. The officials added that this accolade further strengthens VMC's commitment to improving the livelihoods and financial stability of street vendors in the city.

No compromise...

Continued from Page 1

The Deputy Chief Minister also commended the successful execution of Gram Sabhas across the state during the 'Palle Panduga' events, which gained national recognition. He called for the same level of commitment in completing current projects, urging the state to set an example of high standards and transparency in rural development.

Development...

Continued from Page 1

Additionally, a Civil Aviation University and data centre are set to be established in Visakhapatnam, the state's financial capital, with TCS commencing operations soon. Lokesh underscored that AP is striving to become a global manufacturing hub, inspired by Prime Minister Modi's vision of "Vikasit Bharat 2047."

He encouraged industrialists from the US to invest in AP and join the state's comprehensive development efforts.

Consulate General Srikanth Reddy commended CM Naidu and Minister Lokesh's commitment to attracting investments to Andhra Pradesh. He noted that the recent Drone Summit in Vijayawada was well-received and that the roundtable was organized to facilitate investment discussions with Indian industry leaders.

Prominent attendees included Indiaspora Founder MR Rangaswamy, Google VP Rao Surapaneni, A5 Corporation CEO Vinay Krithivendi, Applied Materials CTO ON Nalamasu, Pi Datacenter CEO Kalyan Muppaneni, and representatives from TCS, West Bridge Capital, and Silicon Andhra, among others.

Jagan slams TDP-led NDA govt for power sector mismanagement

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former chief minister and YSRCP Chief, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, sharply criticised the TDP coalition government led by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu for burdening the people of Andhra Pradesh with steep power tariff hikes, contrary to pre-election promises.

Taking to social media platform 'X', YS Jagan accused CM Naidu of misleading the public with assurances of stable or reduced power tariffs, only to impose an additional Rs. 6,072.86 crores on citizens, disregarding their appeals.

YS Jagan highlighted that, despite commitments to maintain tariffs, the TDP government repeatedly raised power charges from 2014 to 2019, significantly impacting household budgets. He cited examples of the sharp rise in electricity costs during Naidu's tenure: a 76-unit bill that cost Rs. 140.10 in 2015-16 climbed to Rs. 197.60 by 2018-19, reflecting a 41.04% increase. Similar hikes were seen across other usage slabs, with a 78-unit bill rising by 39.57% and an 80-unit bill by 38.21%. Jagan condemned these increases as evidence of TDP's disregard for public welfare and failure to ensure affordable living for the people.

He also pointed to the



The TDP government repeatedly raised power charges from 2014 to 2019, significantly impacting household budgets. He cited examples of the sharp rise in electricity costs during Naidu's tenure: a 76-unit bill that cost Rs. 140.10 in 2015-16 climbed to Rs. 197.60 by 2018-19, reflecting a 41.04% increase.

TDP's mismanagement of the power sector, highlighting how Naidu's administration entered into costly power purchase agreements (PPAs) for about 8,000 MW, imposing an additional annual burden of Rs. 3,500 crores on power corporations over 25 years. These high-cost agreements resulted in severe financial strain, with cumulative losses escalating from Rs. 6,625 crores in 2014 to a staggering Rs. 28,715 crores by 2019. Additionally, debts and liabilities of government-run power corporations rose from Rs. 29,552 crores in 2014 to Rs. 86,215 crores by 2019, placing lasting financial pressure on the state's energy infrastructure.

Rammohan Naidu...

Continued from Page 1

New terminals are also planned for Rajahmundry and Kadapa Airports, while Tirupati Airport will undergo renovations to reflect its spiritual heritage. In a special gesture for Ayyappa devotees visiting Sabarimala, the ministry has permitted travelers to carry their 'Irumudi' on board until January 20, 2025. Addressing safety concerns, Naidu emphasized the government's stringent response to hoax bomb threats, with strict penalties for offenders. The Civil Aviation Ministry will introduce two new regulations, including a flying ban for those found guilty of such actions.

Also present at the event were Rajya Sabha Member Golla Babu Rao, Visakhapatnam West MLA PGVR Naidu, and officials from the Airports Authority of India, Air India, and IndiGo.

ACA aims for more intl matches: Kesineni Chinni

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Andhra Cricket Association (ACA) president and Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath has expressed optimism regarding the future of cricket in the State, attributing recent progress to the efforts of Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu and the support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "With their backing, the State is progressing rapidly," he stated during a two-day review meeting at the ACA-VDC stadium in Visakhapatnam on Sunday.

Sivanath underscored the ACA's unwavering commitment to hosting more international cricket matches in the state, facilitated by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). "We are determined to

bring international cricket to our state and provide local fans with the opportunity to watch world-class matches," he affirmed, highlighting the association's ambitious plans to enhance cricket's profile in Andhra Pradesh.

In an exciting new initiative aimed at fostering young talent, Sivanath announced plans to tap into the hidden passion for cricket among youth in villages across 175 constituencies. "Our priority is to promote the ACA's mark in remote areas, including places like Araku, to foster cricket at the grassroots level," he explained. This initiative will focus on improving infrastructure for cricket development, with training facilities set to be established in the South Zone, North Zone, and Central Zone, akin to the



Center of Excellence recently launched in Bangalore by the BCCI. "This will enable our players to receive high-quality training and development," Sivanath emphasised.

The ACA president also acknowledged the critical role of government support in advancing sports development in the region, announcing, "Visakhapatnam Stadium will

be upgraded with facilities that meet international standards." This upgrade is part of a broader strategy to elevate the standards of cricket in the state. In a collaborative effort to strengthen cricket across Andhra Pradesh, Sivanath and Secretary Sana Satish Babu have committed to engaging with the presidents and secretaries of the 13 joint district

cricket associations. On Sunday, they met with representatives from the cricket associations of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, and East Godavari districts, vowing to address local challenges and seek viable solutions. "We are committed to tackling the issues faced by our district associations and ensuring that cricket flourishes in every corner of the state," Sivanath remarked.

Additionally, ongoing efforts are in place to upgrade the North Zone Cricket Academy in Vizianagaram. A meeting with the remaining nine district cricket presidents and secretaries is scheduled for Monday, where they will further discuss strategies for cricket development in the region.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha

Tithi: Ekadashi: Oct 27 05:24 AM to Oct 28 07:51 AM

Dwadashi: Oct 28 07:51 AM to Oct 29 10:32 AM

Nakshatram: Purva Phalguni: Oct 27 12:24 PM to Oct 28 03:24 PM

Uttara Phalguni: Oct 28 03:24 PM to Oct 29 06:33 PM

Rahukalam: 7:42 AM to 9:08 AM

Yamagandam: 10:34 AM to 11:59 AM

Variyam: 11:33 PM to 01:21 AM

Gulika: 1:25 PM to 2:51 PM

Amritkalam: 08:12 AM to 10:00 AM

Ahhijji Muhurtham: 11:37 AM to 12:22 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Sunny

Temp: 34°C

Humidity: 62%

Sunrise: 6:04 AM

Sunset: 5:39 PM

Updated: October 27, 2024 5:00 PM

VMC mulls taking over mgmt of IGMC Stadium

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) is working on plans to take over comprehensive management and supervision of the Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation (IGMC) Stadium, a facility currently managed by the NTR District Sports Authority (DSA).

While the IGMC stadium is owned by the VMC, the DSA oversees its sports activities. The VMC's intent includes the appointment of qualified coaches to improve players' training and development, and to enhance the range and quality of sports programmes offered at the facility.

VMC Commissioner HM Dhyanchandra, leveraging his background as the Vice-Chairman and Managing Director of the Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP), is particularly focused on the financial potential of the stadium. Notably, he is seeking to improve revenue generation from the Tennis Complex within the stadium.

Previous arrangements saw the fees collected from players credited to the SAAP, which led to a loss of potential revenue for the VMC. Now, Dhyanchandra aims to change this by ensuring that the fees from players, as well as walkers using the stadium facilities, contribute directly to the VMC's income.

Commissioner holding talks with NTR district administration and District Sports Authority



To facilitate this transition, the VMC is engaging in discussions with the NTR district administration and DSA officials. Dhyanchandra has requested that the stadium ground be handed over to VMC control. Additionally, the VMC is exploring the possibility of vacating the DSA office, which has managed district sports activities from a building on the stadium premises for years, as well as the offices of various district sports associations situated under the stadium's gallery.

However, the proposal to vacate these long-established sports bodies' offices could face opposition from district associations, as these organisations have been integral to the management of various sports activities, such as kabaddi, boxing, tennis, volleyball, basketball, handball, and cricket. Despite this potential resistance, the VMC is motivated by the desire to streamline operations and boost revenue through direct control of the facility.

The VMC also plans to reintroduce user charges at the IGMC Stadium. Although a previous attempt to collect fees from walkers faced opposition and was withdrawn, the significant income observed from the Tennis Complex has encouraged the VMC to reconsider this strategy. By implementing these changes, the VMC aims to maximise the financial and operational efficiency of the IGMC Stadium while expanding its role in promoting sports in the city.

Andhra University emphasises environmental conservation

Two-day workshop held on 'Conservation of Endemic Species in the Eastern Ghats'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Andhra University (AU) Vice-Chancellor Prof G Sasibhushan Rao has emphasised the critical importance of environmental conservation at a two-day workshop on 'Conservation of Endemic Species in the Eastern Ghats'.

Addressing the gathering, Rao remarked, "Preserving environmental balance is not just a responsibility, but a necessity." He drew a stark comparison to the environmental devastation wrought by atomic bombs. "Neglecting the environment could lead to equally dire consequences," he cautioned.

Dr SS Das, a scientist from the Botanical Survey of India, captivated attendees with insights into his research on plant intelligence, revealing that plants can respond to music—a discovery that speaks to the complex, often unobserved connections within ecosystems. "Plants, too, respond to external stimuli. This discovery only strengthens our commitment to conserve



and understand them better," Dr Das said, calling for a more harmonious relationship between humans and nature. Conference convener Prof SB Padal highlighted the Eastern Ghats' unique biodiversity, pointing out that the AU Botanical Garden preserves over 30 rare species native to the region. "The Eastern Ghats are home to an irreplaceable variety of life, and protecting these endemic species is essential to safeguarding our biodiversity," he said.

Prof. MVR Raju, Principal of Science College, raised concerns over the rapid degradation of forested areas due to activities such as mining,

unregulated tourism, and encroachment. "Forests are irreplaceable ecosystems that deserve respect and protection. We must raise awareness of the lasting damage these activities cause," he urged, stressing the need for a shift in public perception towards conservation.

The Forestry Department presented plans to organise conservation awareness programmes, while the Department Head, Prof. D. Sandhya Deepika, shared an update on ongoing departmental initiatives aimed at sustaining local biodiversity. The workshop brought together distinguished professors, scientists, and environmentalists.

'Writing a tool for sharing life experiences'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

At a book launch event held at the Hyatt Place Hotel on Sunday evening, prominent industrialist Parvataneni Ravi highlighted the significance of writing books as a means for successful individuals to share their experiences. The event, organised by TLC Masterminds celebrated the launch of Learn and Lip and Ullasamanga authored by Parvataneni Ravi and Parvataneni Padma.

Speaking at the launch, Ravi encouraged others to take up writing as a habit, noting that documenting life's lessons and challenges can provide valuable guidance for readers.

"By sharing our experiences, we not only recount the challenges and solutions we encounter in business but also offer insights that may help others on their own journeys," he stated. Ravi emphasised that books serve as a bridge for sharing knowledge, offering a unique way for individuals to leave a lasting impact on society through their stories and learnings.

ITDA Paderu tackles plastic pollution at Vanjangi Hills

PNS ■ PADERU

As the tourism season begins, the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), Paderu, has rolled out important initiatives to tackle plastic pollution at Vanjangi Hills, a favoured spot in the ASR district. Vanjangi Hills, also known as Meghala Konda, draws thousands of visitors from Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Telangana during the winter months.

"Vanjangi Hills sees a surge in visitors, particularly on weekends. The rise in foot and vehicle traffic has led to a concerning buildup of plastic waste," stated V Abhishek, Project Officer of ITDA, Paderu. In response, ITDA has set up designated bins for collecting plastic waste. "We urge visitors to use these bins for their plastic waste, as we aim to reduce litter and preserve the area's natural beauty."

Abhishek mentioned plans to eventually prohibit plastic bottles entirely, with alternative methods for providing drinking water being considered. Furthermore, Vanjangi



Plastic water bottles and other trash strewn around by visitors being cleared as part of a cleanliness drive at Vanjangi Hill, Paderu, in Alluri Sitarama Raju district

Hills will be closed to tourists one day a week for maintenance. "This closure will facilitate cleaning efforts, helping to keep the area looking pristine," he explained.

ITDA Paderu is also unveiling new attractions, such as a tethered hot air balloon ride near Padmapuram Gardens in Araku Valley.

"The trial run has commenced. Visitors will enjoy an exhilarating ride at 200 feet," Abhishek shared. A paramotoring adventure near Kothavalasa in Araku Valley is also in the works. "This new offering will thrill those looking for adventure in the ASR district."

"These initiatives aim to

protect the region's natural beauty while providing tourists with enjoyable and responsible experiences," Abhishek concluded.

With these efforts, ITDA Paderu seeks to safeguard the stunning sunrise views and surreal cloud experiences at Vanjangi Hills for future generations.

Peeyush Kumar visits Durga Temple

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Finance Department Principal Secretary Peeyush Kumar visited the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam, located atop Indrakeeladri, in Vijayawada on Sunday along with his family members. They offered special prayers to goddess Durga Devi.

On the arrival of the Principal Secretary, the temple authorities gave him a warm welcome and facilitated darshan. The temple priests gave them blessings at the Veda Ashirvachana Mandapam and presented Laddu Prasadam, Sesha Vastram and a Durga portrait.



Durga Temple priest presenting a Durga Devi portrait to Principal Secretary Peeyush Kumar at the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam in Vijayawada on Sunday

SP opens Police Commemoration Week Open House

PNS ■ ANAKAPALLI

In a heartfelt tribute to the brave men and women of the police force, the District Superintendent of Police (SP) Tuhin Sinha inaugurated an Open House event at NTR Stadium on Sunday. This initiative, held as part of the annual Police Commemoration Week, aimed to honour the sacrifices of police martyrs and educate the public, particularly students, about the multifaceted role of the police.

"Our police personnel work tirelessly to safeguard society, often making the ultimate sacrifice," stated SP Tuhin Sinha. "It's imperative to remember and honor these brave souls, especially during this commemoration week." He emphasised the importance of exposing the younger generation to the modern tools and techniques used by the police, from advanced weaponry to sophisticated communication systems.

The Open House event showcased a wide range of police equipment, including AK-47s, pistols, and advanced rifles. Students were also introduced to cutting-edge technology like satellite phones, scanners, and even robotic suits. The District Armed Reserve Police conducted awareness sessions, providing firsthand insights into the operational capabilities of the force.

"By familiarizing young minds with these tools, we inspire them to appreciate the discipline, hard work, and commitment required in this profession," said SP Sinha.

In addition to the equipment display, various competitions, including essay writing, were organized to honor the contributions of police personnel.

Spl festivals at Tirumala in Nov

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The details of special festivals to be observed at Tirumala in November: November 1 - Kedara Gouri Vratam; November 3 - Bhaginihasta Bhojanam, Sri Tirumala Nambi Sattumora; November 5 - Nagula Chavithi, Pedda Shesha Vahanam; November 6 - Sattumora of Sri Manawala Mahamuni. November 8 - Ankuraranam for annual Pushpayagam. November 9 - Srivari Pushpayagam, Atri Maharshi Varsha Tiru Nakshatram, Pillailokacharya Varsha Tiru Nakshatram, Poigai Alwar Varsha Tiru Nakshatram, Pudattalwar Varsha Tiru Nakshatram, Vedanta Desikula Sattumora. November 10 - Peyalwar Varsha Tiru Nakshatra. November 11 - Sri Yajnavalkya Jayanti. November 12 - Prabodhana Ekadashi. November 13 - Kaishika Dwadasi Asthanam, Chaturmasya Vratam concludes; November 15 - Kartika Pournami; November 28 - Dhanvantari Jayanti and November 29 - Masa Sivratra



'Ankuraranam' performed for 'Pavitrotsavams'

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The 'Ankuraranam' for the annual Pavitrotsavams was conducted at Srinivasa Mangapuram on Sunday evening.

This festival is traditionally celebrated as a sin-free event, addressing any omissions and commissions made knowingly or unknowingly by temple staff, religious per-

sonnel, and devotees.

On the first day, October 28, the Pavitra Pratista will take place, followed by the Pavitra Samarpana on the second day, and the Pavitra Purnahuti will be observed on the final day.

Special Gr. DyEO Varalakshmi, AEO Gopinath, and others were present at the event.

SFI to stage dharnas at mandal hqs

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Student Federation of India (SFI) State president K Prasanna Kumar and general secretary A Ashok have urged students to participate in protests and agitations at all mandal headquarters and district collectorates. They said these protests, scheduled for October 28-30 and November 6, aim to address issues in the education sector. During a press conference at the MBVK in Vijayawada on Sunday, they released a poster in this regard.

Speaking on the occasion, the SFI leaders said that the TDP-led NDA government kept Rs.3,480 crore of Vidya Deevana and Vasathi Deevana funds. As a result, the students who completed their courses faced a lot of problems in getting their certificates from their respective colleges. The college management mounted pressure on the students demanding that they pay the pending fees to get the certificates.

Further, they alleged that



SFI State president Prasanna Kumar and general secretary Ashok releasing the poster for 'Chalo Collectorate' agitation, in Vijayawada on Sunday

the new government is delaying release of these funds. They demanded immediate release of the funds to ensure that the students receive the certificates from their colleges. Also, they asked the government to confirm the date of implementation of the Talliki Vandanam scheme. They further demanded that the govern-

ment cancel GO 77 as per its election promise.

Another demand was that the State government should reintroduce the mid-day meals in all government junior colleges. On the lines of allocating Rs.96 to Anna Canteens, diet charges should be enhanced from Rs.53 (colleges) and Rs.46 (Schools) to Rs.100. And,

fill all vacant positions of professors and lecturers in all universities in the State, they said.

In this regard, the SFI will hold dharnas at all mandal headquarters from October 28-30, and a Chalo Collectorate programme on November 6. They asked all students to participate in the agitations.

Minister urges horticulture farmers to adopt drip irrigation

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

Distributes first batch of Bindu and Tumpara irrigation equipment

"Drip irrigation is a boon for horticulture farmers, and every farmer should adopt it to reap its benefits," stated Minister of Minister for MSME and SERP Kondapalli Srinivas on Sunday. The Minister, accompanied by District Collector Dr BR Ambedkar and legislator Aditi Gajapathiraju, distributed the first batch of Bindu and Tumpara irrigation equipment to farmers at the Collectorate, flagging off a vehicle loaded with the equipment.

Speaking to the media, the Minister emphasised the advantages of drip irrigation, noting that it conserves groundwater, reduces electricity consumption, and lowers cultivation costs, ultimately leading to higher income for farmers. "Drip irrigation not only preserves our valuable groundwater resources, but also helps farmers save on operational



costs and increase their profit margins."

The Minister clarified that farmers with access to water sources, such as bore wells, and electricity for pumps or engines qualify for micro-irrigation equipment under the scheme. The district has set an ambitious goal of covering 3,050 hectares with drip irrigation this year,

and the initial phase of the initiative has already benefited 86 farmers with equipment valued at Rs 91.81 lakh, supported by a subsidy of Rs 58.17 lakh.

To make drip irrigation accessible to small and marginal farmers, subsidies are offered. Farmers with up to five acres of land are eligible for equipment valued at Rs 2,18,000 with a 90

per cent subsidy, while farmers with 5 to 12.5 acres can receive equipment worth Rs 3,10,000 at a 50 per cent subsidy. Additionally, discounts are available for Thumpara cultivation equipment, with small farmers eligible for a 55 per cent discount and those with larger holdings up to 12.5 acres for a 45 per cent discount.

Farmers interested in the subsidised equipment are encouraged to register via the APMP online portal at local Farmer Service Centres. "Following a field survey and evaluation by a designated micro-irrigation company, farmers will receive information about their share of the cost via SMS on their registered mobile numbers," the Minister explained, assuring that the process is designed to be transparent and user-friendly.

Tourism sector will witness boom in next 5 yrs: Durgesh



PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Plans are underway to boost the tourism sector in Andhra Pradesh over the next five years, according to Minister for Tourism Kandula Durgesh. The Minister announced that the Godavari riverfront will be beautified in preparation for the upcoming Godavari Pushkarams.

On Sunday, the Minister inaugurated a floating restaurant at Bridge Lanka on the banks of the Godavari, run by the Aahwanam Kitchen agency. Congratulating the organizers, he expressed confidence that the unique experience of dining on the river would attract numerous

tourists, calling it a memory to cherish.

In his speech, the Minister stated, "To enhance the region's appeal as a tourist destination, infrastructure facilities will soon be developed along the banks of the Godavari near Havelock Bridge. Plans are in place to beautify the riverfront, islands, and surrounding plains in preparation for the Godavari Pushkarams."

The Minister outlined goals to encourage tourists to spend two to three days at various attractions, utilizing the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model. He proposed establishing a Tourism Circuit with an investment of ₹1 lakh at key tourist spots, which would

create employment opportunities.

He further shared that efforts are being made to develop eco, adventure, wellness, and temple tourism in collaboration with the Endowment, Forest, Medical, and Tourism departments.

"Despite Andhra Pradesh having more natural beauty than Kerala, it lags in tourism. We will focus on promoting the state's scenic attractions to draw more tourists," he said.

Durgesh criticized the previous YSRCP administration for its neglect of the tourism sector, lamenting that the industry had lost its vibrancy under their leadership.

Welcoming Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's proposal to grant "Industry" status to the tourism sector, the Minister expressed optimism that this move would attract substantial investments. He also highlighted the importance of building film studios and supporting Telugu film production within the state, pledging full support to the film industry.

State Tourism Executive Director (Operations) A Padmavati, General Manager Rajaram, MLAs Battula Balaramakrishna and Adireddy Sreenivas, and Aahwanam Kitchen representative Srinivas were present at the event.

Minister Ramanaidu lays stone for developmental works

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Minister for Water Resources Development Nimmala Ramanaidu laid the foundation stone for the development works at Agartipalem and Agarru villages on Sunday. The development works would be carried out at a cost of ₹1.13 crore.

The Minister announced that a protected drinking water project was being taken up at Agartipalem village at a cost of ₹98 lakh and CC road would be constructed at a cost of ₹30 lakh.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister highlighted that the Chandrababu-led government had implemented money schemes, announced DSC, and reopened Anna canteen to provide nutritious food to the poor at an affordable price. "The Government had raised the input subsidy to ₹25,000 per hectare to the farmers fulfilling the promise which was made in the elections, he reiterated.



"The NDA-led State government is spending ₹4,500 crore to carry out various development works in rural areas to provide basic amenities and the works will be completed by Sankranti festival. The Naidu-led government is committed to implementing all the assurances given to the people, and some of them, have already been fulfilled," he acknowledged.

Taking a dig at the Opposition YSRCP, Minister

Ramanaidu said that development backtracked during the five-year YSRCP regime and the government exchequer became empty forcing the then government to depend on borrowings. The village panchayats were deprived of their rights. The government snatched their funds and diverted them to other purposes, he criticised.

The Water Resources Minister found fault with Jagan Mohan Reddy for dragging his mother and sister to the court

on property issues. Jagan Mohan Reddy has no right to be in democratic politics, he flayed. The man, who can not love his mother and sister, how he loves the people, he questioned.

The YSRCP leaders had indulged in massive scams during the five years regime including sand mining, liquor distribution, and mines and grabbing of lands and siphoned over ₹8 lakh crore, he lambasted. The coalition government had inherited ₹14 lakh crore debts, he lamented. Tahasildar Y Durga Kishore, MPDO Umamaheshwara Rao, Housing PD Trimurthulu and Housing AE Srinivas were among those who attended the programme.

Meanwhile, Minister Ramanaidu handed over financial assistance of ₹3.20 lakh to 11 people under the Chief Minister's Relief Fund at Palakollu. Speaking on the occasion, he observed that the NDA-led State government extended financial assistance to poor patients for the treatment.



10,000 litres jaggery wash destroyed

PNS ■ PADERU

The police destroyed 10,000 litres of jaggery wash, hoarded to distil illicit liquor, at Gundu Vari Gudem in Yetapaka mandal in the ASR district on Sunday.

Police said that a police team led by CI Kannappa conducted a search at Gundu Vari Gudem village. They found 10,000 litres of jaggery wash hoarded in several drums.

The police destroyed the jaggery wash. The police also seized drums and containers of beige used to distil country-made liquor. After noticing the police, the illicit distillers fled the village.

Lanka Dinakar vows to strive for development of Prakasam

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Lanka Dinakar, the chairman of the 20 Points Scheme Implementation, has assured that he will work diligently for the development of the Prakasam district.

An interaction meeting was held on Sunday to congratulate and felicitate Dinakar on his appointment as chairman of the 20 Points Scheme Implementation.

During the event, he emphasized that industries are being established in Donakonda, and railway line projects are underway in the district. He acknowledged that Ongole has played a significant role in his political career and committed himself to the comprehensive development of the district.

"We urged Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on August 27, 2024, to include Prakasam district in the list of backward districts. The



Finance Minister has since included Prakasam in that list and allocated funds for its development in the budget," he stated. He added that the implementation of the 20 Points Scheme encompasses various ministries.

Dinakar highlighted that the development of rural areas, as well as initiatives for youth, women, and students, falls within the purview of this department. He noted that

Deputy Chief Minister K. Pawan Kalyan has successfully secured significant funds under the Jal Jeevan Mission to provide safe drinking water to all villages.

BJP State Executive Secretary N. Surya Kalyan Chakravarti, renowned ophthalmologist Dr. Srimannarayana, Bapatla District BJP In-Charge P.V. Krishna Reddy, and Ongole BJP Convener Yagaiah Yadav also addressed the gathering.

Nellore to have airport soon: Narayana

PNS ■ NELLORE

Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development, P Narayana, announced that an airport is set to be established in Nellore soon. He disclosed this to the district residents during a review meeting at the Nellore Collectorate, which was attended by State Endowments Minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy, MLAs Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy and Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy, Collector Anand, and JC Karthik.

Dr. Narayana highlighted the necessity of the airport, noting that it would bring significant development to the region. The meeting also addressed the long-pending Dagadarthi Airport project and the need to relocate rice mills to other areas. He pointed out that the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has become stringent regarding pollution levels in areas with rice mills, emphasizing that those locations experience four times the normal pollution levels. Therefore, relocating the mills is essential to comply with NGT regulations.

Reflecting on past discussions held when he was a minister, Narayana stressed that a collaborative approach involving local MLAs and the Collector is necessary to ensure that rice mill owners are not



adversely affected by these changes. He suggested potential relocation sites near the Kisan SEZ and Krishnapatnam Port, asserting that the decision to relocate is not intended to inconvenience anyone. Encouraging business growth is crucial for the state's revenue, particularly in terms of GST, and he urged all stakeholders, including rice mill owners and association leaders, to cooperate with the government.

Infrastructure is vital for development, according to Dr. Narayana. He listed roads, railways, air routes, and ports as essential components of growth. The need for an air route to Nellore is underscored by the proximity of the Krishnapatnam Port and the importance of cargo transport. He noted that the previous TDP government had

approved the airport project, but it was stalled by the YSR Congress government for various reasons.

He mentioned that when Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu visited Nellore during election campaigning, he reiterated his commitment to establishing the airport at Dagadarthi. Discussions have been held with central ministers regarding the project, with assurances that proposals would be prepared once the land is made available.

In response to concerns about illegal sand mining, Narayana stated that while prices were high under the previous government, the TDP administration has significantly reduced them. He criticized the YSR Congress for their protests, suggesting they are politically motivated in light of the

TDP's improving reputation.

State Endowments Minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy further elaborated on plans to relocate rice mills from the city outskirts to areas like Krishnapatnam Port and Kisan SEZ. He confirmed that efforts are underway to expedite the Dagadarthi airport project, which is crucial for regional development. The airport will require approximately 1,379 acres, with some compensation already provided for land acquisition, and discussions with central minister Ram Mohan Naidu are planned to finalise the remaining land acquisition. A team from the Airports Authority of India is expected to visit soon for further assessments.

Youth drowned at Suryalanka Beach

PNS ■ BAPATLA

A 20-year-old youth drowned at Suryalanka Beach, and his body was recovered on Sunday. According to police, a group of nine youths had travelled from the Kothapet area in Guntur to enjoy a holiday at the beach.

While they were swimming in the sea, a large tidal wave swept away the victim, R. Kalyan.

His body was later retrieved from the water and taken to the area hospital in Bapatla.

Collector inspects ethanol unit

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

East Godavari District Collector P Prashanthi on Sunday inspected the ethanol company at Gummalla Duddi village.

The Collector saw the ethanol-making process in the Company. She interacted with the company officials and knew the process. Five villagers of Gummalla Duddi accompanied the Collector. She also visited a one-and-a-half kilometre radius of the Dalit colony of the village and saw the environment.

The Gummalla Duddi villagers complained to the officials that the Ethanol unit is generating a huge amount of pollution which is detrimental to the environment of surrounding areas.

The Collector made it clear that a committee is being set up, comprising senior officials, to examine and submit a report on the generating of pollution by the ethanol-making company.

The Committee members



would visit Gummalla Duddi village and the surrounding areas, and submit a report on the water and air pollution after a thorough inspection of the Ethanol Company. Based on the report, action would be taken to regulate the pollution, the Collector added.

The Collector made it clear that a committee is being set up, comprising senior officials, to examine and submit a report on the generating of pollution by the ethanol-making company.

CCTVs play a vital role in providing clues: SP

PNS ■ KADAPA

Superintendent of Police V Harshavardhan Raju has stated that CCTV cameras are instrumental in providing significant clues about offenders to the investigating teams.

An awareness meeting was held on Sunday for members of the merchant association. During the event, SP Harshavardhan Raju emphasized the importance of CCTV cameras for traders. He noted that under the Andhra Pradesh Public Safety Act 2013, it is mandatory to install CCTV cameras in places where more than 100 people gather, and



this law applies to municipal corporations and municipalities.

He urged merchants and owners of various sales outlets to ensure that recorded footage from CCTV cameras is pre-

served for at least 30 days. The SP shared that three cases were resolved last week thanks to the clues provided by CCTV footage. He highlighted that last month, approximately 1,700 CCTV cameras from shops across different parts of the district were repositioned to face the roads as per police department instructions, which yielded positive results.

The SP also revealed that in the investigation of a complaint regarding a kidnapping, it was discovered to be a false alarm. In a separate case involving an attack on an individual in Kadapa city, CCTV cameras from nearby shops were crucial

in identifying the two-wheelers involved and the identities of the accused.

SP Harshavardhan Raju remarked that CCTV cameras played a key role in the arrest of a chain snatcher. He urged everyone to install as many CCTV cameras as possible throughout the district, intending to make it a crime-free area within two months.

Among those who attended the meeting were SB Inspector B. Hema Kumar, CIs Ramakrishna, Nagarjuna, and Madhumalleswar Reddy, along with leaders from cloth, gold shops, fancy stores, oil merchants, and lorry associations.

ED evidence tightens case against Chandrababu

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Former Minister Kurasala Kannababu has stated that Chandrababu Naidu is guilty in the Skill Development Scam explaining that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) recently submitted evidence in the High Court, further clarifying Chandrababu's involvement even clearer.

Speaking to the media in Kakinada, Kannababu remarked that Naidu is increasingly cornered by this case, with evidence showing that he diverted funds through shell companies, totaling ₹151 crore, as revealed by the ED's investigation. He questioned the parties like Jana Sena and BJP, who once dismissed the case as conspiratorial, asking what they have to say now.

The former minister also criticised certain media outlets for failing to hold Chandrababu accountable for not fulfilling election promises, saying it is appalling that these outlets defend Chandrababu's misdeeds while ignoring public issues. He added that despite solid evidence against Naidu, his supporters continue to call him innocent, making the ED's counter in the High Court a slap in the face for such claims.

Further, Kannababu pointed to a previous CAG report that already exposed the scam, noting that ₹355 crore were misappropriated in the project during Naidu's administration from 2014 to 2019. He highlighted how a whistleblower attempted to reveal the scam, only to have the investigation stalled and files destroyed.



Health Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha visiting the students who fell ill at government hospital in Sangareddy on Sunday

15 Gurukul students take ill due to suspected food poisoning

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

Fifteen students of Kasturba Gandhi Gurukula in the district have been admitted to government hospital after they took ill due to suspected food poisoning.

Health Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha visited the students at the government hospital and inquired about their health.

The students studying at the Kasturba Gandhi School in Nyalkal Mandal fell ill, leading to their hospitalisation at Sangareddy Government Hospital. Upon learning about the situation, the Minister visited the hospital to meet the students.

He inquired about the students' health conditions and instructed the

doctors to take all necessary measures to provide better treatment. The Minister interacted with the students and assured them of all help. He also spoke with parents, reassuring them not to lose heart and mentioned that, if necessary, better medical facilities could be arranged at private hospitals, affirming that the government would support the students.

Dr. Anil Kumar, the hospital superintendent, briefed the Minister on the students' conditions.

District Collector Kranti Vallur also visited the hospital in the evening and spoke to the students and parents. The Collector held discussions with doctors and directed them to shift the students whose conditions is critical to private hospitals for better treatment.

Foreign liquor seized from Raj Pakala's house: Jupally

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Responding to the Janwada farmhouse rave party issue, Prohibition and Excise, Tourism and Culture Minister Jupally Krishna Rao said that it is common for enforcement officials to conduct search-

es if someone files a complaint. The law is not anyone's relative, he added.

"After receiving reliable information, the SOT and Excise officials raided the farmhouse. Officials conducted the search as a routine one. No event permission had been taken from the Excise Department

to hold celebrations at the farmhouse. Officials found that the liquor party was held without permission. Non-Duty Paid Liquor (foreign liquor) was seized by the SOT and Excise officials. Duty-free bills were not shown for the imported liquor," he said.

ACROSS THE STATES



Six cyber criminals held from Delhi, Rajasthan

Delhi Police arrested six people from Rajasthan and the national capital under a special drive against cyber fraudsters, officials on Sunday said. According to the police, 110 complaints on the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP) were found to be linked to those arrested and transactions of nearly Rs 5 crore were found in their bank accounts. They were using three different modus operandi to dupe people -- online investment frauds, fake websites for child-modelling frauds and fake updation of electricity bills. "Our team launched an operation against the cyber fraudsters on the basis of ongoing different cases. In a two-day operation in Jaipur and Delhi, a total of six people were apprehended and arrested," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) Ankit Singh said. The arrested were identified as Bipul Kumar (44), Sharwan Pareek (55), Avadhesh Udaival (41) and Mukesh Kumar (30) from Jaipur in Rajasthan, and Devender Singh and Bhipender Mahamana from Delhi.



Man bludgeoned to death, body set on fire in Latur

A man was arrested for allegedly bludgeoning a 25-year-old man to death and setting his body on fire in Maharashtra's Latur district on Sunday, police said. The accused, a scrap collector, was arrested within five hours of the killing that took place on Barshi road in the jurisdiction of the MIDC police station, an official said. The body of an unidentified man near a hospital in the morning, he said. The victim was later identified as Laxman Subhash Gaighate, a resident of Navi Mumbai, was an alcoholic and had come to Latur on October 24 for medical treatment, the official said. Gaighate left his sister's house on Saturday and did not return, he said. Following a probe, the police zeroed in on the accused, Sachin Shivaji Waghmare. The victim had allegedly assaulted Waghmare for a sleeping spot on the roadside, the official said. The accused later returned to the scene and allegedly bludgeoned the victim with a stone while he was asleep and set the body on fire to destroy evidence, he said.



Elaborate security in Jammu for festival season, say police

Amid a spurt in terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir, a senior police officer on Sunday said elaborate security measures had been put in place across the Jammu region to ensure a peaceful festival season. Additional Director General of Police (Jammu zone) Anand Jain was speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a motorcycle rally organised by the force in memory of police personnel who laid down their lives in the fight against terrorism during the past three decades. "The rally was organised to remember and pay tribute to the fallen heroes who sacrificed their lives... We have a lot of police personnel who were martyred in the fight against terrorism," he said. Asked about the security arrangements for the festival season in the aftermath of several major terror attacks, especially in Kashmir where two soldiers were among 12 people killed in the past week, Jain said all measures had been taken to ensure a peaceful Diwali and other festivals. More than 100 motorcyclists, mostly from the police department, took part in the rally as part of a programme to honour the bravery and dedication of the fallen personnel.

JHARKHAND POLLS

Women hold key in CM's constituency, 31 other seats

PNS ■ RANCHI

Women voters may play a decisive role in 32 assembly constituencies, including the seats of Chief Minister Hemant Soren and former CM Champai Soren, as they outnumber male voters in the electoral roll. Out of 32 constituencies where there are more women voters than men, 26 are reserved for scheduled tribes. The elections to the 81-seat Jharkhand assembly are sched-

uled to be held in two phases on November 13 and November 20. The counting of votes is slated for November 23. Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren has filed his nomination papers from the Barhait assembly constituency, where the number of women voters is higher than male voters. The constituency enrolled more than 2.25 lakh voters, including 1.15 lakh women and 1.09 lakh male voters.

Modi: Make India a global animation powerhouse

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Citing the popularity of Indian animated series such as 'Chhota Bheem', 'Hanuman' and 'Motu-Patlu', Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said India is on the way to ushering in a new revolution in the world of animation and urged the people to take the resolve of making the country a global animation powerhouse.

In his monthly Mann Ki Baat radio broadcast, he said India's animation characters and movies, on account of content and creativity, are being loved all over the world. "You must remember the days when 'Chhota Bheem' started airing on TV. Children can never forget that; there was so much excitement about 'Chhota Bheem! You would be surprised that today 'Dholakpur ka Dhol' attracts children not only in India but also in other countries. Similarly, our other animated serials such as 'Krishna', 'Hanuman', 'Motu-Patlu' also have a fan-following all over the world," the prime minister said. "You might have noticed that from the smartphone to

Cites popularity of 'Chhota Bheem'



the cinema screen, gaming console to virtual reality, animation is omnipresent. India is on the way to ushering in a new revolution in the world of animation," Modi asserted. He also pointed out that the gaming space of India is also expanding rapidly and Indian games are also gaining popularity all over the world. "When I met leading gamers of India a few months ago... I got an opportunity to know and understand the amazing creativity and quality of Indian

games. Indeed, in the country, there's a constant wave of creative energy," he said. In the world of animation, 'Made in India' and 'Made by Indians' can be noticed everywhere, Modi said. "You will be happy to know that today India's talent is also a significant part of foreign productions. Be it the present day Spider-Man or Transformers, in both these movies, Harinraran Rajeev's contribution has been highly appreciated by people," he said.

Animation studios of India, are working with world famous production companies such as Disney and Warner Brothers, Modi noted. "Today our youth are creating original Indian content, which reflects glimpses of our culture. These are being watched all over the world," he said. Modi stressed that today, the animation sector has donned the form of an industry that is powering other industries, just as VR Tourism is getting famous these days.

Through a virtual tour you can view the Ajanta caves, take a stroll through the Konark temple corridor or enjoy the ghats of Varanasi. All these VR animation marvels have been made by Indian creators. After seeing these places through VR, many people want to visit these tourist places in reality, i.e. virtual tour of a tourist destination has become a medium of creating curiosity in the minds of people," he said. Today in this sector, along with animators, the demand for storytellers, writers, voice-over experts, musicians, game developers, VR and AR experts is also constantly rising, he said.



Peace possible in Bengal only when infiltration stops: Shah

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Asserting that peace can be established in West Bengal only when cross-border infiltration stops, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday exhorted the people of the state to bring in change in the 2026 assembly elections.

Inaugurating a new passenger terminal building and a cargo gate 'Maitri Dwar' at Petrapole land port bordering Bangladesh, Shah said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to the development of West Bengal. "Bring in change in West Bengal in 2026. (We) will put an end to infiltration and ensure peace in the state", Shah said.

He also said, "In establishing peace in the region, land ports play an important role. When there is no scope for the legal movement of people across the border, illegal

modes of movement arise, which impacts the peace of the country... There can be peace in Bengal only when infiltration stops."

Land ports play an important role in improving connectivity and relations among neighbouring countries, Shah said. These facilities also enhance trade relations among neighbouring countries, he said. Shah said the prime minister started many initiatives across sectors like health since the NDA came to power in 2014. "But the people of Bengal are deprived of the benefits given in the health sector. This deprivation will cease from 2026," he claimed.

He slammed the TMC government in the state over the issue of "corruption".

Shah alleged that a major portion of the funds sent by the Centre to West Bengal was "usurped due to corruption" in the state.

Disengagement first step, and de-escalation next

PNS ■ MUMBAI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday said the disengagement of troops at Depsang and Demchok in Ladakh is the first step, and it is expected that India will return to the 2020 patrolling status.

The next step is de-escalation, which will not happen until India is sure that the same is happening on the other side as well, the EAM said, obviously referring to China.

Earlier this week, India announced it had reached an agreement with China on patrolling along the LAC in



eastern Ladakh, a major breakthrough in ending the over four-year-long military standoff. Addressing a press conference in Mumbai, Jaishankar said consensus has been achieved on patrolling and disengagement in Depsang and Demchok. "It is obvious it

will take time to implement the same. This is the issue of disengagement and patrolling which meant our armies had come very close to each other and now they have gone back to their bases. We hope the 2020 status is restored," he said. The completion of disengagement is the first step. The next step is de-escalation which will not happen until India is sure that the same is happening on the other side as well, the External Affairs Minister said. "After de-escalation, how to manage the borders will be discussed," he added.

AAP govt 'honestly' served Delhi for 10 years: Kejriwal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP government "honestly" served the people of Delhi for 10 years, doing a lot of the work that no other dispensation in the country had done, party chief Arvind Kejriwal said on Sunday. The former Delhi chief minister, who was taking part in a 'padayatra' (foot march) campaign ahead of the assembly polls, also asked the public not to vote for the BJP.

He claimed that the saffron party if it assumed power in Delhi, would stop the city government's free schemes for electricity, health care, education and bus rides for women.



Urges people to reject BJP

Kejriwal also promised that he would waive "inflated" water bills, urging the people to vote for AAP and help him become

chief minister again. "The elections are due in February. I will get these 'inflated' water bills waived in March," he said.

Era of 'doom-gloom' replaced by 'hope-possibility': Dhankhar

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Sunday said that an atmosphere of hope and possibility has replaced the earlier era of 'doom and gloom' in the country, which has emerged with a power to be reckoned with at the global level.

He claimed that there will be forces, both within and outside the boundaries, which will not like India coming forth as a global power, and the youth of the country have to respond to such forces through their action. Speaking at the 21st biennial convention of Krishnaguru International Spiritual Youth Society here, Dhankhar said, "Ten years ago, the atmosphere was of doom and gloom. Now what we see is an atmosphere of hope and possibility. It has been because of the contributions of our great men and saints that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi India is a power at the global level



now." "When Bharat is rising, some people are bound to be hurt. Some are within the country and some outside... the youth will answer these people through the knowledge you have acquired and utilise for the nation," he added. The vice president asserted that the spiritual power of the country is at the centre of Bharat's rise and exhorted the youth to follow the path of spirituality, infusing with it the sense of nationalism and modernity. He also highlighted the economic growth of the country and said, "While you strive for spiritual awakening, another awakening is unfolding for us. It is the incremental and continual rise of Bharat."

MGNREGS demand-driven scheme: Govt Says not possible to fix enrolment targets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The rural development ministry on Sunday dismissed reports that enrolment under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is going down and said it is not possible to fix targets for total enrolment in the demand-driven scheme as the financial year is still going on.

According to a report of Libtech India on the implementation of the MGNREGS, there has been an 8-per cent drop in the number of active workers under the scheme compared to last year.

The report also said there has been a net deletion of 39 lakh workers, raising concerns about wrongful deletions. While the names of 84.8 lakh workers were deleted, only 45.4 lakh workers were added under the scheme.



"Since MGNREGA is a demand-driven scheme and current FY is still ongoing, hence, it is not possible to fix an exact target of person days generation. However, the states/UTs can send proposals for labour budget revision as per the locally felt needs," the ministry said in a statement.

It may be noted that the total person days generated between FY 2006-07 to FY 2013-14 were

1,660 crore, whereas the total person days between FY 2014-15 to FY 2024-25 has been 2,923 crore" it added. The Libtech report said employment opportunities under the scheme have dropped significantly compared to the previous year, from 184 crore to 154 crore person-days.

It also said 27.4 per cent of all the workers, or 6.7 crore people, are ineligible for receiving wages through the Aadhaar-Based

Payment System (ABPS). On direct benefit transfer (DBT) and Aadhaar seeding, the ministry said ABPS conversion is a major reform process where benefits are credited directly into the bank accounts based on the Aadhaar of the workers under the MGNREGS.

"As on 26.10.2024, Aadhaar seeding has been done for 13.1 crore active workers, which is 99.3 per cent of total active workers (13.18 crore)," the ministry said.

"It is a fallacious argument that workers' demand for work is not registered if their accounts are not ABPS-enabled and that their wages remain unpaid because of this reason. In case of non-eligible workers, whose ABPS is still pending, states/UTs have been requested to sensitise all banks to ensure timely seeding of Aadhaar numbers of MGNREGS beneficiaries into NPCI mapper," it added.

Doctors struggle to treat long Covid patients in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Doctors in India are grappling to diagnose and treat unexplained and persistent symptoms of long Covid patients due to limited guidelines, whereas researchers have flagged inadequate studies on the condition.

With the World Health Organization declaring an end to Covid as a global health emergency in May last year, focused efforts are underway around the world to estimate the burden of long Covid among the population.

The condition refers to the set of lingering symptoms affecting varied body parts and persisting well beyond the acute Covid infection period, including cough, muscle and joint pain, fatigue, brain fog and difficulty in focusing. The viral disease is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. While

The condition refers to the set of lingering symptoms affecting varied body parts and persisting well beyond the acute Covid infection period, including cough, muscle and joint pain, fatigue, brain fog and difficulty in focusing



studies have suggested that about a third of those moderately or severely infected are likely to suffer from long Covid, region-wise though, incidence could vary.

A study by researchers, including those from Harvard Medical School, US, estimated that 31 per cent of the once-infected people in North

America, 44 per cent in Europe, and 51 per cent in Asia, have long Covid, which is "challenging the healthcare system, but there are limited guidelines for its treatment". It was published in the International Journal of Infectious Diseases in September.

In India, however, studies on

long Covid are few and far between. One such study by Maulana Azad Medical College in New Delhi, conducted from May 2022 to March 2023 on 553 patients who had recovered from Covid, found that about 45 per cent had lingering symptoms, persistent fatigue, and dry cough being the most common. "There is limited

exploratory research on the long Covid syndrome with scarce data on long-term outcomes," the authors wrote in the study published in the journal Cureus in May this year.

Understanding the long-term effects of the virus is important for developing management strategies, optimising healthcare delivery, and providing support to recovered Covid patients in the community, they said. Dr Rajesh Sagar, Professor of Psychiatry, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, said, "Looking at the current state of long Covid studies in India, it is too premature to say that we understand the condition well enough to know how to diagnose or treat it."

Animesh Samanta, assistant professor at School of Natural Sciences in Shiv Nadar University, Greater Noida, said, "While studies in India high-

light the growing recognition of neurological complications in long Covid patients, more focused research on neuroinflammation is needed."

Doctors, too, have reported a rise in patients complaining of symptoms that they did not have pre-Covid. "People who never had in the past, post-Covid, with every viral infection, they get a long cough, shortness of breath and wheezing, which require the use of inhalers or nebuliser," senior consultant Dr Neetu Jain, who runs a post-Covid care clinic at Pushpawati Singhania Hospital and Research Institute, New Delhi, said.

Dr Arun Garg, chairman, Neurology and Neurosciences, Medanta-The Medicity, Gurugram, said he was noticing a spike in stroke cases among young patients not suffering from known risk factors such as diabetes, hypertension and obesity.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Clouds of doom

As the US push for de-escalation, the risk of a multi-front war looms large, threatening to destabilise West Asia

The recent Israeli airstrikes on Iran and the subsequent retaliatory measures have intensified the long-standing conflict between the two nations, raising fears of a broader war in West Asia. The airstrikes, which targeted Iranian military installations and reportedly resulted in the deaths of four Iranian soldiers, were framed as a response to Iranian aggression. Iran's ally, Hezbollah, quickly reacted with rocket salvos targeting residential areas in northern Israel, signalling the potential for the conflict to spread. The current episode of hostilities began after Israeli warplanes allegedly used Iraqi airspace to conduct strikes on military and radar installations in Tehran. These actions were framed by Israel as necessary measures to neutralise threats posed by Iran and its regional proxies, including Hezbollah in Lebanon. Iran has condemned the strikes as a violation of its sovereignty, insisting on its right to retaliate. As expected the United States has firmly backed Israel, reiterating its "ironclad" support and cautioning Iran against further retaliation. Meanwhile, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called for an immediate cessation of hostilities, expressing concern about the potential for the violence to escalate uncontrollably.



The conflict's spillover into Lebanon, where Hezbollah's rocket attacks targeted northern Israel, highlights the interconnected nature of West Asia politics. Hezbollah, a powerful militia with close ties to Tehran, represents Iran's most prominent proxy in the region. Its involvement indicates that the conflict could easily escalate beyond a bilateral confrontation between Israel and Iran, drawing in other state and non-state actors. The conflict's potential to involve additional countries is significant. Lebanon, already grappling with a fragile political and economic situation, could become a battlefield, destabilising the broader Levant. Similarly, Iraq's alleged involvement in providing airspace for Israeli operations could trigger responses from Shia militias in the country. Besides, Iran's network of proxies, including militias in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, could engage in coordinated retaliatory strikes against Israel or the US interests in the region. This would complicate efforts to contain the conflict and could lead to an asymmetric, multi-front war. It goes without saying that diplomatic efforts are urgently needed to prevent the situation from deteriorating further. One country that could convince Israel for ceasefire is the US. It could leverage its influence over Israel and its regional allies to push for restraint, while simultaneously deterring Iranian retaliation through diplomatic channels. In fact even the US does not want the war to spill over. Direct communication between Washington and Tehran could prevent misunderstandings that might trigger further escalation. Besides, international neutral actors such as India, Russia, or regional mediators like Oman could facilitate backchannel negotiations aimed at establishing a ceasefire. The war must be stopped at any cost now else it could be a free-for-all, making it precursor to the World War III.

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PICTALK



People buy decorative items at a market ahead of the Diwali festival, in Amritsar

PTI

Come winter, Delhi chokes again

Despite the implementation of the Graded Response Action Plan, including stricter dust control and bans on open burning, smog continues to blanket the city



RAJDEEP PATHAK

Every year, an estimated 4.2 million deaths are linked to ambient air pollution worldwide, as nearly 91 per cent of the global population resides in areas where air quality exceeds the safe limits set by the World Health Organisation (WHO). In Asia's largest metropolitan regions, rapid urbanisation, unchecked industrialisation, population growth, and the surge in automobiles and construction activities have exacerbated air pollution levels, posing severe health risks. Delhi, one of the most polluted cities in the world, exemplifies this crisis, with its air quality frequently plummeting to hazardous levels, especially during the winter months, making it a focal point in the battle against air pollution in the region. On the morning of October 19, 2024, the Air Quality Index (AQI) reached concerning levels in various parts of the Capital City, particularly in Anand Vihar and Akshardham, where it climbed to 334, placing it in the "very poor" category. The worsening air quality in Delhi can be attributed to several key factors. First, as easterly winds set in, dust pollution across the National Capital Region (NCR) has become a primary cause of the declining AQI. The Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), a series of measures aimed at addressing Delhi's air pollution, was implemented on October 15 as the situation began to worsen.

These measures include frequent cleaning of roads and restrictions on diesel generators. However, despite these efforts, the problem continues to escalate. One of the most significant contributors to Delhi's declining air quality is stubble burning in neighbouring states, primarily Punjab and Haryana. The Early Warning System (EWS) for Delhi predicts that the contribution of stubble burning to the city's pollution levels is expected to increase significantly over a few weeks. The seasonal practice of burning crop residue adds large amounts of particulate matter (PM2.5) to the air, exacerbating the already poor conditions in the city. As air quality continues to worsen, there are reports of residents



complaining of increasing health issues. Many are experiencing respiratory problems, including difficulty breathing, coughing, and throat irritation. According to media reports, the smog and particulate matter have caused inflammation of the airways and irritation in the eyes. These symptoms are consistent with high levels of pollution, which contribute to various respiratory illnesses to the extent that doctors have been receiving patients with skin issues too. Moreover, ENT specialists have noted a surge in cases involving nasal irritation, throat inflammation, and persistent dry coughs.

These symptoms are affecting children and adults too with complaints of inflammation, and gastrointestinal problems, such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) and dyspepsia, which have also been linked to pollution. In this regard, 'climate change' is another factor worsening this situation in Delhi. With changing weather patterns, temperature inversions at regular intervals, and extreme weather conditions even during summer and winter, in this season, pollutants become trapped near the ground, creating a layer of smog. Delhi's minimum temperature of 19.2 degrees Celsius, slightly above the sea-



THE WORSENING AIR QUALITY IN DELHI CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO SEVERAL KEY FACTORS. FIRST, AS EASTERLY WINDS SET IN, DUST POLLUTION ACROSS THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION HAS BECOME A PRIMARY CAUSE OF THE DECLINING AQI

sonal average, contributes to these conditions. Moreover, climate change also aggravates the effects of vehicular emissions by reducing the frequency of rainfall, which would otherwise help to clear particulate matter from the air. The government has taken several measures to curb the rising pollution, including implementing the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) restrictions - which include different stages I-IV - besides imposing fines for open burning. Additionally, authorities have been tasked with identifying local sources contributing to the worsening air quality. To tackle the immediate crises that have engulfed the Capital City, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has implemented Stage 1 of the Graded Response Action Plan across Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Rajasthan, in response to air quality data and weather forecasts provided by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), with a series of stringent measures, aimed at mitigating air pollution. Key restrictions include enhanced dust control protocols at construction sites, improved waste management practices, and rigorous checks

on polluting vehicles and industrial emissions, particularly from power plants and brick kilns. Additionally, open waste burning and the use of diesel generators are prohibited, along with a ban on coal and firewood in eateries. Construction and demolition activities exceeding 500 square meters face severe limitations, and diesel/petrol vehicles older than 10-15 years, as well as the use of firecrackers, are banned until January 1, 2025. Not only this, traffic management is also prioritised, with increased deployment of police in congested areas to reduce vehicular idling, while visibly polluting vehicles face strict penalties and possible impoundment. These measures form part of a broader strategy to curtail air pollution and improve public health. The situation is also a stark reminder of the need for collective action to address the underlying causes of air pollution, including vehicular emissions, waste burning, and industrial activities, in addition to climate mitigation efforts. What authorities must also look at is the underutilisation of the 'smog tower', which was introduced as a major intervention. (The writer is programme executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

Leveraging folklores to educate the new generation

The ancient art of storytelling remains a vital medium for teaching values and fostering cultural understanding

Folklores, the traditional stories, myths, and legends passed down through generations, have long been a source of fascination, serving as much more than mere entertainment. Folklores often centre on ordinary people who face adversity yet find ways to overcome it, reflecting everyday life's common struggles and aspirations. This relatability comforts those who feel isolated in their struggles, showing that they are not alone and that their challenges are shared across time and place. One of folklore's most significant aspects is its inherent simplicity, which makes it a powerful tool for education across generations. Folklores are often crafted to be relatable, encapsulating moral lessons or practical wisdom in a format accessible to children and adults alike. This accessibility makes folklore an effective educational medium, especially in regions where formal education might be limited. Through memorable characters, narratives, and



moral lessons or practical wisdom in a format accessible to children and adults alike. This accessibility makes folklore an effective educational medium, especially in regions where formal education might be limited. Through memorable characters, narratives, and

Panchatantra and Jataka Tales have transcended regions, becoming staples of Indian storytelling that educate on universal values while highlighting India's unique cultural tapestry. Indian folklores frequently address social issues, challenging established norms and encouraging reflection on societal practices. For instance, the folktales of Tenali Rama, the witty advisor in the Vijayanagara Empire, often question the elite's excesses and promote justice for the common man. Similarly, Birbal, a wise minister in the Mughal court, features in numerous tales that promote intellectual equality. These stories teach Indians to value wit, intelligence, and fairness, subtly questioning the authority of those in power. By embedding reformist ideas within entertaining narratives, Indian folklores provide a soft yet powerful critique of societal hierarchies, encouraging progressive thinking. Many Indian folklore emphasize the bond between humans and

nature, imparting lessons on environmental stewardship that resonate with India's agrarian roots. Stories about sacred rivers, protective spirits, or revered animals highlight the belief that natural entities are to be respected and cared for. These tales often highlight shared human experiences, bridging cultural gaps and fostering a sense of collective identity. Folklore serves as a reservoir of collective wisdom, transcending time and geography to educate and reform society. Its remarkable ability to touch hearts, prompt reflection, and inspire action makes it indispensable in both formal and informal education. In an era dominated by digital technology, folklore may seem antiquated, yet its relevance has only deepened. Modern storytellers, educators, and social reformers can adapt folklore for contemporary audiences, harnessing its emotive power to foster empathy and awareness. (The writer, is the Dean, academic affairs, at Garden City University, views are personal)



BIJU DHARAMAPALAN

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BRICS PRIORITISES DEVELOPMENT

Madam — The power of diplomacy is writ large in the recently concluded bilateral meeting between India and China on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in Russia. It also broke some ice ever since the deadly clash in 2020. However, notwithstanding a new deal settled on the disengagement of troops, both remain deeply suspicious of each other. That BRICS has a greater relevance in a multipolar and multidimensional context at a time when the world faces multiple challenges like the ongoing wars, economic uncertainty, climate change, terrorism, east-west and north-south divide as the forum reflects the Global South's deeper concerns, with many more countries queuing up to join or partner with the grouping. The first ever attendance of new member countries like the UAE, Egypt, Ethiopia and Iran opposing the unilateral sanctions by the west on other nations underscores their challenges confronting them and encourages them to unite for a fairer international order. Another case in point is the creation of the New Development Bank, which has emerged as a significant platform for the needs of such countries. Greater use of local currency finds mention in the Kazan declaration rather than supporting a yuan anchored BRICS against the U.S. dollar. India favours greater use of local currencies for cross border payment system. Increasing use of UPI, which has been adopted by many countries including the UAE acts as a bulwark against the west. The development of the global south remains the top priority of the BRICS Summit in contrast to portraying the grouping as only a gang up against the US-led west. Other initiatives include start-up forums, workforce skilling initiatives, and digital public infrastructure providing low-cost solutions for developing countries. Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

IMPROVE RURAL HEALTHCARE

Madam — There should be the government's special focus on public health, particularly in tribal areas in this season. The

Glaciers are melting fast



The rapid melting of all 900 glaciers in Uttarakhand, along with 9,575 others across the Himalayas, has reached a critical level due to global warming. Alarming factors like deforestation, black carbon deposits, and greenhouse gas emissions are accelerating this decline, leading to water scarcity, impacting hydropower generation,

and threatening the extinction of many aquatic species. To protect our nation and environment from these apocalyptic consequences, immediate and decisive action is essential. According to the Global Forest Watch report, "From 2001-2023, Uttarakhand lost 20.7 thousand hectares of tree cover, representing 0.89% of the global total." This tree loss is unacceptable, and measures like afforestation, preserving green areas around glaciers, and strengthening forest protection are crucial. Furthermore, it is imperative to establish research and development projects to study and preserve glaciers and to limit black carbon emissions. Acting now is essential to safeguarding our natural resources and the future of our environment. Jakir Hussain | Kanpur

KIWIS WINS PUNE TEST

Madam — Kudos to the Kiwis for their marvellous victory at the Pune Test and a series win since 1955 on Indian soil for the first time. Bowlers winning matches has been proven again when Kiwis Mitchell Santner put India off the backfoot in the Pune test. Chasing a target of 359 to win the test, the only batter who played with intent was Jaiswal, and in the end, there was some resistance from Ravindra Jadeja, but it was not good enough. The Indian top order can't rest on the old laurels of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, and both of them failed to deliver. Full credit goes to Washington Sundar and Ashwin for fighting despite the fact that this was the most humiliating defeat for India while beaten in our own backyard very convincingly by the Kiwis. It's high time for the head coach Gautam Gambhir to realise that this team calls for a revamp and to bring in those who are hungry for runs and wickets. AP Thiruvadi | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

DVG Sankara Rao | Vizianagaram



FIRST COLUMN

UNLOCKING THE DIVINE ENERGIE

According to yogic traditions, each day is linked to a specific shakti and Diwali happens to be a special day



ASHWININI GURUJI

The universe operates under the influence of various *shaktis* (divine energies). As one advances in yogic practice (*sadhana*), these energies can be experienced directly. Each of the 365 days is associated with a specific *shakti*, which is why maintaining discipline and consistent daily practice in yoga is crucial. Missing even a single day can disrupt the connection with that day's *shakti*, potentially setting back the entire year's *sadhana*. In the cosmos, every element is interconnected, so when one aspect is neglected, it affects everything—our body, the Earth, and even other planets and stars. Each *shakti* is associated with a day, but accessing these energies does not require rituals. In yogic and tantric traditions, *sadhana* alone is the key to connecting with *shakti*. Understanding the form (*swarup*) of each *shakti* is essential. While every form has a specific name, names are revealed only after the body is prepared through particular *sadhanas*. At a basic level, when you meditate (*dhyan*) with your guru, you may see different forms manifesting in them, such as the sun or the moon. Have you ever wondered what these forms signify?

Many practitioners have reported seeing the sun during meditation. What makes the sun so significant? If you observe the sun at sunrise or sunset while focusing on the Manipura chakra (navel centre) and chanting the mantra "Ram," you will notice a glow emerging in your body. Within a month, you may begin to look noticeably different. However, a word of caution—any yogic practice should be undertaken under the guidance of a *guru* who can adapt it to your capacity. Similarly, the moon is a fascinating energy source. It merely reflects the sun's light, yet it can influence tides and even the Earth's surface during a full moon. Have



you ever considered what makes the moon special? On full moon nights, animals may behave aggressively, and incidents of accidents and conflicts tend to rise. These are just basic observations that hint at something deeper about these celestial forms. Understanding their true nature requires direct experience, which is attainable through the proper practice of *Sanatan Kriya*. The moon may appear calm and peaceful, but it is actually more volatile than the sun. When you observe the moon under a *guru's* guidance, you can perceive the mantras embedded within its form. Some *shaktis* are not directly visible and can only be accessed through other *shaktis*. These experiences form the foundation of yoga. Without direct experience, yoga remains incomplete. Nature, with all its wonders—from flowers of various colors to the sky above—contains the hidden forms of *shaktis*. If you observe these elements without blinking, under the guidance of a *guru*, you may find that your physical and mental imbalances begin to dissipate. However, discipline (*niyam*) is essential. The practice must be continuous, and disruptions will occur if one lacks the capacity for the *shakti* or does not have a *guru* to guide them. Everything around us contains the essence of *shakti*, and these energies are easily accessible. When one becomes steady and focused on a particular *shakti*, it starts to follow them, empowering their life. The nine days leading up to Diwali hold special significance because of the congregation of specific *shaktis* during this period. Our ancestors advised observing celibacy (*brahmacharya*) during these days to strengthen the body and prepare it to receive these energies. During this time, keep your mind centred within yourself, as the *sadhana* performed during these nine days is equivalent to months of practice. As Diwali approaches, especially on *Amavasya* (the new moon night), when we light *diyas*, it is an opportune time for *shakti sadhana*. Even a layperson who is not an experienced practitioner can perceive the *swarup* of *shakti* by sitting with closed eyes in meditation. With a pure heart, one can experience these divine energies without any elaborate rituals. Let this Diwali be a time to connect with the powerful *shaktis*, embracing their presence to enrich your spiritual journey.

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

Rising import reliance amid regulatory challenge



UTTAM GUPTA

Despite Government efforts to boost domestic production, policy constraints and pricing caps continue to stifle the energy sector's growth



According to the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MPNG), during the first six months of the current financial year (FY) September 2024, India's consumption of natural gas (NG) increased by almost 12 per cent to 36.850 billion metric standard cubic meters (bmscm) over the corresponding period last FY. However, the import of NG (it is imported in a liquefied form commonly known as LNG) increased by 23 per cent to 18.975 bmscm during this period. Taken as a proportion of consumption, imports were 51.5 per cent during April-September 2024 up from 46.8 per cent during April-September 2023.

The country's production of NG registered a marginal increase of around 2 per cent during April-September 2024. The State-owned major Oil and Natural Gas Corporation or ONGC (it contributes about 84 per cent of total domestic output) produced 9.407 bmscm of NG during this period, which was 4 per cent less than during the same period of last FY. However, Oil India Limited (it has 8 per cent share) produced 4 per cent more NG at 1.577 bmscm during this period. The share of production in consumption was 48.5 per cent. Delivering the 75th Independence Day address on 15th August 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi vowed to achieve self-reliance in energy production by boosting the gas-based economy. He had then wished the share of NG in the total energy mix to go up from subsisting around 6 per cent to 15 per cent. Pertinently, even to comply with the 6 per cent share, India had to import more than 50 per cent of its NG requirement.

The position hasn't changed even today. Increasing the share of NG in the total energy mix to 15 per cent would require its consumption to increase from its current annual of 73,689 bmscm to 184,222 mmscm (73.689x2.5). The current consumption includes domestic production of 35,739 bmscm. If domestic production stagnates at the current level (in sync with the trend of the last few years) then, to achieve the 15 per cent target, the import of LNG will have to be 148,483 bmscm (184,222-35,739) which means India's import dependence will have to increase to over 80 per cent. The above calculation assumes no



THERE IS AN URGENT NEED FOR A 'PREDICTABLE' AND 'ATTRACTIVE' POLICY ENVIRONMENT TO GIVE A FILLIP TO THE EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION OF NG

increase in total energy consumption. But, it is increasing at a rapid pace. The country's power demand alone is projected to grow at a compound annual rate of 7 per cent during the next five years (as per an estimate by the Central Electricity Authority or CEA).

In that scenario, compliance with the 15 per cent target for NG would mean still higher reliance on imports. What is coming in the way of increasing production? Natural resource endowment is not a problem. India has 26 sedimentary basins (SBs) covering an area of 3.4 million sq km that could be searched for hydrocarbon resources. However, only six of the SBs are under commercial exploitation; these too are sub-optimally utilised. Hydrocarbon exploration is a highly capital-intensive and technology-intensive business involving a long gestation period. It is risky, especially when drilling in deep/ultra-deep and high-pressure/high-temperature (D/UD/HP/HT) fields in offshore areas such as the Krishna-Godavari (KG) basin.

However, these areas offer maximum promise in terms of reserves. Multinational companies (MNCs) such as ExxonMobil, Chevron, Total etc. which have the technology and resources can be enthused to take long-term bets in the Indian hydrocarbon sector provided the government offers them an opportunity to earn an attractive return on their investment in a 'sustained' basis.

This, in turn, requires that their efforts in the discovery and development of NG fields don't face regulatory hurdles and that they can sell the gas 'freely' at a 'remunerative' price. Modi - The government has made a lot of efforts to remove regulatory hurdles. Until recently, of 1.73 million sq km SB area lying offshore, 0.69 million sq km was a 'No go' area, courtesy of security reasons.

The Centre has released almost all of this for exploration and produc-

tion (E&P) activity. Now, it is granting lease rights over the entire economic life of the allotted fields (this could extend up to 30 years, even beyond depending on the available reserves) instead of the extant system of short tenure with extensions.

It has also made amendments to the Forest (Conservation) Act to enable prompt access to forest areas for exploration of hydrocarbon resources. Under the Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP), also known as the Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP) launched in 2017, E&P firms are allowed to pick up a block of their choice unlike the earlier New Exploration and Licensing Policy (NELP) (launched in 1999) wherein they had to accept what the government offered. Besides, under OALP, an operator gets a composite license to search for hydrocarbon in whatever form viz NG, 'shale gas', CBM (coal bed methane) etc. For long, E&P efforts were hamstrung by cumbersome procedures, multiple approvals and bureaucratic red tape. Approvals were needed at every stage.

As many as 37 procedures were required to be followed by a firm-awarded block under NELP. Team Modi has substantially liberalised and de-bureaucratized approvals by providing for self-certification of documents and pre-approved clearance of blocks. While the above helps, without freedom of marketing and the ability to secure a good price, E&P firms won't get enthused. Of the domestic gas, on around two-thirds of supplies (mostly from so-called 'legacy fields' given on nomination to ONGC and OIL and from fields given under NELP), the Centre has full control over 'to whom' the supplies will be made and at 'what price'. From April 1, 2023, based on the recommendations of the Kirit Parikh committee, this price expressed on a per million British thermal units (Btu) basis is arrived at by taking 10 per cent

of the monthly average of the Indian crude basket in the preceding month and notified every month. The price thus calculated is subject to a ceiling of US\$ 6.50 per mBtu which makes the formula redundant.

Now, the bureaucrats have come up with a 20 per cent premium on supplies by ONGC and OIL only from the so-called 'new wells' or 'well interventions'.

If their intent is to give a good price why put a cap in the first place? Moreover, which fields get the benefit of 'new wells' or 'interventions', will also be solely at their discretion. Even the pricing of the remaining one-third of domestic NG supplied from the so-called deep/ultra-deep and high-pressure/high-temperature fields (KG-D6 operated by Reliance Industries and neighbouring KG-DWN-98/2 operated by ONGC in Krishna-Godavari basin off the Andhra Pradesh coast fall in this category) isn't free from 'control' 'discretion' and 'arbitrariness'. Technically though, the firms can go for competitive bidding to determine the price for such supplies (referred to as a 'premium' price), this too is subject to a ceiling linked to the prices of alternate fuels including fuel oil, naphtha, and LNG.

There is an urgent need for a 'predictable' and 'attractive' policy environment to give a fillip to the exploration and production of NG. The Kirit Parikh committee was conscious of this when it recommended de-regulating difficult gas fields' prices by January 1, 2026, and the price on supplies from legacy fields by January 1, 2027. The government should implement these recommendations. Meanwhile, it should prepare the ground for giving subsidies directly to major users such as fertilizers, power, CNG, PNG etc instead of creating distortions in the supply chain by controlling the price of basic inputs such as NG.

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

Ayurveda Day 2024: Celebrating innovations for global health and wellness

This year's celebration aims to highlight the transformative potential of Ayurveda in addressing modern health challenges

Over the last decade, the Ayush sector has undergone a significant transformation, largely due to the initiatives led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This revolution in traditional Indian medicine has created new opportunities for various stakeholders, including industry professionals, traders, and healthcare practitioners. Since its establishment in 2014, the Ministry of Ayush has successfully integrated Ayush into mainstream healthcare, driving innovation, research, and gaining global recognition. The ministry's strategic focus encompasses public health, technology, education, globalisation, and quality control, ensuring that Ayush products and services are safe and of high quality.



RAJESH KOTECHEA

This comprehensive approach aligns with the goals of universal health coverage and sustainability, contributing to the sector's growth, increased public awareness, and a rising demand for Ayush healthcare systems worldwide. Ayurveda Day is celebrated on the occasion of Dhanteras to honor Lord Dhanvantari, the deity revered as the physician

of the gods and the God of Ayurveda. This year, Ayurveda Day will be observed on October 29, 2024, with a renewed focus on the theme "Ayurveda Innovations for Global Health." Since the Ministry of Ayush initiated Ayurveda Day in 2016, the event has expanded into a global celebration. The emphasis this year is on showcasing Ayurveda's potential to improve global health through innovative practices and natural treatment methods. Ayurveda's core strength lies in its holistic approach to health, which emphasizes prevention, health promotion, and natural healing. With the growing global demand for integrative healthcare solutions, Ayurveda is gaining recognition as a viable and sustainable alterna-

tive. Recent advancements, supported by scientific research, have increased the global reach and acceptance of Ayurvedic practices. One of the most notable contributions of Ayurveda to modern healthcare is the innovative use of herbal medicine. It is reported that over 95% of Ayurvedic interventions are based on herbal treatments, utilizing the healing properties of nature. As scientific research continues to validate the effectiveness of Ayurvedic herbs and therapies, the demand for these natural solutions is rapidly increasing worldwide. The rise of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, cardiovascular disorders, and cancer has highlighted the need for natural, preventive healthcare solutions.



Ayurveda, with its focus on holistic well-being, offers a unique approach to managing these conditions. Additionally, the growing problem of antimicrobial resistance requires alternative treatment methods, and Ayurvedic remedies, rooted in herbal medicine, present sustainable options. As climate change exacerbates health risks,

Ayurveda's emphasis on lifestyle management, mental health, and care for the elderly provides resilient solutions for vulnerable populations. Moreover, as societies face challenges like nutritional disorders and mental health crises, Ayurveda's approach to balancing the body and mind becomes increasingly relevant. Ayurveda is not a static system; it evolves continually through ongoing research and innovation. Recent advancements in fields such as genome sequencing and nanotechnology have revealed parallels with traditional Ayurvedic concepts like Prakriti (body constitution) and Bhasma (herbal-mineral formulations). These modern innovations help bridge the gap between traditional practices and contemporary

healthcare, making Ayurvedic treatments more accessible and scientifically validated. Ayurveda as a proactive health strategy that can boost immunity, mental clarity, and overall well-being. The alignment of Ayurvedic innovations with the SDGs and Universal Health Coverage (UHC) underscores its potential to provide accessible, affordable, and inclusive healthcare. The 2024 Ayurveda Day will mark several important milestones that reflect the growth and integration of Ayurveda into mainstream healthcare. The Ministry of Ayush is accelerating this progress through the construction of Phase II of the All India Institute of Ayurveda in New Delhi and the establishment of six new Centers of Excellence to promote innova-

tion and research in traditional medicine. Plans to develop the Central Research Institute of Yoga and Naturopathy (CRIYN) in Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Andhra Pradesh aim to enhance the promotion of holistic health practices. The celebrations for Ayurveda Day 2024 will include a variety of engaging activities, such as creative exhibitions, Ayurveda quizzes, medical camps, and Prakriti Parikshan (body constitution analysis). Initiatives like "Ayurveda in My Kitchen" and "Ayurveda in My Vatika" will emphasise the practical application of Ayurvedic principles in daily life.

(The writer is Secretary Ministry of Ayush; views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

PUSH TOWARDS GREEN ENERGY TRANSITION

Govt plans to issue ALMM for PV cells

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is planning to introduce an Approved List of Models and Manufacturers (ALMM) for solar cells on the lines of module manufacturing to boost India's transition towards green energy.

The government is aiming to make the second list (List II) under the ALMM for solar PV cells effective April 1, 2026.

The government introduced the ALMM order (List I) in 2019 for solar modules to boost the manufacturing and usage of made-in-India solar panels. It was made mandatory to source PV modules from models and manufacturers included in the ALMM List I.

According to an office memorandum of the Ministry of



New and Renewable Energy, the ALMM order dated January 2, 2019, specified models and manufacturers of solar PV modules, whereas List-II will identify and include models and manufacturers of solar PV cells.

However, to date, List II of solar PV cells has not been

issued because the installed capacity of solar PV cells in the country was lower than the demand, the government document said.

"With installed capacity of solar PV cells in the country expected to increase substantially in the next two years, it

has been proposed to issue List-II of solar PV cells under ALMM, which shall be effective from April 1, 2026," according to the draft amendment to ALMM order for implementation of ALMM for Solar PV cells.

The draft paper also proposed that the solar PV modules -- which are presently enlisted in ALMM List-I (for solar PV modules) with an expiry date beyond March 31, 2026 -- will also have to use solar PV cells included in ALMM List-II (for solar PV cells) from April 1, 2026, onwards.

If the modules don't have the cells included in List-II, they will be liable to be delisted from ALMM List-I, as per the draft.



'Network densification to drive next phase of growth'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Swedish telecom gear maker Ericsson expects its next phase of growth in India will be driven by network densification due to the rising data consumption appetite of end users in the country, a senior company official has said.

Ericsson's managing director for India and head of networks for market area South East Asia, Oceania and India, Nitin Bansal told PTI that there is significant potential for growth in fixed wireless

access in India, and it will soon surpass the number of deployments in the US.

"The next phase of growth is focused on meeting increasing traffic requirements, primarily through network densification to enhance network utilisation. Network densification will occur due to increased network utilisation," he said.

Ericsson estimates that the data traffic in India will grow from 29 GB per smartphone user per month to 68 GB per smartphone user per month by 2029.



Air Express plans to start flights to Bangkok, Phuket

Air India Express plans to start flights to Bangkok and Phuket in the coming months as the Tata Group-owned airline expands its network. Currently, the carrier flies to 14 international cities, mostly in the Middle East, and 35 domestic destinations. It has a fleet of 90 aircraft and operates more than 400 flights daily. A senior official told PTI that the airline will be expanding its operations and plans to start services to Bangkok and Phuket in Thailand. The airline is expanding its network and this week announced that it will start flights to Jammu and Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair) from December 1. It has services to 14 overseas destinations -- Abu Dhabi, Doha, Dubai, Kuwait, Ras al-Khaimah, Riyadh, Al Ain, Bahrain, Dammam, Jeddah, Muscat, Salalah, Sharjah and Singapore. Another official in the know said the carrier is focused on expanding its presence in the leisure travel segment and continuing to strengthen routes mainly catering to the expat community.



'Overall job postings surged by 20 %'

Professional networking platform apna.co has reported a 20 per cent year-on-year increase in job postings to 2.16 lakh this festive season across logistics & operations, e-commerce, and hospitality. This year's festive season was particularly important for businesses looking to rebound after a slowdown in consumer spending during the summer and election periods. Companies were focused on driving sales beyond last year's numbers, according to apna.co. Additionally, the rapid expansion of the quick commerce industry contributed to this hiring momentum. Among the sectors, logistics and operations experienced the highest growth with a 70 per cent increase in job postings. Retail and e-commerce followed with a 30 per cent rise, while the restaurant and hospitality sector grew by 25 per cent. To meet the rising demand, logistics and mobility leaders like Rapido, Delhivery, Ekart, and Shiprocket have posted over 30,000 openings for roles like warehouse managers, logistics associates, inventory managers, and delivery drivers. "At Apna, we typically start preparing for the festive season two months in advance.

Mahindra Lifespace posts Rs 14 cr loss on lower income

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Realty firm Mahindra Lifespace Developers Limited has posted a consolidated net loss of Rs 14.01 crore for the second quarter of this fiscal on lower income.

The company had posted a net loss of Rs 18.93 crore in the year-ago period.

Its total income declined to Rs 16.96 crore during the July-September quarter from

Rs 26.70 crore in the year-ago period, according to a regulatory filing on Friday.

During the April-September period of this fiscal, Mahindra Lifespace posted a net loss of Rs 1.27 crore against a net loss of Rs 23.20 crore in the year-ago period.

The total income grew to Rs 222.66 crore in the first six months of this fiscal from Rs 136.76 crore in the same period of the preceding year.

Hindustan Zinc to double production capacity: CEO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vedanta Group firm Hindustan Zinc plans to pump in up to US\$ 2 billion (around Rs 17,000 crore) to double its production capacity to 2 million tonnes in the next few years, its CEO Arun Misra said. The company which had already engaged consultants to ramp up its capacity is looking for mining partners for the same, Misra said.

"We have a plan of doubling



the production to 2 million tonnes... So, I am sure by the

end of this quarter, we should be able to make project announcements, which projects, how much and where it is happening," he explained.

The company is targeting a production capacity of 1.2 million tonnes (MT) in 2025, followed by 1.35 MT in 2026 and 1.8 MT in 2027, Misra said.

"And then finally, sometime, we should be able to get 2 million tonnes," he explained.

When asked about the investment the company plans

to make to increase production capacity, he said, "Because most of the mining infrastructure is in place, so, it is anywhere between 2 billion dollars or 1.95 or 2 billion dollars, roughly about, say, Rs 14,000 crore to Rs 17,000 crore is the kind of money that will be required."

On the company's restructuring plans, he said that the discussions are on and the stakeholders are talking regularly.

Mcap of nine of top-10 firms drops Rs 2 lakh cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Nine of the top-10 most valued firms together lost a whopping Rs 2,09,952.26 crore from market valuation last week, in line with weak trends in equities, with Hindustan Unilever and Reliance Industries Limited taking the biggest hit.

Last week, the BSE benchmark tanked 1,822.46 points or 2.24 per cent.

"The dismal Q2 earnings so far have aggravated the

investors' woes while persistent FII selling continued to create havoc in the market," said



Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd.

From the top-10 pack, HDFC Bank emerged as the only winner.

The market valuation of Hindustan Unilever eroded by Rs 44,195.81 crore to Rs 5,93,870.94 crore.

Reliance Industries' valuation tumbled Rs 41,994.54 crore to Rs 17,96,726.60 crore.

State Bank of India's market valuation plummeted by Rs 35,117.72 crore to Rs 6,96,655.84 crore, and that of Bharti Airtel tanked by Rs 24,108.72 crore to Rs 9,47,598.89 crore.

FII activities, trends key drivers for market movement

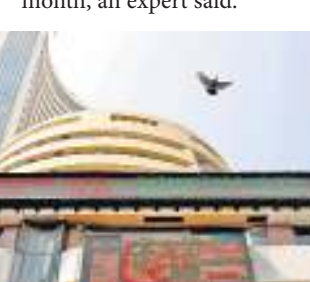
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Equity investors will track the trading activity of foreign investors, global trends and ongoing earnings results for further cues, and benchmark indices may continue to witness consolidation in a holiday-shortened week amid the monthly derivatives expiry, analysts said.

Markets fell sharply last week amid massive foreign capital outflows and dismal Q2 earnings so far.

Weakness in the markets might continue in the near

term amid cautiousness among investors ahead of the US presidential election early next month, an expert said.



Equity markets will remain closed on Friday for Diwali, but a special trading window

will be open for one hour in the evening.

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.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said, "We expect the consolidation to continue in the short term. A reversal in trend will depend on a slowdown in FIIs' selling intensity and the outcome of the US presidential election".



'SBI named Best Bank in India for 2024'

State Bank of India (SBI) was recognised as the Best Bank in India for 2024 by Global Finance Magazine of the US at its 31st Annual Best Bank Awards event held during the sidelines of Annual Meetings of the IMF and the World Bank in Washington. SBI Chairman CS Setty received the award in recognition of the bank's unwavering commitment to providing exceptional services and promoting financial inclusion nationwide by winning the trust of its customers, the bank said in a statement. For decades, Global Finance's Best Bank Awards have set the trusted standard for evaluating the world's financial institutions, making them invaluable to corporate decision-makers, especially as the global economy faces significant challenges.

Turkiye's safeguard measures impact exports: India Seeks compensation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has sought compensation from Türkiye as Ankara's decision to extend safeguard measures on polyester staple fibres has impacted the product's exports, an official said.

India flagged concerns and impact from these measures during a recent bilateral consultations with Türkiye under the WTO's safeguard agreement.

On October 14, India sought consultations with Türkiye under the agreement following Ankara's decision to extend safeguard measures on polyester staple fibres.

"We have sought compensation as we have a loss of trade.

India has the option to propose retaliatory customs duties equivalent to the value of export loss if the issue will not be resolved through consultations," the official said.

India has exported these fibres worth US\$ 22.18 million during 2023-24. It was US\$ 23.55 million in 2022-23.

In September, Türkiye decided to extend safeguard measures against imports of polyester staple fibres. "As a member having a substantial trade interest in the export of products concerned, India had requested for consultations with Türkiye on the extension of the measures," the official added.

FSSAI is now more pro-active, industry-centred: Nestle

PNS ■ SAMALKHA (HARYANA)

There has been a dramatic change in the tone and tenor of FSSAI, and the Indian food regulator has now become more pro-active and industry-centred with fast responses in the last decade, said Nestle India Chairman and Managing Director Suresh Narayanan.

Moreover, with the setting of more NABL-accredited laboratories by different leaders of FSSAI, the credibility of the testing process has also increased, said Narayanan, who led Nestle India after the Maggi crisis, which unfolded almost a decade back.

In June 2015, FSSAI banned

Maggi noodles for allegedly containing lead beyond permissible limits, forcing the company to withdraw the product from the market.

Industry observers opine



that only after the Maggi crisis did the FSSAI come into the limelight across the country though it was established almost seven years ago, in September 2008, to lay down

science-based standards for food articles and rules and regulations.

Nestle India relaunched Maggi in November 2015 after the ban was lifted and again got its pole position in the fast-growing instant noodles segment, where it still dominates with over 60 per cent market share.

Nestle has sold over six billion servings of Maggi, making India the largest market for Maggi worldwide, the company disclosed in its latest annual report earlier this year.

When asked about the evolution of FSSAI as a regulator in the last decade after the Maggi crisis, Narayanan said it "has come a very long way".

FPIs withdraw Rs 85,790 cr on attractive Chinese market valuations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign investors have continued selling in the Indian market, pulling out a massive Rs 85,790 crore (around USD 10.2 billion) from equities this month due to Chinese stimulus measures, attractive stock valuations, and the elevated pricing of domestic equities.

October is turning into the worst-ever month in terms of foreign fund outflows. In March 2020, FPIs withdrew Rs 61,973 crore from equities.

The latest outflow came after a nine-month high investment of Rs 57,724 crore in September 2024.

SURETY BONDS BUSINESS

Regulatory changes to provide necessary push: Experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Regulatory changes like amendment in the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code and standardization of bond wordings would give a fillip to newly introduced product underwritten by general insurance companies, called surety bonds, experts said.

This product launched in 2022 is going to play a crucial role in supporting India's infrastructure development and heavily reduce reliance on bank guarantees for project finance. As a result, banks can focus on other productive sectors for lending.

Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, which is the pioneer of the product said that it has been able to add more than 50



This product launched in 2022 is going to play a crucial role in supporting India's infrastructure development and heavily reduce reliance on bank guarantees for project finance

beneficiaries who have started accepting surety bonds.

According to Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Chief Technical Officer TA Ramalingam, possible amendments in the legal framework are crucial in providing insurance companies with equal

legal recourse as banks under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

This parity would provide a level playing field, encourage fair competition and foster market growth for surety bonds, he said. According to a government official, the matter is before the concerned ministry and amendments in IBC may be tabled in Parliament in the due course of time.

"The expectation that surety bonds should be cheaper than bank guarantees is unsustainable for insurers. Issues related to pricing, reinsurance options, and lack of clarity on indemnity documents further hinder progress. The Indian Contract Act and Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code do not recognize the

rights of insurers at par with financial creditors," Vara Technology founder Sunil Kanoria said.

These challenges, if addressed, would give a necessary push to surety bonds and help in unlocking economic development and infrastructure expansion, he added.

Ramalingam further said, "While the surety bond market faces significant challenges stemming from regulatory disparities, data limitations, reinsurance constraints, and lack of standardization, strategic initiatives focused on legal reform, data transparency, industry collaboration, and standardization hold the key to overcoming these obstacles."

Ajay Devgn's Naam finally gets release date

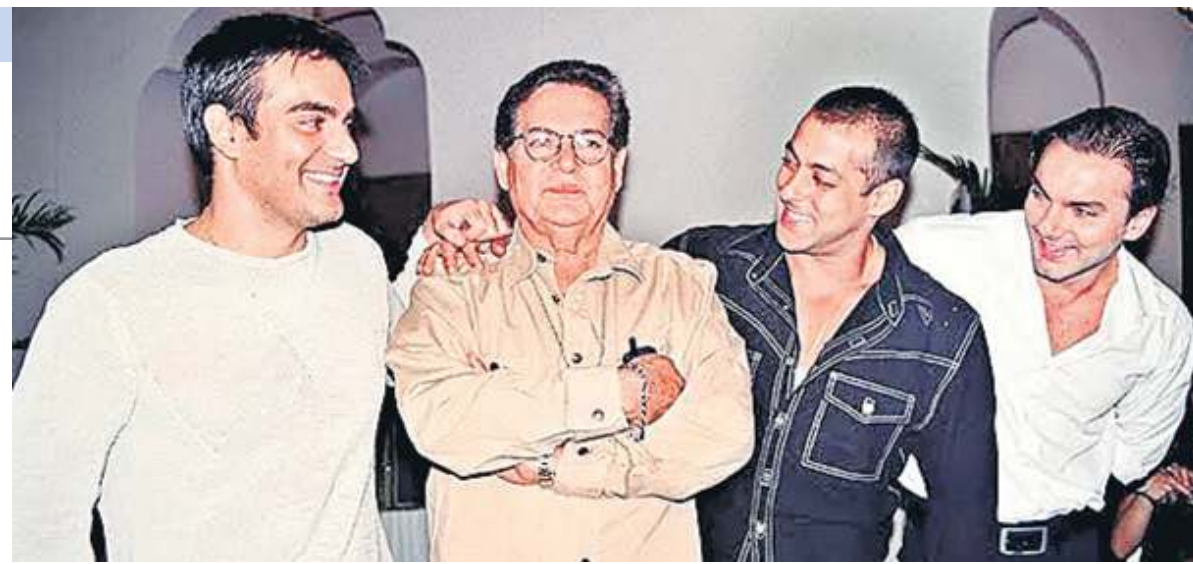


high on the anticipation surrounding *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3*, *Naam* arrives as an unexpected thrill, promising an epic blend of action, drama and intense performances.

Produced by Anil Roongta under the banner of Roongta Entertainment, in collaboration with Snigdha Movies Pvt. Ltd., *Naam* is set to hit cinemas nationwide on November 22, 2024, distributed by Pen Marudhar. The makers unveiled a bold first-look poster that has left audiences abuzz, offering just enough to spark intrigue without revealing too much of the plot.

Bollywood superstar Ajay Devgn and director Anees Bazmee are set to redefine action cinema with their latest venture, *Naam*. After a decade of anticipation, Ajay Devgn's long-delayed film *Naam* is finally set to hit theaters on November 22, 2024. The excitement surrounding the film has electrified fans who have been eagerly awaiting this collaboration with director Anees Bazmee. They have eagerly awaited this collaboration. With Devgn gearing up for the release of *Singham Again* and Bazmee riding

Ajay Devgn, often dubbed 'Mass Maharaja' for his commanding presence and action prowess, teams up with Bazmee to push the boundaries of the action genre. Adding to the excitement, the film's soundtrack is crafted by renowned music composers Himesh Reshammiya and Sajid-Wajid, whose energetic compositions are set to heighten the film's dramatic intensity. With *Naam*, the team behind the project aims to deliver a one-of-a-kind action epic that will resonate with audiences far and wide, marking a new high for Indian cinema.



Bishnoi community burns effigies of Salman and Salim Khan over Blackbuck case defence

In a powerful display of protest, members of the Bishnoi community gathered in Jaipur on to burn effigies of Bollywood megastar Salman Khan and his father, renowned screenwriter Salim Khan. The uproar erupted after Salim Khan publicly defended his son's alleged involvement in the infamous 1998 Blackbuck poaching case, insisting that Salman "could never hurt an animal." For the Bishnoi community, who hold blackbucks as sacred, Salim Khan's comments struck a deep nerve, igniting frustration and outrage that spilled into the streets.

Community leaders accused Salim Khan of attempting to "mislead" the public with his statements, which they claim disregard the facts of the case and undermine the cultural values that the Bishnois have upheld for centuries. "We are Bishnois; we do not defame anyone lightly. But Salim Khan's statements are hurtful and dishonor the sacredness of the blackbuck," said one leader during the

protest. He, along with others, reiterated the Bishnoi stance that they will persist in demanding accountability from the Khans, who they say should apologise for what they consider a serious offense against their revered animal.

The Bishnoi community has long upheld that justice remains incomplete until Salman acknowledges the harm done in 1998. Through the court acquitted Salman, the Bishnois have neither forgotten nor forgiven the incident, which continues to provoke strong emotions within their community. In an official statement, the leaders said they would not cease their protests until justice is served and urged the actor to acknowledge his "wrongdoing" by visiting their temple and asking for forgiveness.

The situation is further inflamed by threats from notorious gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, who has openly warned both Salman and Salim of severe consequences unless Salman seeks pardon from the

Bishnoi temple in Rajasthan. Bishnoi, known for his ties to organised crime, has repeatedly demanded that Salman make amends or face potentially violent repercussions. Earlier this year, shooters reportedly affiliated with the Lawrence Bishnoi gang fired shots outside Salman's residence, prompting Mumbai Police to increase the actor's security.

Authorities have linked the recent murder of MLA Baba Siddique, a close associate of Salman Khan, to the Lawrence Bishnoi feud. This killing has only heightened the tension around Salman and fuelled the ongoing animosity between the actor and Bishnoi's network. With the Bishnoi community united in their call for justice and Lawrence Bishnoi's threats growing bolder, the pressure on the Khan family has intensified, leaving them caught in a volatile web of public and criminal scrutiny over the Blackbuck case.

Kate Beckinsale: Bruised, bold and taking names!

Fans were shocked when Kate Beckinsale, 51, took to Instagram to share raw, up-close shots of her bruises, busted fingers, and what seemed to be a back brace, all from her daring stunts in the upcoming thriller *Canary Black*. The British actress revealed a series of injuries, humorously brushing off fan concerns with quips like "kicking impeccably chic ass" and even joking about "shopping for tampons and talking about boys" as a response to her bruised-up appearance. While her lighthearted tone gave fans a chuckle, many couldn't help but express concern: "Are you okay?" one asked, while others wondered if she had "gone too far" for her role.

But Beckinsale's bruises aren't the only thing grabbing attention. The *Underworld* star recently clapped back at critics who suggested that stunt doubles did all the "heavy lifting." Posting a review that hinted she took a backseat in her action sequences, Beckinsale made it clear she did far more than close-up shots. Her stunt double, Laura Vörter, chimed in to back her up, commenting, "She did much more than the medium and close-ups!" In true Beckinsale style, she's determined to remind everyone that, bruises and all, she's the real deal on set—proving once again that age and intensity are no barrier to her commitment on screen. Fans are left in awe as she keeps her chin up and her humour sharp, embodying her badass character both on and off set.



SHRADDHA KAPOOR FOUGHT FOR A BIGGER ROLE IN STREE!

In a surprising twist, Shraddha Kapoor revealed in a throwback interview that she was originally only offered a cameo in the 2018 horror comedy *Stree*. Rajkumar Rao and Shraddha's unexpected pairing became the heart of the film, keeping audiences guessing as her mysterious character drew them deeper into the supernatural plot—reminiscent of the nail-biting suspense that gripped fans in *Baahubali*. But fans recently discovered that Shraddha wasn't initially cast as a lead. Instead, director Amar Kaushik and producer Dinesh Vijan approached her for a special appearance. Yet, captivated by the film's fresh concept and social message, Shraddha boldly requested a larger part. "I was so entertained by the premise that I asked if I could be more than a cameo," she shared in an interview last year, a clip of which has now resurfaced and stirred up fans online.

Some fans speculated about Shraddha's extended role, with one Reddit user noting, "Her character still felt like a cameo," while another joked about how she "lobbied for more screen time, changed the script, and then took over the sequel." Fans are now eagerly awaiting her return in *Stree 3*, where they hope she will finally unveil the full mystery behind her character.



VIKRANT MASSEY TAKES ON LEGENDARY ROLE AS SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

Bollywood actor Vikrant Massey is set to bring the inspiring life of global spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar to the big screen in an ambitious, international thriller designed to captivate audiences worldwide. Recently, Massey had a rare opportunity to meet Sri Sri in person, with the pair joined by producer Mahaveer Jain and acclaimed filmmaker Aanand L Rai. This remarkable moment, captured in a photograph shared by Jain, symbolized the project's high-profile beginning and the start of Massey's deep dive into the role of one of the world's most respected peace advocates. Inspired by Sri Sri's commitment to non-violence and his instrumental role in ending Colombia's brutal 52-year civil conflict, the film will spotlight how he utilized ancient Indian wisdom to bring peace to one of the most violent conflicts in recent history. It will explore the power of unity, resilience, and compassion that Sri Sri employed to inspire both warring factions and political leaders toward reconciliation.

Set to be produced in English and Spanish for a global reach, the film will be dubbed in several international and Indian languages, making Sri Sri's story accessible to audiences across borders. A source close to the production hinted at its ambitious scope: "The supporting cast and crew will include highly acclaimed, Academy Award-winning talents from Los Angeles and Colombia, and it will be presented by some of the most respected filmmakers around the world." The project is expected to bring together top-tier talent from Hollywood, Bollywood and beyond, blending India's rich spiritual heritage with cutting-edge cinematic storytelling.



Produced by Siddharth Anand and Mahaveer Jain, the film will not only pay homage to Sri Sri's efforts in Colombia but will also reflect the Indian philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" or "One World, One Family," underscoring the message of universal harmony. With a narrative that transcends borders, the movie is set to serve as both a tribute to Sri Sri's legacy and a celebration of India's cultural values on a global stage.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



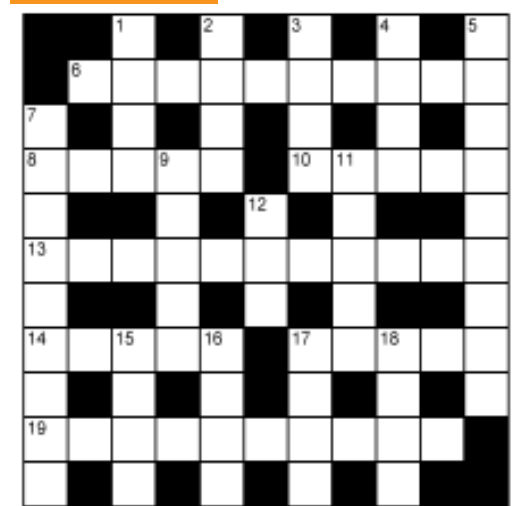
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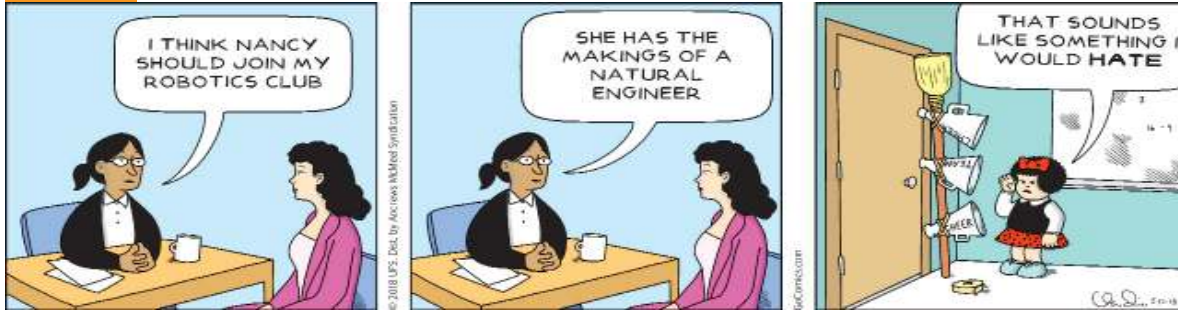
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

8	5		2				9	
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Yesterday's solution

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

- 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

- Something chewed but usually not swallowed (7,3)
- With lots of sunshine
- A stand for an artist's painting
- Straight away
- Tossed
- Put words on paper
- Daily publications

DOWN

- Part of your face
- Absent
- One time
- Hens lay these
- People who work for a business
- Helper
- A female relation
- Change
- Baby goat
- Uses oars
- Cried
- Rub with a cloth
- Yours and mine



WHEN SOUNDARYA WAS 'CRUISING THROUGH HER EMOTIONS' ON SETS OF HOUSEFULL 5



Soundarya Sharma speaks her heart out in an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, expressing her gratitude for her rise to fame, interesting insights about her upcoming film *Housefull 5* and more

TEJAL SINHA
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Soundarya Sharma, the *Bigg Boss* sensation who set the reality TV show ablaze with her sizzling glamour and fiery personality, is now ready to take the silver screen by storm with her highly anticipated film *Housefull 5*! With a spark in her eyes and a spring in her step, this talented actress is all set to showcase her impressive range and leave fans spellbound with her undeniable charm and talent. As she makes her way from the *Bigg Boss* house to the big screen, Soundarya Sharma is sure to make a lasting impact and cement her place as one of the most exciting new stars.

"It feels amazing," begins the *Country Mafia* fame with a chuckle, overwhelmed with the love and opportunities she's been receiving right from ads to shows and now with films. "It feels on top of the world seeing how you've started the journey and finally, some baby steps you've taken. There is a silver lining in life. It feels very good. *Jab aapka kaam longe dekhte hai* and they appreciate you for your hard work."

Well, that's just not it! Her life post stint in *Bigg Boss* has been all about love, immense recognition and the adulations of fans not

just in India but overseas too. "Every time that I've travelled, the love I've received has been humongous. My first travel post about the show felt so thrilling. People who didn't know about my work now know me and my work so well," says the *Raktanchal 2* actress.

Fast forward to the present; she's all set to star in one of the biggest film franchises, which has already been the talk of the town since its announcement—*Housefull 5*. As we were about to discuss, Soundarya was so excited about this project, because, why not? "I'm on cloud 9," she expresses with immense exhilaration. Though she has no godfather in the industry, however, she's all grateful for her god sister, Wardha Khan Nadiadwala, for believing in her. "It feels amazing when someone believes in you and shows that interest, especially when you come from nowhere as an outsider. My dream was always to make it big and see myself on the biggest screen; emerge as the biggest superstar and upcoming star of the country."

"I think you'll have to ask Wardha for this and eventually Sajid sir as well," expresses the *Ranchi Diaries* fame about what really made her get onboard for the project. So eventually one day, Soundarya was showing her show's reel to the lady boss of Nadiadwala Productions. "They had also seen me in *Bigg Boss*. I'm blessed to have her in my life because all it takes is one person to believe in you. I feel she's that person who believed in me when nobody did. So I'm truly grateful. Like I said, she's just my god sister. She's an angel; God sent the

angel. One day, she called me up, saying, "We have signed you for *Housefull 5*. I couldn't believe it at that moment. I was just crying and it was raining that day."

There's also a heartwarming moment she recalled for us: "I remember as a kid, I used to dance to *Housefull* songs, *Dhanno* and *Papa Jag Jaayega*. For me to be a part of *Housefull 5* is a great deal. Little did I know that one day I would be a part of *Housefull 5* as a lead. I've been so excited that I'm jumping and just dancing all the time these days." Haha, that's cute! Well, we get it, Soundarya.

Housefull 5 has an ensemble cast with the OG Akshay Kumar, Riteish Deshmukh, Dino Morea, Abhishek Bachchan, Shreyas Talpade, Chunky Panday, Jacqueline Fernandez, Nargis Fakhri and Chitrangana, among the rest.

While she's also had the opportunity to previously work with Akshay Kumar, Shah Rukh Khan and Ajay Devgn in *Vimal* advertisements, little did she know that she would soon star alongside Akshay Kumar in such a big franchise. As she was all praises for her co-stars, she says, "Ritesh sir is so amazing. Abhishek's so cute. Nargis is a sweetheart. Jackie, everyone is, like, so amazing and so supportive of a newcomer like me. Akshay is so supportive. He's always been supportive. And this time, working in a film with him, they still play pranks and make jokes about me, but then I'm the most junior amongst the set. I hope fingers crossed that I get to work with him more and more in upcoming films. I've grown up fascinating and

thinking being Akshay Kumar's heroine."

Well, without revealing much about her character, she shares that this film is going to be different from the previous *Housefull* films. "It's larger-than-life. It's mega. It's a laughter ride, a fun ride and you will see me in a never-seen avatar."

She's got her fingers crossed now, hoping for more opportunities to come her way. "I'm sure God has been so kind and given me this platform and pedestal; so are my producers and all the amazing actors on board. I feel definitely opportunities will come my way. I hope at least people get to see the working side of me as an actor."

Then comes discussing how a day of the shoot was of the *Housefull 5*: "It was full of excitement. We were shooting on the cruise. Good bright sunny day. My intro scene was to be shot. That sound of camera action is still echoing and I was so overwhelmed when it happened. They had to do a retake only because I started to cry and I turned red. It was full of emotions. I don't know how to express that, but only an actor can tell you when you've longed for something good in your life and you're starting your journey with something like you had never imagined."

With a promising project potentially on the horizon for December, the excitement is palpable. Though tight-lipped about the details, Soundarya's enthusiasm is infectious and we can't help but share her optimism. One thing is certain: this talented actress is committed to choosing roles that showcase her versatility and passion for storytelling.



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From Assam to the world

With a deep respect for India's rich textile heritage, Sonam is on a mission to preserve and promote the country's diverse cultural traditions through his stunning creations. In this exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*, Sonam Dubal takes us on a journey through his design philosophy, his inspiration and his latest project, "Threads of Tradition," which showcases the beauty of Kerala and Northeast India's textile legacy

SHIKHA DUGGAL
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Met Sonam Dubal, the style sensation whose creative juices were sparked by the iconic Rohit Khosla! His East-meets-West masterpieces, infused with Pan-Asian flair, resonated with Sonam's culturally rich upbringing, making him the perfect fit for our fashion spotlight! Moreover, he is thrilled to introduce us to "Threads of Tradition in Anant Samagan 2024," a unique fashion showcase that blends the traditional with the modern to commemorate the eternal beauty of India's varied textile legacy. "When incorporating design aesthetics from North Eastern fabrics and weaving into a collection, sensitivity to cultural history is essential. An essential component in naturally developing a Pan-Asian vibe for a collection is combining modern styles or aspects with weaving or motif techniques that are more generic in nature or colours that evoke the underlying essence of nature. At the same time, using native weaves and textiles, such as ERI silk, is becoming increasingly popular due to the global emphasis on sustainability," the fashion designer explains how his creations easily combine Western aesthetics and Eastern customs to create a pan-Asian appeal.

"Threads of Tradition" will essentially take center stage to showcase Kerala and the Northeast, two of India's most culturally diverse regions. A visual voyage through elaborate traditional weaving reimagined contemporary designs and sustainable fashion breakthroughs is what the event offers. Here's where Sonam Dubal comes in! One little-known truth about this designer is that he was born in Assam, has Sikkimese and Maharashtrian ancestry and wears it on his sleeves to symbolise his heritage. "Couture Chronicles celebrates Kerala's and the Northeast's textile heritage, organised by the Aalekh Foundation. Every weave or pattern in the North East's stunning potpourri of textiles demonstrates the distinctive artistic talent of local communities, each of which has historical value. These textiles are essential manifestations of community identity and pride, ranging from the Mekhala chador of Assam, which is embellished with elaborate motifs that symbolise local folklore, to the exquisite shawls of Nagaland and Manipur, as well as motif designs in the weaves of Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura, Meghalaya, Sikkim and Mizoram," he shares. Similar to this, Kerala's weaving heritage is well-known for its exquisite handloom silks and cottons, which capture a long history of artistry. The exquisite Kasavu sarees, to mention a few, which are worn at festivals and weddings and symbolise festivity and tradition, serve to accentuate this.

Thus, one of the event's main highlights is sustainability. When we asked Sonam how he combines eco-friendly methods with traditional

workmanship, he only replied, "Eco fashion, also known as sustainable fashion, is crucial to maintaining traditional methods. It involves more than simply preservation methods; it also involves attempting to lower pollution and raise awareness of conscientious consumption and attire. For me, creating markets in India and elsewhere has been made possible by using natural or vegetable dyes, handcrafted techniques, avoiding digital printing and mostly working with woven textiles and embroidery. Like the butterfly effect, more and more designers are entering the sustainable world, which is a natural ecosystem that is generating more jobs and assisting traditional weavers in finding new opportunities in the global economy."

The couturier himself claimed that the Mekhala Chador was similar to Burmese or Myanmar costume, while the Mundu was similar to the Thai sarong or lungi. Due to their ties to Southeast Asian culture, both of these traditional outfits naturally transform into contemporary silhouettes that are appropriate for a wide range of people. Although the sensitivity of history and folklore must be taken into account when dealing with the weaving, clothing is significant for Sonam. However, incorporating more contemporary knotting or wrapping techniques can be interesting as a modern approach. The seamstress continued, "The con-

temporary Indian woman is both open to modernity and grounded in tradition. Indian women today are more empowered and conscious and don't always follow in the footsteps of their Western counterparts. Despite having her own unique style, she is conscious of who she is. Since a large portion of my handiwork and embroidery is based on heritage, my collections highlight the wearer's inherent elegance as well as emotional intelligence." It's fascinating to hear the story.

Then he talks about how fashion technology is challenging since it would fundamentally alter the culture if current traditional methods were to be compromised. However, digitally recreating missing themes or even patterns that have vanished, similar to antique photographs, can be envisioned in a contemporary textile cape, much like Gustav Klimt's prints that transition from textile to canvas to wall. "The digital world is vast and can work into many avatars," he says without hesitation. "However, this shouldn't be altered for conventional methods like block printing or dyes that are still being used. While I am looking at digital technology and working on more painterly abstract interpretations of disappearing motifs and patterns from my earlier lines, I am also making a conscious effort to keep some practices sacred because they have become emblematic of my label. In this way, it is more

about regeneration or reincarnation." The unique style of his works transcends time and cultural boundaries. According to his personal perspective, "The development of a unique aesthetic has been largely dependent on individuality and sincerity. Working primarily with hand-woven fabrics and vintage textiles that have a connection to the Silk Road has always been at the heart of my storytelling, which is based on the preservation of tradition. My upbringing in a multicultural environment gave me the freedom to discover who I am, and as I've worked over the years, encountering fascinating people, travelling and learning about art history as well as various musical and cinematic genres have all impacted me in the creation of backgrounds for my cross-cultural and cross-temporal design language."

An encyclopedia of the specifics of natural dyeing and the history of indigenous Eri and Muga silk, working with Narmohan Das has been an amazing experience. Sonam was able to meet him in Assam at Bongaigaon earlier last year through another project. Narmohan Das is a social entrepreneur from Assam who works with indigenous silk yarns and natural dyeing techniques. It struck a strong chord with Sonam to watch him labour in the vegetable dyeing process. In reality, he is helping to sustain entire village households, providing a living for over 1000 households in rural Assam.

"My clothing embraces cultural variety and is more timeless and inclusive. I serve real people, especially classic women who take pride in their identities and clothing choices. Over the years, the elder women have consistently supported me. Through my representative Gail Percy, a piece from my 2016 collection was worn by Hollywood actress and Italian icon Isabella Rossellini in the television series *Shut Eye*. Later, in 2020, Vidya Balan wore my sari and cape in the movie *Shakuntala Devi*, which was made possible by costume designer and friend Neharika Khan. Over the years, patrons from both India and abroad have inspired me."

He only ever collaborated with one designer, Rohit Khosla, whose presence and output greatly inspired Sonam Dubal. He encouraged him to think independently and to constantly be aware of his uniqueness and authenticity. He learned a lot from him, but he was also a friend who encouraged Sonam to immerse himself in the world of textiles, embroidery and style. He was also incredibly committed, meticulous and a fantastic stylist. "It is possible to study fashion. Style is instinctive, but I learned. Working with Rohit Khosla inspired me to think differently, try to make a cultural difference and map the area that I knew the best—the northeastern part of India—absorbing its natural ethos, style and innate intelligence, natural sustainability and incorporating these elements into my work over the years in an effort to gradually weave a narrative into the Indian fashion canvas." The costumer ends the interview on a touching note.



SPICE UP YOUR TRAIN RIDE

As you step onto the train, the air buzzes with anticipation—what's the first thing that catches your eye? Perhaps it's the colourful rangolis decorating the compartments or the mouthwatering aroma of steaming samosas sailing through the aisle.

In the peak festive season, the demand is overwhelming and getting a confirmed ticket can feel like a small miracle. For those who missed out, the Tatkal quota, or last-minute ticket booking system, becomes a frantic yet hopeful chance. People across the country from different cultures board the train, which seems like a festival itself. People share their excitement through food and stories of their celebration.

Food plays a bigger role in any Indian celebration. What does the pantry in the train do special? During the festive rush, the pantry service is often overwhelmed by high demand, and travelers may find their orders misplaced or delayed. On a lucky day, you might receive a fresh, piping-hot meal. Other times, the quality and hygiene may be a concern, leaving travelers to rely on their own packed food or other vendors.

"Chai, chai, chai garam," buzzing with hawkers' voices. No sooner had the chai-wala moved on, when another voice called out, "Bhel puri! Fresh and tasty bhel puri!" These hawkers sell food that is prepared in bulk and sell it throughout the day. While a crispy pakora or a warm vada

may be tempting, travellers often weigh the risk of consuming items that may not have been stored or prepared in the cleanest conditions. Though the flavours are usually satisfying, the freshness and quality can be unpredictable, and falling ill during the festive season is a risk most travellers would rather avoid.

A train food app, RailRestro, provides a variety of food to your seat in the train on time. Be it vegetarian, non-vegetarian, or even Jain food, it has all the options in its menu. It is very simple to order food on this app and it delivers food to more than 450 rail stations across India at an affordable price.

Manish Chandra, founder of the app, expressed, "We are delighted to see the passengers response and promise to provide hygienic and varieties of food options through RailRestro to enhance the food experience of our passengers. We aim to deliver an unmatched food experience through our platform, making train travel more comfortable and enjoyable for everyone."

RailRestro has a special menu for the festive season. *Sabudana khichri, fruit chaat and makhana kheer*, among the rest, are some of the specialties. If you have a baby with you on the train, they have it all covered. The delivery partner will deliver the baby food to your seat on time. Worries are out of the window. Just travel, enjoy the landscapes and leave the responsibility of the food to RailRestro.

HIGHLIGHTS OF SHOW:

1. Runway debuted with the striking Naga shawls, the graceful Kasavu sarees from Kerala and the colourful Mekhala Chadors of Assam. These clothes in their true form enthralled audiences and captured the essence of these places.
2. Observed how designers combined history and modernity by elevating Northeast tribal themes in elegant evening gowns and transforming Kerala's traditional Mundu into sleek jumpsuits.
3. The last couture outfits in the show harmoniously combined Kerala and Northeast Indian textile traditions. This conclusion symbolised togetherness through fashion and a blending of cultures.
4. Designers also showcase eco-friendly fashion, using organic fabrics and natural dyes, combining traditional craftsmanship with sustainable practices.

INDIAN BATTERS WERE EXPOSED BY SANTNER; KOHLI'S FORM NOT A CONCERN: SIMON DOULL

PTI ■ PUNE

Former New Zealand pacer Simon Doull attributed India's shocking series defeat to their batsmen's inadequacies against spin bowling but he was not ready to write off underwhelming star batter Virat Kohli.

Left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner grabbed 13 wickets as the Kiwis walloped India by 113 runs in the second Test here on Saturday to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

"There's a misconception that Indian players are better players of spin. I think they've had better spinners and they've been able to expose the opposition batters. But in this Test (at Pune), their batters were exposed a little bit by a very, very good performance from Mitchell Santner," Doull told PTI Videos.

Even though Doull said negating spin is no longer a forte of many teams, he conceded that Indian batters' capitulation against "not a world-class spin bowling attack" of New Zealand offered some worrying signals.

"I think you get used to playing on such good wickets. And when it does turn, techniques get exposed a little bit. For a long time, when



India played on turning surfaces, they still had the best spinners in the world in Jadeja and Ashwin.

"So, they've been able to undo other sides. In this Test match, they were undone by a New Zealand side that, with all due respect, is not a world-class spin bowling attack. So, that will be a concern of some sort," he detailed.

Kohli's modest run in the ongoing series was one of the talking points, as the veteran batter succumbed to spin three times in four innings.

But Doull did not read too much into the former Indian captain's dismal form, and said it would not have an effect in the upcoming five-match Test series against Australia.

"There're issues against spin but he's not the only one. You're not going to find those (spin-friendly) conditions in Australia. He (Kohli) had a great series Down Under.

"He plays quick bowling as well as he has for the last four or five years. So, I don't think it's a concern," he noted.

The 55-year-old also defended Indian skipper Rohit Sharma for his defensive approach and placed veteran bowlers in the side as culpable for the series defeat.

"I think winning the toss is crucial. For Rohit, the wrong decision at Bangalore was crucial. He's admitted to that as well. New Zealand seamers took advantage of that," he said.

Rohit elected to bat first in the opening Test under overcast conditions and his side got

bowled out for a pathetic 46, which eventually transpired into an eight-wicket defeat.

The second Test saw a different scenario as New Zealand skipper Tom Latham won the toss and smartly elected to bat first, realising that batting fourth on Pune pitch would be a tough task.

"Winning the toss in this Test (at Pune), when you knew, pitch was going to turn...it might not have looked like a big score, 259 in the (NZ) first innings.

"But it was made to look like a really big score because the ball was turning. So, I think Tom Latham's captaincy was outstanding for the most part."

Doull, who took 98 wickets from 32 Tests, said senior bowlers too should have taken more responsibility.

"People say Rohit might have been a touch defensive, but that comes down to the bowlers. There're very, very senior spin bowlers in that side.

"If you can't trust an Ashwin or a Jadeja to set his own field, you can't blame Rohit for that all the time. I think the bowlers have to have some part to play in that as well," he explained.

Moving over to the upcoming Border-Gavaskar Trophy, Doull said winning the third Test at Mumbai against the Kiwis will do a world of good

to their morale ahead of the marquee clash starting next month.

"They have to forget about this series. They could go out and win the third Test in Wankhede and go to Australia with a little bit more confidence. In Australia, quick bowlers will be required. India batters, I think, will be a lot better off on good surfaces. That's what you tend to get in Australia."

Doull said India have good enough players to tackle the Australian challenge.

"I'll come down to how they play the quick bowlers from Australia - the tall, slightly bouncer bowlers. But they've got the batters to do the job, I think, in good conditions.

"And if later on in the Test matches, whether it be in Perth or whether it be in Sydney, it starts to turn and bounce a little bit, then their spinners will come into play."

New Zealand also became the first visiting side to win a Test series in India after 12 years, and Doull termed it remarkable.



Shami's absence big loss for India, but won't underestimate reserve pacers: McDonald

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Australia head coach Andrew McDonald feels the absence of Mohammed Shami during the marquee Border Gavaskar Trophy next month is a huge loss for India, but stressed that the hosts won't underestimate the quicks stepping in for the seasoned pacer.

Shami, who had played a significant role in India's successful 2018 tour of Australia, has not played since the ODI World Cup final last November due to an ankle injury. He underwent surgery and was subsequently rehabilitating at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) but developed swelling in his knees which affected his rehabilitation.

"Mohammed Shami is a big loss," McDonald was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo on ABC's Offsiders.

"The way our batters speak about his relentless nature, his line and lengths, the way he goes about his business, a real good complimenting skill set to Bumrah so I think that one-two combo they'll lack a little bit, and they'll miss that."

India have handed maiden call ups to Delhi speedster Harshit Rana and Andhra seam bowling all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy while quicks Akash Deep and Prasidh Krishna have also

been selected for the marquee series. Jasprit Bumrah will lead the fast bowling department.

"But needless to say we saw what happened last time, they had reserves that came in and did the job as well so they cannot be underestimated at all," he added.

Australian teenager Sam Konstas, who announced himself with twin Sheffield Shield centuries for New South Wales earlier this month, is in the reckoning to partner Usman Khawaja at the top in the five-match series.

"I think we're picking the best team for here and now, and if that does encompass a younger player, then we'll head down that direction," he said.

McDonald stated that if the selectors believe the 19-year-old is the best option, he will receive a Test debut, regardless of his lack of first-class experience.

"I've heard people commenting 'do you protect the player?' If they're ready, they're ready in our mind, and if Sam's capable and we feel as though it is capable to fill that spot I don't think that the opponent should come into the equation."

Australia will host India for the Border Gavaskar Trophy, starting November 22 in Perth.

Sivarajan, Sukant shine as India wins 24 medals at Japan Para Badminton International

PTI ■ TOKYO

Sivarajan Solaimalai and Sukant Kadam delivered standout performances, helping India win an impressive 24 medals at the Japan Para Badminton International on Sunday.

India won six gold, nine silver and as many bronze medals in the tournament. Sivarajan enjoyed a double victory, clinching gold in the men's singles SH6 class and partnering with Sudarsan Saravanakumar Muthusamy to win the top prize in men's

doubles. Sukant also excelled, taking gold in men's singles (SL4) and silver in men's doubles (SL3-SL4) with partner Dinesh Rajaiyah. He triumphed over fellow Indian Tarun in a thrilling singles final, winning 21-12, 21-10, while Naveen Sivakumar and Surya Kant Yadav secured bronze medals.

In the doubles final, Sukant and Dinesh fought valiantly but fell short against compatriots Umesh Vikram Kumar and Surya Kant Yadav, losing 5-21, 22-20, 16-21 to take home silver.



"Winning gold in singles and silver in doubles is incredibly special," Sukant said in a release.

"I thank my coaches, support team, and the entire para-badminton community for their unwavering support.

This victory fuels my motivation to keep pushing boundaries." In other events, reigning Paralympic champion Kumar Nitesh claimed silver after a close match against Japan's Daisuke Fujihara, losing 16-21, 21-18, 19-21 in the SL3 finals.

In women's SU5, Manisha Ramdass captured gold by defeating Japan's Mamiko Toyoda 21-12, 21-18, while Neeraj settled for silver in the women's SL3 category after falling to Coraline Bergeron. Neeraj also finished second

in mixed doubles with Surya Kant Yadav in the SL3-SU5 category.

In men's doubles SU5, Hardik Makkar and Rithvik Ragupati won gold, while Dev Rathi and Indonesia's Bartlomiej Mroz secured silver. Hardik and Rithvik also earned silver and bronze in men's singles SU5.

In the men's doubles WH1-WH2 category, Abu Hubaida and Prem Kumar Ale took home bronze, while Alpha James bagged silver in the women's singles WH2 category.

Move over Messi-Ronaldo, new generation of soccer stars lining up to win Ballon d'Or



AP ■ MANCHESTER (ENGLAND)

No Lionel Messi. No Cristiano Ronaldo. When the Ballon d'Or is presented at a gala ceremony in Paris on Monday, it will feel like the start of a new era in soccer. There is also a sense of void now that one of sport's most engrossing rivalries is likely over.

"It's interesting that as it starts to come to an end, we are sort of saying, what's the next equivalent rivalry going to be," soccer author Jonathan Wilson told The Associated Press. "As if that kind of rivalry was a natural state. But, there's never been a rivalry like that before."

Messi and Ronaldo won soccer's most prestigious individual award a combined 13 times over 16 years of unprecedented dominance. Neither has been nominated this year. Instead Real Madrid winger Vinicius Junior is the favourite to be crowned the world's best player and become the first winner born this century. He underlined his credentials this week with a stunning Champions League hat-trick against Borussia Dortmund.

"Vinicius had an incredible season where he was a key player... He proved he's the best player in the world," Madrid teammate Lucas Vazquez said.

But, rather than Vinicius spearheading a new era of dominance, it seems likely the award will revert to a time before Messi and Ronaldo when multiple winners were relatively rare.

France great Zinedine Zidane, for instance, only won it once. The same goes for Ronaldinho, Rivaldo, Luis Figo and George Best. Originally limited to European players, it was never won by Pele or Diego Maradona.

Before Messi, the last player to win back-to-back awards was Dutch striker Marco van Basten in 1988 and '89. Messi won a record-extending eighth Ballon d'Or last year after leading Argentina to triumph at the World Cup in 2022. Wilson, who wrote about the history of Argentinian soccer in his book "Angels With Dirty Faces," sees no obvious successor to the Barcelona great, now at Inter Miami.

"Messi's been phenomenal for 17, 18 years," he said. "It's not a pure tallying process, but in terms of greatness over a protracted period, Messi is the greatest there has ever been by quite some margin."

"I don't think there's anybody in the world now who has anything remotely close to that talent."

would Vinicius Junior become the first winner born this century, but there has never even been a recipient born in the '90s.

Vinicius Junior, whose goals helped Madrid to a record-extending 15th European Cup last season, is part of a new generation of stars that are flourishing as Messi and Ronaldo reach the final stages of their careers.

Kylian Mbappe, Erling Haaland, Jude Bellingham and Lamine Yamal make up a field of contenders who could challenge for years to come.

Manchester City midfielder Rodri is the second favourite to win this year and would become the first player born in the '90s to take the award. Mbappe, who has long been seen as the heir to Messi and Ronaldo as the world's best player, was born in 1998, meaning it's likely there will eventually be a winner from that decade even if Rodri misses out. The only other winners since Ronaldo won his first Ballon d'Or in 2008 were Luka Modric in 2018 and Karim Benzema in 2022. Both were born in the 1980s. The award was cancelled in 2020 when Robert Lewandowski was widely regarded as the best player that year. He was also born in the '80s. Neymar, born in 1992, came third on two occasions.

Lewandowski and Yamal spoil Mbappé's first clasico as Barcelona routs Real Madrid 4-0

AP ■ BARCELONA

Robert Lewandowski scored twice and Lamine Yamal piled on to ruin Kylian Mbappé's first clasico as Barcelona routed Real Madrid 4-0.

The lopsided victory in Spain's capital ended the host's unbeaten run in La Liga at 42 games, one shy of Barcelona's record streak in 2017-18. Carlo Ancelotti's side suffered its first loss since Sept. 23 last year. And what a loss it was.

Lewandowski got the visitors going from a superb pass by Barcelona's latest youth talent Marc Casadó in the 54th minute and rose up to head in a fine header three minutes later to silence Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

Yamal made it a rout in the 77th when the teenage phenom rifled a shot from an angle over goalkeeper Andriy Lunin. That goal made him the youngest scorer in a clasico at 17 years, 105 days, surpassing teammate Ansu Fati, who was about 250 days older in October 2020. Raphinha then broke free with Madrid completely unhinged and chipped Lunin in the 84th.

The win came three days after Barcelona thumped Bayern Munich 4-1 in the Champions League. It has outsourced its last five opponents 21-2. "We came here to do just this," Yamal said. "We had lots of confidence and when we scored the second goal, we wanted to score a third, and then a fourth, as many goals as possible. To win 4-0 at this ground and beat Bayern 4-1, we showed that we are ready for anything."

It is an understatement that Mbappé had a frustrating first game against Barcelona in a white shirt. The France star was caught eight times offside by Barcelona's synchronized



back four and failed to beat second-choice goalkeeper Iñaki Peña one-on-one with his team down two goals.

"We knew that they played with a high line, and we just couldn't take advantage of it," Ancelotti said. "Sometimes (Mbappé) fell offside, but he had three or four chances to score and needed a better finishing touch."

Hansi Flick, meanwhile, had a night to remember in the first clasico for the German coach. Barcelona still has financial troubles that cast doubt over its future but its youthful team has made huge steps forward since Flick replaced Barcelona great Xavi Hernández in the summer. "Today we made a fantastic

match and it is all about the team. Everyone gave it 100%," said Flick, who Ancelotti called "a gentleman" for telling his bench to cool it when they effusively celebrated the fourth goal near Madrid's dugout.

After opening a six-point lead over Madrid at the top of La Liga, it is no longer a foregone conclusion that with Mbappé on board Madrid will waltz to a second straight domestic title.

Casadó was one of five homegrown players that Flick put in his starting lineup, the same 11 from the Bayern win. Six players under 22 years old started for Barcelona, led by 17-year-olds Yamal and Pau Cubarsi.

times in the first half hour, as Barcelona pressed high. Vinicius Junior, who featured in a fascinating duel with Cubarsi, missed a golden chance in the 21st when he shot past the post from close.

"When they scored those back-to-back goals it took the energy out of us," Ancelotti said. "This is a complicated moment for us. It hurts to lose a game and especially after going 42 games unbeaten, but we shouldn't just throw everything away because this team will play better."

Peña was questioned if he was up to the task of replacing Marc-Andre ter Stegen, out long term with a knee injury. His strong performance, which included two stops to deny Mbappé, was his first great game in goal for Barcelona.

"Our coach said that playing a high defensive line was non-negotiable," Peña said. "It is risky to play with such a high defense line, but the effort and work of the entire team is reflected in the offside traps we are creating."

Raphinha's goal confirmed his massive step forward under Flick. The Brazil forward, who acted as Barcelona captain, has 10 goals in this campaign.

Lewandowski's goals 16th and 17th overall for the Poland striker this season, taking his league-best tally to 14. He also hit the post. Mbappé, by comparison, has eight goals in all competitions. Ayoze strikes again

Ayoze Pérez scored his seventh goal since joining Villarreal this campaign to help it win 2-1 at Valladolid and lift his team into third place. Rayo Vallecano beat Alaves 1-0 after scoring late despite having played a man down from the 22nd, while Las Palmas beat Girona 1-0.



RITU VARMA BRINGS MAJAKA TO LIFE AS 'BLAZE IN BREEZE'

Sundeep Kishan's upcoming film *Majaka*, directed by Nakkina Trinadha Rao, pairs him with Ritu Varma, who adds sparkle to this father-son comedy set for Sankranthi. Currently shooting in Visakhapatnam, *Majaka* marks Sundeep Kishan's 30th film. Directed by Nakkina Trinadha Rao, with a story by Bezawada Prasanna Kumar and produced by Ramesh Danda, *Majaka* stars Ritu Varma as Sundeep's love interest and Anshu Sagar opposite Rao Ramesh.

Filming is set to complete 60% of the movie in Visakhapatnam, with the remainder in Hyderabad. The film is slated for a Sankranthi release and promises comedy as Sundeep and Rao Ramesh portray a humorous father-son duo. Anshu Sagar, known for *Manmadhudu*, also returns to the screen in this film.

On Sunday, the filmmakers shared a video featuring a light-hearted moment with Ritu Varma and Sundeep Kishan, with Ritu in bridal attire, capturing her as a "blaze in the breeze." The successful duo of Nakkina Trinadha Rao and writer Prasanna Kumar Bezawada is known for past hits, and they bring their combined strengths to *Majaka*, with Prasanna providing the story, screenplay and dialogues.



'PRIYADARSHI IN SARANGAPANI JATHAKAM WILL LEAVE YOU SMITTEN'

Director Mohanakrishna Indraganti's third project with Sridevi Movies is set to deliver a hilarious comedy called *Sarangapani Jathakam* featuring Priyadarshi and Roopa Koduvayur.

Starting off the promotions with an unconventional 'No Audio' promo, the film crew launched a peppy lyrical song *Saranga Saranga* on Sunday via Aditya Music.

Listening to Armaan Malik's calming vocals, along with the lovely lyrics by Ramajogayya Sastry, instantly made this Vivek Sagar musical a beloved choice.

Showcasing the happiness of *Sarangapani*, the main character, at a pivotal moment in his romantic tale, the scenes capture simple to observe and replicate. Amidst the expectations of the film, director Mohanakrishna Indraganti says, "This song features the joy of lead character Sarangapani at a crucial juncture of his love story in the film. Interestingly shot in and around Hyderabad city, Armaan Malik's vocals added energy to Ramajogayya Sastry's beautiful lyrics thereby creating magic for Vivek Sagar's musical. You'll witness a new Priyadarshi in this film on December 20, 2024 and I'm sure you'll enjoy the film."

The talented composer, Vivek Sagar, appears to have created a varied album that combines different elements to match the tone and atmosphere of the film.

'KA TO HAVE CLIMAX LIKE NO-OTHER'

Nayan Sarika and Tanvi Ram, the female leads in *KA*, share their experiences, challenges, and aspirations. While Nayan, a newcomer with a few Telugu films, is enthusiastic about the film's unique plot, seasoned Malayalam actress Tanvi looks forward to the release and potential Telugu projects

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As the excitement builds for *KA*, which stars Kiran Abbavaram, the film promises a gripping narrative and dynamic performances. Nayan Sarika portrays Satyabhama, while Tanvi Ram takes on the role of Radha. Both actresses express their enthusiasm for the project, particularly praising the script and screenplay for their compelling content.

"I really liked the content and the script, especially the climax. It was too interesting," Nayan shares. "There are many twists and turns in the film which I can't reveal too much about, but it is definitely interesting. Everyone involved in this project became like family. Although I don't share many scenes with Tanvi, we became good friends."

Nayan's journey to *KA* was quite serendipitous. "My profile was circulated among many filmmakers, which led director Sujith to call me for a look test. At that time, I was shooting for *Aay* in Amalapuram and fell ill," she explains. "I traveled to Hyderabad, was admitted to the hospital and just three days later, I did the look test and was locked in for this project."

Tanvi Ram's entry into the film came with its own hurdles. "I had a very brief call with the director, who shared a one-liner of the story. I was down with dengue fever and took nearly a month to recover. After 28 days, I finally met the team, and they narrated the story along with my role," she reveals. "It's quite an intense character with a lot of scope to perform."

When discussing the highlights of signing on for *KA*, Nayan emphasises the unique content. "The film's story is set in the 1970s, providing a different look at that time," she notes. "I watched clips of Sridevi for reference, and my portrayal of Satyabhama draws inspiration from Savitri's look. I loved how she could portray deep emotions without glycerin, which is a quality I aimed to replicate in my role."

Tanvi describes her character as a school teacher from a different era. "Though I won't share many scenes with Satyabhama, the connection between my character and hers



will be clear on screen," she says. "I'll reveal more about my role and backstory after the film's release."

The film's director duo, Sandeep and Sujeth, dedicated eight months to pre-production, ensuring clarity for every character, which Nayan and Tanvi appreciate. Tanvi shares her personal challenges during filming, including late-night shoots and emotionally intense scenes, which are quite different from her usual routine. "I have to approach these scenes multiple times for different angles, which can be challenging, but I embrace the profession and the range of emotions it requires," she reflects.

Both actresses commend Kiran Abbavaram for his ded-

ication. "He insisted on performing a difficult action scene without a body double, which shows his commitment to this film," they agree.

Looking ahead, Tanvi is working on various Tamil and Malayalam projects and hopes that the release of *KA* will open doors for more Telugu opportunities. Meanwhile, Nayan is eager for the film's debut and is in discussions for upcoming projects. "I'll know more in the coming weeks," she concludes.

KA not only showcases the talents of its cast but also presents a unique storyline that promises to captivate audiences this Diwali.



Sai Pallavi: Army personnel relived their own stories watching *Amaran*

Sai Pallavi and Siva Karthikeyan, the lead pair of the upcoming film *Amaran*, are in the city to promote their film. The story, based on real life, will be released on October 31.

"I always choose my films carefully and give my best to those characters, keeping in mind the audience. Now, I am coming up with *Amaran*. It's a film based on a real-life journey. It's a good film," said Sai Pallavi about the film.

"Some days ago, we showed this movie to Army personnel and they all enjoyed it. They

claimed it to be real and they could witness their experience unfold in the movie. I enjoyed the movie and I adored the character I portrayed in it," Sai Pallavi expressed her happiness about meeting everyone with her upcoming Telugu film release.

The actress further shared that she will talk more during the *Thandel* promotions. "My Telugu film *Thandel* is releasing soon and I will talk more at that time. Wherever I go, whatever I do, the Telugu people have showered their love on me and my films."

Amaran is based on the life of Major Mukund Varadarajan and Rebecca.

Siva Karthikeyan, the lead actor in the film, meanwhile said that this is going to be a different film. "I played Major Mukund and everyone knows how Sai Pallavi performs; in this film, she performed very well. When Kamal Haasan entered our project, it gained more weight," said Siva Karthikeyan. The Telugu distribution rights have been acquired by Sudhakar Reddy and he is releasing it here.

Renu Desai thanks Ram Charan-Upasana's pet Rhyme for paws-itive gesture

Actress-filmmaker Renu Desai has been making a big difference in the field of animal welfare. It is known that she has initiated Shree Aadya, an animal shelter, which she has named after her daughter. The facility is committed to saving and looking after dogs, cats and other household pets.

The shelter was recently surprised by a touching donation from an unlikely source - Rhyme, the darling pet of Global Star Ram Charan and Upasana. The kind donation was used to acquire an ambulance, a vital asset to the shelter's activities.

Expressing her gratitude, Renu took to her Instagram story to extend thanks to Rhyme and Upasana. This act of generosity will have a significant effect on the lives of many animals. Renu's commitment to animal welfare has been truly motivating.



Suriya, Disha Patani, Bobby Deol's chemistry shines at *Kanguva* audio launch

Kanguva makers had organised a grand audio launch event in Chennai. The highlight of the evening was the presence of popular stars Suriya, Disha Patani and Bobby Deol, who are set to grace the occasion and connect with their fans.

The music for the film is composed by none other than the renowned rockstar, Devi Sri Prasad (DSP). Known for his energetic compositions and chart-topping hits, DSP's work is eagerly awaited by fans and industry insiders alike. DSP had also brought in a special performance and live singing which will definitely be a treat to the eyes.

At the event, lead actor Suriya Sivakumar couldn't help but acknowledge the excitement around Disha, praising her during his speech: "Disha, you had the loudest cheer in this gallery. The audience is so happy to see you here in Chennai. Thank you for all the support and



love you've brought to this film."

Kanguva is the biggest and most expensive film of this year. With an estimated budget of over 350 crore, it's bigger than the likes of *Pushpa*, *Singham* and several other big films. Moreover, the film has been shot across seven different countries on various continents of India. The makers had a very specific look in mind, as this is a very unique film showing the prehistoric period. The makers hired experts from Hollywood for the technical departments like action and cinematography. The film has one of the biggest war sequences, featuring over 10,000 people. Studio Green has signed up with top distribution houses to release the film on a massive scale across the globe.

Directed by Siva, *Kanguva* stars Suriya Sivakumar, Disha Patani, and Bobby Deol and will release in cinemas nationwide on November 14, 2024.