

the pioneer

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

The pioneer

The busting of the Janwada farmhouse party is not what Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy meant by political bombs, but that is a self-goal by BRS leaders. Political bombs mean the Kaleshwaram Project, electricity deals, Budhan, the ED and hawala. The Kaleshwaram, electricity and Budhan land scams will come out soon

— Yennam Srinivas Reddy, Mahbubnagar MLA



P4

Bengal home to all: Mamata



INDIA AND SPAIN SIGN MOUS ON INFRA, RAIL TRANSPORT



'I can't limit myself to only playing roles of my AGE GROUP'



DON'T MISS...

Chintalapudi LI Scheme will be...

Minister for Housing and I&PR, K Parthasarathy, has assured the speedy completion of the Chintalapudi Lift Scheme to address irrigation needs and resolve issues faced by rural residents in the district. The Minister laid the foundation stone for several development works at Annavaram village on Monday. Among these, he inaugurated the construction of a CC road at an estimated cost of ₹20 lakh, funded through MGNREGA. On the occasion, he also planted saplings to promote greenery in the area. Addressing the...

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World looking at India with new...

Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Monday the world is now listening to India with rapt attention and seriousness, and everyone is looking at the country with new hope and discussing the vast possibilities it presents in different fields. Addressing a gathering at Lathi in Amreli district of Gujarat after launching development projects worth Rs 4,800 crore, he said countries that participated in the recent BRICS summit (held in the Russian city of Kazan) expressed their eagerness to join hands with...

-PAGE: 5

India has entered cyclical growth...

Japanese brokerage Nomura on Monday said the Indian economy has entered a phase of "cyclical growth slowdown" and the Reserve Bank's estimate of 7.2 per cent GDP expansion is "overly optimistic". The brokerage said it sees "rising downside risks" to its GDP growth estimates of 6.7 per cent in the ongoing FY25 and 6.8 per cent in FY26. "We believe India's economy has entered a cyclical growth slowdown. Coincident and leading growth indicators point to a further moderation in..."

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India women need to resolve batting...

India will be hoping to resolve their batting brittleness in their quest to win the third and final women's ODI and seal the series against New Zealand here on Tuesday. It was clear from the first match, which the hosts won by 59 runs through a fine effort by the bowlers, that India's batting is not in top shape, and the second one-dayer underscored that reality. India's batting went a notch down on Friday as they were bundled out for 183 while chasing 260. It was a tough target indeed, but not improbable in nature...

-SPORTS

Rs 238 cr compensation to 1.46L flood victims: Spl CS



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Revenue Department Special Chief Secretary R.P. Sisodia announced that compensation amounting to Rs 238.38 crore has been disbursed to 1,46,318 flood victims across the State.

In a statement issued on Monday, Sisodia emphasised that the compensation process was conducted with full transparency, ensuring that all eligible victims received financial assistance for property losses. He noted that the government provided multiple opportunities for the affected individuals to apply for compensation.

Sisodia said that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu directed officials to adopt a humanitarian approach in delivering aid. Information for compensation disbursement was meticulously gathered through ward and village secretariat staff, with the payments credited directly to the victims' bank accounts.

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The Special Chief Secretary recalled that the Chief Minister had camped with the district administration for ten days to oversee relief operations personally, leaving only after normalcy was restored in the flood-hit areas. He commended the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams for their dedicated efforts in managing the relief operations. Sisodia further announced that any victims who were inadvertently left out of the compensation process could still register their grievances through the Public Grievance Redressal System to claim their due.

According to Government Order (GO) No. 5, compensation is only provided to families whose homes were submerged or damaged for over two days due to natural calamities. However, recognising that many victims could be excluded under this rule, the Chief Minister ordered a relaxation of these conditions. Subsequently, the government issued GO No. 13, ensuring that all affected victims are eligible for compensation.

63K cr works soon: Lokesh

Meets Tesla CFO Vaibhav Taneja and proposes EV production at Anantapur

AMARAVATI PROJECT IN FAST LANE

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

IT and Education Minister Nara Lokesh has said that the construction and developmental works by the government and private sectors in and around the capital Amaravati, worth USD 7.5 billion (Rs 63,000 crore) will start soon.

Lokesh, who is currently touring the USA, has appealed to industrialists to invest in the state, which has a favourable environment in all aspects.

"I explained that various construction and development works will be started in the vicinity of the capital Amaravati with USD 3 billion in the government sector and USD 4.5 billion dollars in the private sector," Lokesh said in a social media post on Sunday night.

He further said new green field seaports are coming up at Machilipatnam, Ramayapatnam, Kakinada and Moolapet areas of the state.

He also said the upcoming Visakhapatnam International Airport at Bhogapuram is set to boost large-scale economic activities there. The work on the airport will be completed in the next 18 months.

Continued on Page 2

- Lokesh is currently in the USA, encouraging industrialists to invest in Andhra Pradesh due to its conducive business environment.
- Lokesh meets industrialists, including Dropbox co-founder Sujoy Jaswa, during his visit.



- He will participate in the ITServe Alliance Synergy Conference in Las Vegas today and unveil an idol of former CM N T Rama Rao in Atlanta on October 31.
- He also met Ross Perot Jr. in Dallas to discuss developing industrial and logistics parks in Andhra Pradesh, similar to the Alliance Texas project.

RTC driver's viral dance floors IT Minister

VIJAYAWADA: Impressed by a video in which a driver of the state-run transport corporation is seen dancing to "Kili Kiliye" song from Junior NTR starrer Devara movie, Minister Nara Lokesh on Monday said he will meet the dancer after returning from the US. When a netizen pointed out that the driver was



suspended over his dance moves, the minister said he would be immediately reinstated. The dance video by a driver of Tuni depot of Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) went viral with even Lokesh saying "Superb dance brother keep it". "I hope the bus passengers had as great

a time watching the performance as I did, without any complaints!" Lokesh said on X on October 26. However, a netizen tagging the minister said the driver was suspended after the video surfaced. In response to that, Lokesh said the "suspension" will be revoked and he will be taken back into work. "The suspension orders will be revoked, and he will be taken back to work immediately. I will meet him personally when I come back," he said. Lokesh is currently touring the US. An official of APSRTC said that the driver, an outsourced employee, was not suspended and is on duty.

GGH heads in AP shuffled

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The state government has transferred several Assistant Directors of Medical Education (ADME), Professors, and Principals of Government Medical Colleges (GMCs), as well as Superintendents of Government General Hospitals (GGH), on administrative grounds. The transfers were made under the direction of the Director of Medical Education, and a government order (G.O. RT No. 649) was issued by the Special Chief Secretary of Health, Medical & Family Welfare Department, M.T. Krishna Babu, on Monday.

According to the order, Dr. N.V. Sundarachary, Principal of Machilipatnam GMC, has been transferred to serve as Principal of



Guntur GMC, while Dr. T.T.K. Reddy, the current Principal of Guntur GMC, has been posted to Machilipatnam GMC.

Gottipati refutes Jagan's claims on FPPCA charges

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar has dismissed allegations made by YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy regarding the recovery of Fuel and Power Purchase Cost Adjustment (FPPCA) charges by DISCOMs. The minister criticised the YSRCP government for hiking power tariffs nine times during its five-year rule, which, he said, placed an unbearable burden on common people.

Addressing the media at the Secretariat on Monday, Ravi Kumar

strongly objected to Jagan Mohan Reddy's remarks on FPPCA recovery. He stated that the previous government under N. Chandrababu Naidu had handed over the power sector with surplus electricity generation, but the YSRCP regime crippled the sector during its tenure.

Responding to Jagan's comments that FPPCA recovery was a "Divali gift" from the government, the minister remarked, "He has no right to speak on power tariff hikes, given the YSRCP's mismanagement."

Continued on Page 2

Dy CM Pawan warns poachers of stern action

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj and Forest K. Pawan Kalyan has issued a stern warning to poachers, stating that strict action will be taken if animals are hunted. Pawan Kalyan unveiled a poster from the Forest department on anti-poaching measures at his camp office in Mangalagiri on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, the

Deputy Chief Minister emphasised that poaching, killing, and smuggling of wild animals are serious offences punishable under the law.

He stressed that protecting forests and wildlife is a collective responsibility. "Animals also have the right to coexist with humans on this earth," he stated, urging everyone to show compassion and kindness towards animals.

Continued on Page 2

Adani Group ready to invest in AP, says CM



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu announced that a delegation from the Adani Group met with him on Monday to discuss potential investments in the state and var-

ious projects. Naidu stated, "I met with a delegation from the Adani Group led by Mr. Rajesh Adani, Managing Director of Adani Exports Limited, and Mr. Karan Adani, Managing Director of Adani Ports and SEZ Limited, to explore a range of investment opportunities in Andhra Pradesh."

He added, "Their presentation highlighted projects that could drive comprehensive growth across key sectors in the state, including ports, mining, ring roads, IT, tourism, and AI. They also expressed their commitment to rebuilding Amaravati and supporting our vision for Swarnandhra Pradesh."

FREE GAS CYLINDERS' SCHEME



Orders issued for funds release

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has issued orders for the release of funds to implement its flagship 'free gas cylinders' scheme from November onwards. A total of ₹894.92 crore has been sanctioned for the initiative.

The Civil Supplies Department's ex-officio Secretary, G Veerapandyan, issued GO No. 38 on Monday, facilitating the release of these funds.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu will officially launch the scheme on October 31, though the booking of gas cylinders under this scheme will commence from October 29. Once the

scheme is inaugurated, eligible beneficiaries will receive their free gas cylinders.

The government has allocated ₹2,684.75 crore annually to provide three domestic gas cylinders per year to each eligible family. Beneficiaries will receive the subsidy amount directly into their bank accounts after delivery of the cylinders.

For queries, beneficiaries may contact the toll-free number 1967. Civil Supplies officials informed that there are 1,06,772 domestic gas connections in the Combined Krishna district. Beneficiaries are required to complete their e-KYC at their respective gas dealerships to avail the scheme benefits, officials added.

Women face bias for giving birth to daughters

JAVVADI LAKSHMANA RAO
lakshmana123@gmail.com
■ VISAKHAPATNAM

I feel lost and don't know what to do." Another woman from Madhurawada, who chose to remain anonymous,

expressed similar feelings. "I leave it to your judgment," she said, her voice filled with despair. Her family's indifference towards her and her daughter

has made her feel isolated and unsupported.

Despite societal celebrations of the birth of girls, many still perceive them as burdens. A senior official from the Domestic Violence Cell at MVP Police Station stated, "We've encountered cases where husbands want to divorce their wives solely because they had a girl." This year alone, over 20 cases of gender-based discrimination have been reported, with a notable number involving newly married couples. Alarmingly, some women undergo early sex determination tests and face harassment if the foetus is female. The threat of divorce hangs heavily over many families. "Some men are willing to leave their wives because they have a girl child," the official explained.

Continued on Page 2



A senior official from the Domestic Violence Cell at MVP Police Station stated, "We've encountered cases where husbands want to divorce their wives solely because they had a girl." This year alone, over 20 cases of gender-based discrimination have been reported, with a notable number involving newly married couples. Alarmingly, some women undergo early sex determination tests and face harassment if the foetus is female.

In a troubling reflection of societal biases, an increasing number of women are experiencing discrimination and neglect following the birth of daughters. This harsh reality has been highlighted by victims who have courageously shared their painful stories with the Domestic Violence Cell. Speaking exclusively to The Pioneer, Lakshmi (name changed), a resident of Gajuwaka, shared her profound sorrow, "I was thrilled to have a daughter, but my joy was fleeting. My in-laws rejected me, and my husband left me for months. They openly threatened to abandon me if they saw the child.

SEEDAP trains 1.36 lakh youths, 1.04L secure jobs

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Society for Employment Generation and Enterprise Development in Andhra Pradesh (SEEDAP) chairman, Deepak Reddy Gunapati, announced that the state government aims to generate 20 lakh jobs over the next five years. Speaking at a press conference on Monday, he shared that SEEDAP has already trained 1.36 lakh youth, of whom 1.04 lakh have secured employment.

Deepak Reddy stated that SEEDAP plans to expand its efforts further, targeting the creation of 1 lakh jobs annually and promoting enterprise development.

"Our programmes align with the government's goal of generating 20 lakh jobs, as envisioned by HRD Minister Lokesh, who aims to position Andhra Pradesh as a hub for highly skilled professionals," he said. He added that the Skill Census initiative, a first-of-its-kind effort to map the state's work-



"Our programmes align with the government's goal of generating 20 lakh jobs, as envisioned by HRD Minister Lokesh, who aims to position Andhra Pradesh as a hub for highly skilled professionals".

force, is a step in that direction. "We are working towards making Andhra Pradesh the Skill Capital of India," he asserted. He highlighted that SEEDAP's initiatives are aligned with the Prime Minister's 'Vikshit Bharat 2047' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' missions, as well as the Chief Minister's 'Swarna Andhra 2047' vision. "Our aim is to ensure global success for 'Telugu people,' he

remarked. SEEDAP currently manages the DDUGKY programme and plans to take up 12 more skilling projects, becoming a one-stop solution for skill development in the state. To further its mission, SEEDAP will prepare a comprehensive action plan in consultation with Sector Skill Councils (SSCs), industry stakeholders, and training partners, which will be presented to the Minister.

"We are encouraging SSCs to establish Centres of Excellence (CoEs) and develop cluster models to support local industries and reduce rural migration," he said. Deepak Reddy also noted that SEEDAP is actively pursuing international placements for trainees. "We will address any skill gaps efficiently under the guidance of the HRD Minister," he concluded.

Future of VSP: Workers seek clarity on SAIL merger or shutdown

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As questions swirl around the future of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP), workers are voicing deep concerns. They claim an atmosphere of confusion has taken hold, casting uncertainty over whether the plant will be merged with the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) or if a complete shutdown is imminent.

"The proposed privatization is a direct threat to our livelihoods and the region's economy," said a spokesperson for the plant workers' union. Protests have been ongoing at the Kurmannapalem intersection for an impressive 1,354 consecutive days, reflecting the sustained unrest among the labor force. In addition to statewide demonstrations, protest programmes were held in Delhi; however, no response has been forthcoming from the central government. In addition to statewide demonstrations, protest programmes were held in Delhi; however, no response has been forthcoming from the central government. The recent state election



The recent state election brought a coalition government to power, raising hopes that new pressure from coalition allies could sway the Centre towards supporting the steel sector. As a result, VSP managed to clear some outstanding dues, offering a glimmer of hope. However, key concerns persist, particularly regarding the plant's lack of a dedicated raw material supply or mining rights. "Without access to raw materials, how can the plant survive?" questioned a senior worker.

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However, key concerns persist, particularly regarding the plant's lack of a dedicated raw material supply or mining rights. "Without access to raw materials, how can the plant survive?" questioned a senior worker. "If they want to protect this plant and its workers, a merger with SAIL would be a

logical step. Why isn't it happening?"

Amidst the uncertainty, many suspect hidden agendas may be at play. "We're told that the steel sector will be protected, yet it feels like there's a quiet push to weaken the plant, to eventually hand it over to private interests," said a veteran employee. This sentiment has driven workers to demand transparency and sincerity from both state and central governments to merge the plant with SAIL.

At its peak, VSP employed over 20,000 workers. Now, the number has dwindled to

around 12,000-13,000. "People who have dedicated their lives here are now facing options like deputation to NNDCC or voluntary retirement," said a former department supervisor. "We need the government to step up and protect this plant and its people."

As workers press for immediate action, they remain hopeful for a resolution that secures the plant's future and preserves the livelihoods of thousands. "This plant is not just steel—it's a lifeline for the entire region," said a longtime employee. "It deserves a fighting chance."

'Job Mela' at Tiruvuru tomorrow

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Principal of Government Degree College in Tiruvuru, Dr. M. Suseela Rao, announced that a Job Mela will be held on October 30. The event is being organised jointly by the Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation (APSSDC) and the Society for Employment Generation and Enterprise Development in Andhra Pradesh (SEEDAP).

In a press release, Dr. Suseela Rao mentioned that the Job Mela aims to provide employment opportunities to students and job seekers, offering them a platform to engage with various companies and recruiters.

He encouraged interested candidates to participate in the event to explore career prospects.

The Job Mela will offer more than 80 positions. Genius Consultant Limited will recruit for 50 posts, while D-Mart will fill another 30 positions during the event. NTR District Skill Development Corporation officer D. Victor Babu will also be present at the mela.

Dr. Rao advised interested candidates who have completed SSC, ITI, Intermediate, or Degree courses to attend the Job Mela on October 30.

Raymond Group donates Rs 2 cr to CMRF

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Raymond Group has donated Rs 2 crore to the Government of Andhra Pradesh for flood relief efforts.

Raymond Group chairman Gautam Singhania met Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu at the Secretariat in Amaravati on Monday and personally handed over the cheque. The contribution was made towards the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) to support ongoing flood relief operations.

In addition, the Bank of Baroda (BoB) contributed Rs 1 crore to the CMRF. BoB Zonal Head and General Manager Ritesh Kumar, along with Zonal Deputy Manager Sudhakar, presented the cheque to the Chief Minister.

The Private Schools Association also extended



support by donating Rs 65 lakh. Gangavarapu Vijaya Bhaskar handed over the cheque on behalf of the association. The Rashtriya Seva Samithi (RASS) contributed Rs 50 lakh, with its General Secretary Venkata Ratnam

and Project Director Nagaraju presenting the cheque.

Further, NRI Maddipati Krishna donated Rs 10 lakh to the CMRF, enhancing the collective support for the flood-affected regions.

Over 60 flights get bomb threats

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More than 60 flights of Indian carriers received bomb threats on Monday, sources said. In 15 days, over 410 domestic and international flights operated by the Indian carriers have received hoax bomb threats. Most of the threats were issued through social media. The sources in the know said around 21 flights each of Air India and IndiGo, and about 20 flights of Vistara received the threats on Monday. An Air India spokesperson said a number of its flights were subject to security threats received on social media on Monday.

"Following the laid down protocols, relevant authorities were immediately alerted, and all security procedures strictly adhered to, as per guidance from the regulatory authorities," the spokesperson said in a statement.

Churn out an entrepreneur from every family: Minister

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In tune with Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's vision of nurturing an entrepreneur in every family across Andhra Pradesh, Minister for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Rural Poverty Alleviation, and NRI Empowerment, Kondapalli Srinivas, urged officials from various departments to work collectively. These departments, integrated with the state's rural poverty alleviation mission, have been tasked with facilitating this ambitious initiative.

At a coordination meeting held on Monday at the office of the Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP), the minister provided clear direc-



tions on measures to transform members of self-help groups (SHGs) into micro and small-scale entrepreneurs. He emphasised the need to economically empower SHGs by guiding their members toward entrepreneurship. Addressing potential hurdles, the minister stressed the importance of swift, practical solutions and

announced that coordination meetings will now be held every month to ensure timely progress.

The meeting was attended by Nandini Salaria, CEO of the MSME Corporation, G. Shekhar Babu, CEO of the Food Processing Society, along with officials from the National Small Industries Corporation, Khadi and Village Industries Board, National Highways Development Authority, and various departments such as Fisheries, Horticulture, Agriculture, and Animal Husbandry. Representatives from NABARD and the Kaithi voluntary organisation also participated, discussing the alignment of schemes linked with their respective departments.

Stroke in young adults rising: Expert

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Stroke is one of the leading causes of death and disability, says expert. Stroke occurs when the blood supply to a part of the brain is interrupted, either by a clot (ischemic stroke) or a burst (hemorrhagic stroke) in the blood vessel.

On occasion of World Stroke Day, Dr B Lakshmi Anusha, Consultant-Neurology, Aster Ramesh Hospitals, Vijayawada, highlighted the recent trend of stroke in young adults in the age group of 40s and 50s.

"When we talk about stroke we usually think of older people with risk factors like atherosclerotic disease, diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol. Although the cause is unknown, the incidence of stroke in young adults has been increasing in the recent years.

She said that diagnosing stroke is of utmost impor-



tance for younger patients because of impact of a prolonged disability period on the career and family unit. Stroke is a condition that affects the quality of life. It is paramount to raise awareness regarding stroke as younger patients often don't expect to be at risk, which leads to delays in seeking medical help.

One of the most promising advancements in stroke care is the extension of the treatment window beyond the traditional 4.5 hours. In certain cases, particularly with

new imaging technologies, doctors can assess whether brain tissue is still salvageable even after the standard window has passed. Now, with the help of advanced imaging techniques, we can sometimes treat patients even beyond 12 hours of stroke onset. This has been a game-changer for many who couldn't make it to the hospital in time. However, the success of these treatments still hinges on having the right setup and expertise in place. This late-window treatment opens doors for stroke patients who, in the past, would have been considered beyond help. Surgical techniques, such as thrombectomy, offer hope for a better recovery when performed within this extended timeframe. The critical factor remains rapid transportation to a hospital equipped with these capabilities or a stroke-ready hospital.

Despite these advances in treatment, prevention

remains the best strategy. Lifestyle modifications, such as regular exercise, maintaining a healthy weight, and managing conditions like hypertension and diabetes, are essential to lowering stroke risk. Simple steps like standing up frequently during long periods of sitting, reducing salt intake, and managing stress through mindfulness or relaxation techniques can make a significant difference. The goal of World Stroke Day is to raise awareness on the risks and symptoms of stroke, especially in younger populations. With better awareness and access to advanced treatment, the hope is that fewer people, regardless of age, will face the long-term consequences of a stroke. The message is clear: time is brain, and the right treatment at the right time and the right place can mean the difference between a full recovery and lifelong disability.

Women face...

Continued from Page 1

"Pregnant women are often sent back to their maternal homes, and fathers refuse to recognize their own daughters." The stigma attached to girl children, particularly those with disabilities, is equally concerning. "Mothers face blame for their children's disabilities, such as Down syndrome or physical impairments," the official added.

Dr T Padmavathy, a retired gynaecologist from KGH, emphasises the need to address the root of the problem. "Gender discrimination is a crime, and those who practice it should face strict consequences," she stated. "A mother is not to blame for having a girl child; it is the male chromosomes that determine the sex. Holding the mother accountable is unfair." Dr Padmavathy also noted that the rising number of couples facing infertility only exacerbates the issue. "It's unreasonable to discriminate based on gender when many are suffering from the heartache of not having children at all. Girls are excelling in various fields, often outshining boys. It's time to shed these outdated beliefs and celebrate every child, regardless of gender."

As these women's experiences show, the battle against gender bias continues, and the need for awareness and change is more important than ever. In a society where every child should be cherished, the voices of these mothers highlight the urgent need for equality and respect.

India's 1st private facility for making military aircraft takes wings

PNS ■ VADODARA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Spanish counterpart Pedro Sanchez on Monday inaugurated the Tata Aircraft Complex in Vadodara, a facility which marks India's first private venture dedicated to the production of military aircraft, specifically the Airbus C295.

During the inauguration, Modi highlighted the strengthening partnership between India and Spain, stating this project is a vital step in the 'Make in India, Make for the World' initiative.

He extended his best wishes to the teams at Airbus and Tata, while also paying tribute to the late industrialist Ratan Tata for his contributions.

The Airbus C295, designed and initially manufactured by the Spanish aerospace firm CASA, which is part of Airbus Defence and Space, is a medium tactical transport aircraft capable of performing a variety of roles, including medical evacuations, disaster response, and maritime patrol missions.

Under the C295 programme, a total of 56 aircraft are to be delivered, with 16 being supplied directly by Airbus from Spain and the remaining 40 manufactured in India by Tata Advanced Systems Ltd, according to an official release.

Modi and Sanchez toured an exhibition set up for the launch, where Modi showcased the factory as a representation of the new work culture in India.

63K cr works soon...

Continued from Page 1

The minister said an AI (artificial intelligence) university will be set up in Amaravati which will cater to the needs of new firms working in the sector.

Lokesh said he met some industrialists at the residence of Dropbox co-founder Sujay Jaswa in San Francisco.

The minister will participate in the ITServe Alliance Synergy Conference to be held in Las Vegas on October 29 and unveil the idol of for-

mer Chief Minister N T Rama Rao in Atlanta, USA on October 31.

In a post on Monday, Lokesh said he visited Tesla headquarters and met with its Chief Financial Officer Vaibhav Taneja in Austin and pitched Anantapur district as the perfect destination for its eclectic vehicles and battery units.

In a separate post, he said he met with Ross Perot Jr. Chairman of Perot Group and Hillwood Development, in Dallas and discussed

how the coastal region of AP has an ideal environment for developing industrial and logistics parks on the lines of their Alliance Texas project.

"Looking forward to collaborating with Perot Group for smart city projects and the development of our larger cities," Lokesh said.

The Perot Group is a global player in the real estate, technology, data and energy sectors. It is recognized for developing Alliance Texas, a 27,000-acre master-planned community.

Gottipati refutes...

Continued from Page 1

Ravi Kumar further accused the YSRCP government of mishandling the sector by cancelling power purchase agreements (PPAs) and coercing producers to transfer contracts to loyalists. "It was during their regime that DISCOMs were authorised to recover FPPCA charges, forcing consumers to bear the brunt of steep tariff hikes in 2022-23 and 2023-24," he said.

The minister added that not only the power sector but several other sectors also suffered under the YSRCP's administration.

Dy CM Pawan...

Continued from Page 1

Pawan Kalyan asserted, "According to the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, hunting, killing, and trafficking of wild animals is strictly prohibited.

We will take stringent action against anyone who hunts wild animals or destroys forest resources."

He recalled recent incidents where officials arrested those responsible for killing a leopard in the Koundinya forest area of Chittoor district within three days, and the poachers were subsequently sent to judicial remand.

Similarly, the police apprehended those involved in the killing of a rare animal in Palnadu district shortly after the incident. He encouraged the public to report any instances of killing, hunting, or trafficking of wild animals in their areas, urging them to contact the forest officials at the toll-free number 18004255909. Present at the event were Forest Department Special Chief Secretary Ananta Ramu, PCCF Chiranjeevi Chowdary, and forest officers A.K. Naik, Sharavanan, Rahul Pande, and Santhipriya Pandey.

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha
Tithi: Dwadashi: Oct 28 07:51 AM to Oct 29 10:32 AM
Trayodashi: Oct 29 10:32 AM to Oct 30 01:15 PM
Nakshatram: Uttara Phalguni: Oct 28 03:24 PM to Oct 29 06:33 PM
Hasta: Oct 29 06:33 PM to Oct 30 09:43 PM
Rahukalam: 2:51 PM to 4:16 PM
Yamagandam: 9:08 AM to 10:34 AM
Varjyam: 04:04 AM to 05:52 AM
Gulika: 11:59 AM to 1:25 PM
Amritakalam: 10:25 AM to 12:13 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:37 AM to 12:22 PM
VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: Partly Cloudy
Temp: 33°C
Humidity: 68%
Sunrise: 6:04 AM
Sunset: 5:38 PM
Updated: October 28, 2024 5:00 PM

Repair canal breaches soon: MLA to NSP officials

GOVT PLANNING TO RELEASE IRRIGATION WATER TO CANALS ON NOV 15

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Mylavaram MLA Vasantha Krishna Prasad has directed the officials concerned to repair the breaches in the Nagarjuna Sagar Project (NSP) canals, caused by the recent floods, on an urgent basis. He noted that the Kondapalli, Jakkampudi, Chevutur, Velvadam, Jamalapuram, Rangapuram, Nuzvid, and Mylavaram major branch canals have all been affected. He urged the officials to take immediate action to address these breaches.

The MLA conducted a review meeting with all NSP Deputy Executive Engineers, Assistant Executive Engineers and other officials at his camp office in Mylavaram in the NTR district on Monday. He enquired about the breaches to the canals at various areas of the NSP.

Speaking on the occasion,



Mylavaram MLA Vasantha Krishna Prasad speaking at a review meeting with the NSP officials at his camp office in Mylavaram on Monday

Krishna Prasad said that many NSP major branch canals were breached due to the recent floods in the district, causing obstruction to the supply of irrigation water to the NSP Ayacut. The NSP officials were asked to take up the repair works on a war-footing.

Further, he stated that the State government plans to release irrigation water to the NSP canals and NSP major branch canals on November 15. So, before releasing irrigation water, officials were advised to complete the breach closing works to avoid issues in

supplying irrigation water. After releasing the water, officials should take appropriate steps to fill all irrigation tanks in the district, he directed. Meanwhile, MLA Prasad suggested that officials coordinate with farmers in identifying canal breaches.



Somireddy 'assaults' security staff at Krishnapatnam Port

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Somireddy Chandrashekar Reddy, who had pledged to revive container terminal services at Adani Krishnapatnam Port, is now facing flak for allegedly assaulting security personnel at the port. According to reports, Somireddy led an 'all-party delegation' and tried to enter the port premises without following security protocols, demanding entry without inspection.

When the security staff insisted on carrying out their procedures, Somireddy allegedly got into a physical altercation. The situation escalated further when Somireddy entered the office of the Port CEO, reportedly using abusive language, prompting the CEO to leave the room in protest.

Agrigold scam: Form SPV, demands CPI

Scores of Agrigold customers and agents take part in protest held at Dharna Chowk



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Agrigold Customers and Agents Welfare Association (AGC&AWA) staged a protest called 'Maha Vignaapana Deeksha' at Dharna Chowk in Vijayawada on Monday, demanding justice for them. CPI State secretary K Ramakrishna inaugurated the Maha Vignaapana Deeksha and expressed his party's solidarity with the association.

Scores of Agrigold customers and agents attended the protest led by AGC & AWA honorary president Muppalla Nageswara Rao, president EV Naidu, general secretary V Tirupathi Rao, and deputy general secretary BV Chandrasekhar. They demanded action from the State government to solve the issue.

Addressing the gathering, Ramakrishna said that the government should form a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to resolve the long-pending issue of Agrigold cheating. "The SPV should be led by efficient officials. The CPI leadership will meet Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu in this regard and request him to resolve the financial scam as

early as possible," he added.

The Agrigold financial scam occurred 10 years ago, and many victims are still waiting for justice. He requested that the Chief Minister convene an all-party meeting to gather suggestions from all party leaders before forming an SPV. He lamented that while governments change in the State, the Agrigold issue remains unresolved. He expressed concern that addressing the issue after a long delay would not be effective.

Muppalla Nageswara Rao urged the State government to fulfil its election promise of ensuring justice for the victims after selling the Agrigold company assets. The previous TDP government led by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu took over the assets of the Agrigold company and paid Rs.5 lakh compensation to 142 families, he reminded.

Meanwhile, Rao said that the previous YSRCP government paid Rs.906 crore in two phases to the small depositors following his association's agitation. On the other hand, the government should protect the Agrigold company assets, he said. Progressive

Democratic Front (PDF) MLC KS Lakshmana Rao stated that he would give an adjournment notice in the Legislative Council to allow the government to discuss the Agrigold issue in the upcoming budget session. On behalf of the PDF MLCs, Lakshmana Rao extended support to the victims' agitation. Former Minister Vadde Sobhanadreeswara Rao opined that there would be no financial burden on the government to resolve the Agrigold issue. CPM State secretary member Y Venkateswara Rao requested the government to consider it as a problem that affects many families.

Meanwhile, TDP politburo member Varla Ramaiah visited Agrigold's Maha Vignaapana Deeksha and held discussions with Muppalla Nageswara Rao and other leaders. He said that the TDP-led NDA government is committed to resolving the issue. Once again, he would take the matter to the notice of the CM, he added.

Later, Ramaiah relinquished the Maha Vignaapana Deeksha by offering lemon water to the leaders.

HC Judge Sekhar visits Durga temple

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh High Court Judge Justice TCD Sekhar, along with his family members, visited the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada on Monday. He and his family members offered special prayers to the goddess Durga Devi.

Kanaka Durga Temple Executive Officer (EO) KS Rama Rao accorded a warm welcome to Judge Sekhar and provided a darshan to his family as per the temple etiquette.

Later, the Vedic Scholars gave blessings to the Judge family. EO Rao presented Seshu Vastram, Laddu Prasadam and Portrait to Judge Justice Sekhar.

Minister condemns sexual assault of 3-yr-old

ASSURES GIRL'S FAMILY OF THE GOVERNMENT'S FULL SUPPORT

PNS ■ VIJAYANAGARAM

The Woman and Child Welfare and Tribal Welfare Minister, Gummidi Sandhya Rani, expressed deep shock and outrage over the recent sexual assault of a three-and-a-half-year-old girl in Gantiada mandal. She described the incident as "extremely inhumane and deplorable".

Visiting the young victim at Gosha Hospital in Vizianagaram, Sandhyarani stressed the urgent need for societal change to prevent such tragedies. "This is a crime that demands our collective condemnation. We must work together to create a society where such atrocities do not happen again," she declared.

The Minister assured the girl's family of the government's full support and discussed her health condition



with medical staff. She ordered improved treatment and necessary medical tests to be conducted. In a subsequent media briefing, Sandhyarani demanded stringent punishment for the perpetrators. "We cannot allow those who commit such heinous acts to evade justice. I urge our legal community not

to grant bail to the accused," she asserted. She revealed that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has ordered the establishment of a fast-track court to expedite the judicial process. The Minister emphasised the crucial role of parents in educating children about right and wrong. "It is vital that we

instill these values in our boys and girls alike," she said. "We all share the responsibility to protect our girls and ensure that justice is served."

Superintendent of Police Vakul Jindal confirmed that the accused had been arrested and that all necessary scientific evidence was being collected. "We are committed to establishing a fast-track court and conducting a thorough investigation into this incident," Jindal said.

Zilla Parishad Chairperson Mazji Srinivasa Rao has demanded strict action against the perpetrator of the heinous crime against a toddler. "The crime must be thoroughly investigated, and the accused should face severe punishment." He urged the government to implement measures to ensure the safety of children and prevent such incidents.

Mental strength key to women's online safety: MP

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Visakhapatnam MP and GITAM President M. Sriharath stressed the importance of mental strength and digital literacy in combating the growing threat of cybercrime, particularly against women. At the Women and Technology (WAT) conference, Sriharath emphasised that "mental strength plays a critical role in protecting oneself online". He highlighted the need for self-confidence and digital literacy to empower women to navigate the digital world safely.

City Police Commissioner Dr. Sankhabrata Bagchi echoed these concerns, warning citizens about the rising number of cybercrimes, especially among youth, women, and unemployed individuals. "Be cautious when sharing personal information on social media and avoid engaging with unknown callers," he advised.



Experts at the conference pointed out disturbing trends in cybercrime. Sumit Bhattacharya, COB AP of The

Hindu, noted that cyber fraud is more prevalent among educated urban populations compared to rural counterparts. He

cited recent incidents like the Cambodia online job scam, advising students to be wary of unknown apps and unsolicit-

ed online business calls.

Dr. Rajesh from GITAM's EECE department warned that pirated software could expose users to criminal networks, advising users to understand their device manuals to prevent scams. Symbiosis Technologies CEO O Nares Kumar stressed the need for cybersecurity awareness and mental resilience among youth.

The conference featured contributions from various experts, including AIDWA secretary Ramadevi, GITAM professors Dr. Niveditha and N. Chitra Saxena, and representatives from the Information Technology Association of Andhra Pradesh. The event aimed to raise awareness, educate the public, and empower women and youth to protect themselves against online threats.

Tribal Freedom Fighters Museum to finally take shape

State government releases Rs. 6.75 cr

PNS ■ PADERU

After a delay of five years, the construction of the long-awaited Tribal Freedom Fighters Museum in Lambasingi is set to gain momentum. The recent release of funds from the coalition government marks a significant breakthrough, following the previous YCP government's failure to allocate the State's share of the budget.

"The release of Rs. 6.75 crore by the State government will finally allow us to proceed with the project. We are eager to see the museum come to fruition," said a senior official from the Tribal Welfare Department. The department has recently received administrative permissions for fund disbursement.

Approved by the Central government in 2021, the museum is dedicated to honouring the history of tribal freedom fighters who played a pivotal role in India's Independence Movement against the British rule. "This museum is more than just a building; it is a tribute to the brave tribal leaders whose contributions have been long overlooked. We aim to pass on their legacy to future generations," said Minister for Tribal Welfare Gummidi Sandhya Rani.

The foundation stone for the museum was laid in October 2021 with an estimated budget of Rs 35 crore, with the Central government contributing Rs. 15 crore and the State government allocat-



The main section of the museum is ready for slab construction.

ing Rs 20 crore. While the Center had released Rs. 7.5 crore as part of its share in 2021, the YSRCP government reportedly misused the funds for other purposes. Despite the Centre's subsequent disbursements of Rs. 3.5 crore and Rs 4 crore in early 2023, construction remained stalled due to the State's inaction.

"Despite the Centre's best efforts, the project was stuck in limbo because the state government didn't release its share. We hope this new allocation will finally break the deadlock," commented a spokesperson from the contractor responsible for the construction.

The project is expected to transform the museum into a key tourist destination. Plans include showcasing statues, weapons, and historical artifacts used during the tribal rebellion. Additionally, modern facilities like shopping complexes, an amphitheatre, and restaurants will be constructed to benefit the local tribal communities.

State-level RBI 90 Quiz held in V'wada

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) celebrated its 90th year of operations this year and launched the RBI 90 Quiz as part of the year-long series of commemorative events. The quiz, a nationwide general knowledge competition, targets undergraduate students and is conducted in multiple stages. The online phase of the quiz took place from September 19-21, and based on their performance, college teams advanced to the State-level rounds.

The Andhra Pradesh State-level round of the RBI 90 Quiz was held at Hotel Novotel in Vijayawada on Monday, where 166 students, comprising 83 teams, competed. The team from the Indian Institute of Petroleum & Energy (IIPPE), consisting of Kritagya Sharma and Ujjwal Narayan, secured



first place. The second and third places were taken by teams from Spaces Degree College and the Indian Institute of Information Technology Design and Manufacturing (IIITDM), Kurnool, respectively. The prize amounts for the top three teams were Rs. 2 lakh, Rs. 1.5 lakh, and Rs. 1 lakh, respectively.

The winning team from IIPPE will move forward to the zonal round, scheduled to take place between November 21, and December 4, with the national final set for December 2024 in Mumbai. RBI FIDD GM Mahana and other officials attended the event, highlighting its significance in celebrating the RBI's milestone anniversary.

State govt pledges to transform rural AP: Sandhyarani

Major investments in Saluru constituency, including road projects

PNS ■ PARVATIPURAM

Minister for Women and Child Welfare and Tribal Affairs, Gummidi Sandhyarani, has reiterated the government's commitment to rural development. During a public event on Monday, she highlighted significant investments in the Saluru constituency, including road infrastructure projects worth crores of rupees. "We are dedicated to transforming rural landscapes and improving the quality of life for our people," Minister Sandhyarani emphasised. "Our government is committed to bridging the urban-rural divide and ensuring that every citizen, regardless of their location, has access to essential services and opportunities."

She also underscored the



importance of the village festival programme. "This initiative aims to foster progress in rural areas by celebrating local culture, traditions, and talents. It will also provide a platform for local artisans and entrepre-

neurs to showcase their products and generate income." The Minister assured the public that the government is diligently working to fulfill all electoral promises. "As a Diwali gift, we will provide free gas

cylinders to women in our State," she announced. "This is a small token of our appreciation for their invaluable contributions to our society." Highlighting the collaborative efforts of the State leader-

ship, she said, "Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan are working tirelessly to secure the second round of funding to propel village development. Their vision for a prosperous and equitable Andhra Pradesh is inspiring."

Reflecting on the challenges faced during the previous administration, Minister Sandhyarani criticised the stripping of powers from sarpanches in gram panchayats. "With the formation of our coalition government, we have restored full authority and respect to the village sarpanches, empowering them to lead local development efforts," she concluded. "We believe that empowering local leaders is the key to achieving sustainable and inclusive development."

Chintalapudi LI Scheme will be speeded up: Min

PNS ■ ELURU

Minister for Housing and I&PR, K Parthasarathy, has assured the speedy completion of the Chintalapudi Lift Scheme to address irrigation needs and resolve issues faced by rural residents in the district.

The Minister laid the foundation stone for several development works at Annavaram village on Monday. Among these, he inaugurated the construction of a CC road at an estimated cost of ₹20 lakh, funded through MGNREGA. On the occasion, he also planted saplings to promote greenery in the area.

Addressing the gathering, Parthasarathy announced that developmental projects worth ₹120 crore are underway across Eluru district, with foundation stones laid for all major works.

He recalled that the 'Palle Panduga' programmes were organised to improve basic amenities in rural areas across the state. The Minister assured that all projects initiated under the 'Palle Panduga' programme would be completed by the Sankranti festival.



Highlighting government support for farmers, he mentioned that ₹1,600 crore had been disbursed to them for paddy procurement.

"Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is focused on developing Andhra Pradesh industrially on a large scale. The works on five major projects, including the Chintalapudi Lift Scheme, will be completed soon to ensure water supply for both irrigation and drinking purposes. Measures have also been taken to address the grievances of rural residents," the Minister emphasised.

Collaboration is essential for Anakapalli's growth: Kollu

PNS ■ ANAKAPALLI

Excise Minister Kollu Ravindra highlighted the importance of collaboration for Anakapalli's growth, emphasizing the Chief Minister's special affection for the district. He reaffirmed the government's dedication to fulfilling its promises and maintaining public trust. During his maiden visit as district in-charge minister, Ravindra held a review meeting to discuss ongoing development initiatives and future projects. He announced increased monthly pensions, job notifications, and the establishment of Anna canteens. Additionally, he mentioned the repeal of the land titling act and the allocation of Rs 4,500 crores for village development through the village festival program.



Addressing pressing issues, the minister facilitated a robust discussion on infrastructure development, particularly regarding roads, sand supply, housing construction, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds. Local public representatives voiced concerns about the condition of various roads, urging the upgrade of critical routes such as Achathapuram to Anakapalli, Parawada to Anakapalli, and Aganampudi to Akhathapuram into four-lane highways connected to national highways. They also pressed for an increase in CSR fund allocations for the district.

Legislative Assembly Speaker Chintakayala Ayyanna Patrudu contributed significantly to the discourse, emphasizing the necessity of implementing contracts for

the Anrak Aluminium Factory and ensuring job provisions for displaced individuals. He raised concerns regarding heavy factory vehicles damaging local roads and advocated for a ban on cannabis in the district. Patrudu also highlighted the urgency of completing the fresh water scheme for Narsipatnam and proposed utilizing sand from the Godavari River for local construction projects. Additionally, he recommended the construction of an indoor stadium to boost local sports.

In a bold vision for Anakapalli's industrial growth, MP CM Ramesh proposed ambitious initiatives, including bringing water from the Polavaram left canal to the district, establishing a steel plant, and developing a logistics hub and central school. He also called for urgent solutions to issues concerning the Gowada sugar industry, controlling industrial pollution, and increasing CSR fund allocations.

YSRCP threatens to protest against power tariff hike

PNS ■ PRODDATUR

YSRCP spokesperson and former MLA Rachamalla Sivaprasad Reddy has demanded an immediate rollback of the recent power tariff hike by the TDP coalition government, warning of widespread protests if the government failed to act. He criticized the tariff increase, stating it adds a significant financial burden on 70% of consumers, with each household's expenses rising by around Rs. 400 per month.

Speaking to the media in Proddatur, Rachamalla Sivaprasad Reddy pointed out a contradiction in the government's recent announcements. While they introduced a free gas scheme for Diwali, promising to save households Rs. 200 per month, they simultaneously raised power tariffs, adding Rs. 6073 crore annually to consumer costs.

This, he noted, would heavily impact those using 200 to 300 units of electricity per month.

'Naidu trying to privatise ports'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP Krishna district president and former minister Perni Venkatramaiah (Nani) has slammed Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's governance, accusing him of failing to create wealth and instead privatising public assets for the benefit of his allies.

He pointed out that while YS Jagan's administration has initiated numerous infrastructure projects, Naidu's government has stalled projects like the Ramayapatnam, Machilipatnam, and Moolapeta ports and is now looking to privatise them.

Speaking to the media at the party's central office, Nani condemned the selective silence of certain media outlets, which had previously



criticised the YSRCP but now ignore soaring electricity tariffs and the rising costs of essentials under the TDP regime.

He noted that the electricity sector's losses, which ballooned during Naidu's tenure, highlight his inefficiency, with sector debts

increasing from Rs 29,552 crore to Rs 86,215 crore.

Challenging Naidu's political claims, Nani dismissed the assertion of a Supreme Court mandate for the tariff hike, calling for greater transparency.

He also pointed out that while Jagan's government has advanced 17 medical college projects, Naidu's administration has obstructed these initiatives in favour of privatisation.

Nani demanded a rollback of decisions regarding electricity tariffs, port privatisation, and the privatisation of medical colleges. In response to comments made by former Minister Balineni Srinivasa Reddy, he dismissed them, advising Balineni to focus on local issues instead.



1 killed, 3 hurt in blast at cracker unit

PNS ■ AMALAPURAM

One person died and three others, including his wife and parents, were injured in an explosion at a firecracker manufacturing unit in Edida village, Mandapeta mandal, Konaseema district, on Monday. According to police, the explosion occurred while firecrackers were being made in a house in the village, resulting in the instant death of Kalla Venkata Krishna (30).

His wife, Jayasri, sustained serious injuries in the incident and has been admitted to the Government General Hospital (GGH) in Kakinada, where her condition is reported to be critical.

Venkata Krishna's parents, Srinivas and Savitri, also suffered injuries and are currently undergoing treatment at the GGH in Mandapeta. Police revealed that firecrackers were being manufactured in the house without the necessary permissions.

ED submitted fresh evidence in skill scam: Kannababu

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Former minister Kurasa Kannababu has said that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu is guilty in the Skill Development Scam explaining that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) recently submitted evidence in the High Court, further clarifying Naidu'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, totalling Rs. 151 crore, as



conspiratorial, asking what they have to say now.

Further, Kannababu pointed to a previous CAG report that already exposed the scam, noting that Rs. 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.

He emphasised the need for a transparent investigation by an independent body, rather than through the state CID, to uncover the full truth.

GVMC prioritises drinking water quality

Stresses importance of regular testing

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) has intensified its efforts to ensure the quality of drinking water supplied to its residents. Commissioner Dr P Sampat Kumar has directed engineering officials to conduct regular quality tests at all water pump houses.

During an inspection at the Block 18 Water Supply Pump House in Burma Colony on Monday, Dr Kumar emphasised the importance of regular testing. "The drinking water supplied by GVMC is routinely tested for chlorine to prevent contamination. We supply 300 MLD of drinking water daily through various channels," he stated. The Commissioner was accompanied by Chief Engineer P Siva Prasad Raju and Superintending Engineer KVN Ravi.

The Block 18 pump house has a capacity of 2,270 kiloliters and supplies 10 MLD of drinking water to approximately one lakh residents through 18,182 service connections. "Eighteen water samples are tested daily," informed Superintending Engineer KVN Ravi. Senior analyst Sivaramakrishna from the Regional Public Health Laboratory confirmed that the water quality test results showed 2 ppm EC 320, indicating good quality and no contamination.

Dr. Kumar announced plans to introduce mobile test vehicles to facilitate on-site water testing throughout the city. He highlighted ongoing infrastructure improvements, including the relocation of 375 out of 398 water pipelines connected to canals. "GVMC addresses approximately 25 to 30 pipeline leaks daily," he added.

To prevent contamination, cleaning measures are being carried out to avoid manhole overflows.

Rampant corruption in Excise Dept

COMPREHENSIVE INVESTIGATION NEEDED

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Jana Sena MLA Vamsi Krishna Srinivas has launched a blistering attack on the YSRCP government, alleging rampant corruption within the Excise Department under Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. Addressing the media on Monday, Srinivas claimed that high-ranking officials have misappropriated substantial funds, suggesting that a comprehensive investigation would expose the depth of corruption involving prominent YSRCP leaders.

"There was a massive scam of crores in the Excise Department under Jagan's watch," Srinivas asserted. "Jagan expanded the department only to let it disappear under his regime." He specifically accused YSRCP MPs Mithun Reddy and Raj Kasireddy of being directly involved in the alleged liquor scam, asserting that an outsourcing structure had been established to siphon off



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funds. "If Raj Kasireddy, a suspected frontman, is investigated, we will see just how much money was looted," he emphasised.

In a bid for accountability, Srinivas announced his intention to file a formal complaint with Minister Kollu Ravindra, urging immediate action regarding the alleged misconduct in the Excise Department. Srinivas's criticism extended beyond the Excise Department, chal-

lenging the integrity and effectiveness of YSRCP's leadership since its inception. "From the beginning, people have been leaving YSRCP due to Jagan's failures," he remarked. "The promised prohibition on alcohol hasn't been implemented, the Polavaram project is incomplete, and other promises remain unfulfilled."

He also referenced comments made by YS Sharmila, Jagan's sister, who charac-

terised her brother's smile as "plastic." "Everything Sharmila said about Jagan's fake smile is true," Srinivas remarked, underscoring the perceived disconnect between the government's promises and its actual performance.

Moreover, Srinivas accused prominent YSRCP figures, including MP Vijayasai Reddy and YV Subba Reddy, of merely parroting Jagan's directives, hinting that several former YSRCP ministers and MLAs are poised to leave the party. "If Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan open the gates, all but Jagan would join," he claimed. Srinivas did not shy away from targeting former Vice Chancellor of Andhra University, Prasad Reddy, alluding to misconduct in his tenure. "The law will take its course in Prasad Reddy's case," he stated firmly, indicating that accountability will be sought for all alleged wrongdoings.

Vijayawada Rly Division observes Vigilance Awareness Week

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Vijayawada Division, South Central Railway, is observing Vigilance Awareness Week from October 28 to November 3, with a series of events aimed at promoting integrity, transparency, and accountability. Every year, Vigilance Awareness Week is observed in the week in which the birthday of Bharat Ratna Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel falls in.

At the outset, Divisional Railway Manager Narendra A. Patil administered the 'integrity pledge' to staff and Branch officers at the DRM Office Portico on Monday. After the pledge, the Division conducted a Walkathon from DRM office to Vijayawada Railway Station. Students

from Jack n Jill School, Bharat Scouts and Guides, and railway employees enthusiastically participated in the walkathon, holding placards and spreading awareness about the importance of integrity and transparency.

Speaking on the occasion, the DRM stated that Vigilance Awareness Week is an opportunity for us to reaffirm their commitment to integrity, transparency, and accountability. "As a railway employee, we must strive to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct and promote a culture of transparency and accountability," he added.

Srinivasa Rao Konda, ADRM, Operations, Anand Katta, Sr. DPO, other officers and staff took part in the event.

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PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

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GVMC is committed to providing purified water to prevent diarrheal diseases," Dr. Kumar reiterated. "We urge the public to cooperate with GVMC by following health protection measures. By taking these steps, GVMC aims to ensure the safety and quality of drinking water for all residents of Visakhapatnam."

KTR's politics will end if he supports Raj Pakala: Srinivas

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao's political career would end if he supports his brother-in-law Raj Pakala in the Janwada farmhouse party case, Mahbubnagar MLA Yennam Srinivas Reddy said.

Pointing out that KTR has been saying shamelessly that the police did not provide a search warrant, Yennam Srinivas Reddy said the police have the legal right to conduct searches without giving prior information.

He said that it is ridiculous to say that the party was held without Raj Pakala's presence in his residence.

Addressing the media at the CLP Media Hall on Monday, Srinivas said, "Don't we know the history of Raj Pakala?"

He said that Raj Pakala fled as he was afraid of drug tests and as Vijay Madduri tested cocaine positive.

KTR's words would have had meaning if Raj Pakala had come forward and explained to the media what happened at the farmhouse, he said.

"KTR should not try to support his brother-in-law. If he does, his political career would end. It was Raj Pakala who made the BRS admin give permission to pubs in Jubilee Hills. Is investigating the case wrong? Where is the involve-



Raja Pakala should surrender before the police if it was false or else the public will believe that Vijay Madduri's version is right. KTR's counter attack will not work at all," he said.

"The busting of the Janwada farmhouse party is not what Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy meant when he spoke about political bombs. That is a self-goal by BRS leaders. Political bombs mean the Kaleshwaram Project, electricity deals, the Bhudhan scam, the ED and hawala bombs. The Kaleshwaram, Electricity and Bhudhan land scams will come out soon," the Srinivas said.

ment of the CM and officials in it? Police conducted raids after complaints but it was not a sting operation. Sting operations started during BRS rule," Srinivas said. He said that Vijay Madduri told the police that he had consumed drugs after Raj Pakala gave them. "That is a serious matter."

ACROSS THE STATES



Three die of electrocution while putting up Diwali lights

Three persons, two of them minors, were electrocuted, and one person was injured when the ladder they were using to hang lights for Diwali touched a wire in Chhattisgarh's Mungeli district on Monday, police said. The incident occurred in front of a petrol pump in the Sargaon police station area, where the victims were putting up decorative lights, an official said. As per preliminary information, the victims were dragging an iron ladder when it came in contact with an overhead wire, he said. The official said the four were electrocuted and sustained burn injuries. They were taken to a community health centre in Sargaon, where three of them were declared dead. The other injured man was later shifted to the Chhattisgarh Institute of Medical Sciences (CIMS) in Bilaspur, he said. The deceased were identified as Priyanshu Yadav (15), Arjun Yadav (15) and Ram Sahu (20), while the injured man is Shiva Pandey (20), he said. The official said a case has been registered in connection with the incident.



Union min inaugurates BRIC-NABI institute in Mohali

Union Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh on Monday inaugurated the BRIC-National Agri-Food Biomanufacturing Institute (NABI) here. The establishment of BRIC-NABI is a strategic merger between the National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute (NABI), Mohali and the Centre of Innovative and Applied Bioprocessing (CIAB), Mohali, both of which are autonomous institutes under the Department of Biotechnology (DBT). The combined expertise of NABI and CIAB will enhance agricultural productivity through innovations such as genetically modified crops with higher yields, better disease resistance, and improved nutritional content, an official release said. Speaking about the new institute, the minister said the establishment of BRIC-NABI will strengthen the collaboration between biotechnologists and bioprocessing experts. "When the idea of merging NABI and CIAB was floated six to seven years ago, I am glad that the DBT has been the first to integrate 14 institutes under it under one umbrella. Today, with this merger, we have moved one step further," he said. The minister told the gathering that it is a coincidence that this event is being held at a time when the government of India has come up with 'BioE3 Policy' (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment).



ATM engineer robbed in Itanagar

An ATM engineer was robbed of Rs 1.5 lakh at an outlet of the bank in Itanagar on Monday, police said. The incident happened at an ATM of the State Bank of India (SBI) in Bank Tinali area of the city, they said. Dipak Deori, employed as an engineer with Hitachi Payment Services, was checking the ATM when the incident happened, Superintendent of Police (Capital) Rohit Rajbir Singh said. He had received Rs 1.5 lakh from the local SBI branch for testing the cash deposit machine, police said. Around 2 pm, while he was checking the machine, a man came on a motorcycle along with another person, stole his bag containing the cash and fled, Singh said. A case was registered and efforts were being made to identify those behind the incident, he said. Singh said officers immediately rushed to the spot, examined the complainant, and obtained CCTV footage. All check gates were alerted and a thorough search was being conducted across the Capital Complex, he said.

World looking at India with new hope: Modi

PNS ■ AMRELI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Monday the world is now listening to India with rapt attention and seriousness, and everyone is looking at the country with new hope and discussing the vast possibilities it presents in different fields.

Addressing a gathering at Lathi in Amreli district of Gujarat after launching development projects worth Rs 4,800 crore, he said countries that participated in the recent BRICS summit (held in the Russian city of Kazan) expressed their eagerness to join hands with India and become partners in its development journey.



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, during his visit to New Delhi last week, announced that his country will issue visas to 90,000 Indians every year, and it is now up to the country's youth to develop skills for the same, said Modi.

"As we continue to develop, India's pride and influence on the world stage is increasing. The whole world is looking at

India with new hope, and a new vision. People have started recognizing India's potential. Today, the whole world listens to India seriously and attentively, and everyone discusses the possibilities present within India," the PM affirmed. "Every country is asking about the possibility of investment in India," he told the gathering.

Modi said when a dairy cooperative was started in Amreli district in 2007, there were only 25 villages associated with it, but now that number has grown to 700.

Ports of Amreli district will be developed under the central government's port-led growth initiative, he emphasised.

MAHARASHTRA ELECTONS

Two Cong turncoats, among 25 candidates in BJP's third list

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The BJP on Monday released its third list of 25 candidates for the Maharashtra assembly polls, giving tickets to two Congress turncoats and the personal assistant of Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

The BJP, so far, has announced candidates for 146 seats. Polls to the 288-member Maharashtra assembly will take place on November 20, while results will be declared on November 23.

Jitesh Antapurkar, who won a by-poll in 2021 on a Congress ticket and is considered close to former chief minister Ashok Chavan, has been nominated

from Deglur. Chavan had left the Congress recently and joined the BJP, which made him a Rajya Sabha MP.

Archana Patil-Chakurkar, daughter-in-law of Congress veteran and former Lok Sabha Speaker Shivraj Patil, has been fielded from Latur City seat. She had joined the BJP from the Congress in March this year. Sumit Wankhede, who has served as Fadnavis's personal assistant for several years, will be the BJP's candidate from Arvi assembly constituency.

Incidentally, the BJP had given Fadnavis' former PA Abhimanyu Pawar a ticket from Ausa in 2019. Pawar had won at the time.

WAYANAD BYPOLL

Priyanka accuses Centre of undermining Constitutional values

PNS ■ WAYANAD

Kicking off her second phase of campaigning, Congress candidate for the Wayanad by-election, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, on Monday launched a scathing attack on the BJP-led Centre, alleging that the values of the Constitution are constantly being subverted under its rule.

Addressing a corner meeting organised in Meenangadi in this hill district, the AICC general secretary referred to the violence in Manipur and alleged that "planned" attacks are taking place against minorities in the country.

"You know the BJP government at the Centre is spreading fear, anger and distress



among the community. You have seen the attack on minorities. You have seen the attacks in Manipur. You have seen again and again anger, spread of hatred and fear concerted in a planned fashion," she alleged. Priyanka also alleged that policy after policy is made to

favour Prime Minister Narendra Modi's friends rather than the common people.

"There is no compassion towards the farmers who are toiling day and night. There is no understanding of tribal people, their lands are taken away for rich people," she

here, please consider it as your home state. Do not misunderstand me but consider my views," she added.

Among the pandals she inaugurated were Girish Park Kali Puja, Janbazar Sammito, India Club, Venus Club, and Youth Friends Club Kali Puja, which are located in areas that have significant non-Bengali population.

"During festivals, we all celebrate together in Bengal. I do not want people to fight or create any differences," she said.

BENGAL HOME TO ALL: MAMATA

PNS ■ KOLKATA



Asserting that West Bengal is home to all sections, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday urged the people to live in peace and celebrate every festival together.

Inaugurating a number of community Kali Puja pandals across Kolkata, she also urged the people to celebrate with environment-friendly fire-crackers.

"Bengal is such a place, where nobody will ask you about your caste, or which state you belong to or what is your religion or whether you are vegetarian or non-vegetarian. Nobody will ask whether you like Bengal or not. This is your right," Banerjee said.

"We are proud to say that you all are citizens of Bengal. Whenever you are staying

'Institutional collapse gave way to dangerous form of cronyism'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Stepping up his attack over conflicts of interest allegations against SEBI chief Madhabi Buch, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday said the current regime is no longer merely encouraging monopolies but actively concentrating the nation's wealth in the hands of a few.

Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, made the remarks in his post along with a video featuring him and Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khara in which they talk about the alleged conflicts of interest of SEBI chief Buch.

"Institutional collapse has now given way to a more dangerous form of cronyism -- Adani Bachao. The current regime is no longer merely encouraging monop-



olies, it's actively concentrating the nation's wealth in the hands of a few," Gandhi said.

The Madhabi Buch scandal goes deeper than initially imagined, he said, adding that it may be that Buch, entrusted with safeguarding retail investors, has been manipulating the system to protect Adani's

interests and his inflated valuations.

Those entrusted with protecting common Indians and their investments have abrogated their responsibilities and are indulging in wide-scale corruption and malpractice, he alleged.

The Congress has consistently raised these issues, is investigating these scams, and exposing the truth to the public, Gandhi said.

In the video, Khara is seen explaining to Gandhi the various conflicts of interest allegations against Buch and how there were powers behind her that were at work, an apparent reference to the Adani Group.

Sharing the video, the party said the role of the SEBI chairperson is to maintain the security of the stock market and ensure investments of common Indians are not at risk.

PATEL BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

Nadda urges people, MPs, MLAs to take part in 'Run for Unity'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP president JP Nadda on Monday urged people and all public representatives, including MPs, MLAs, office bearers and workers of his party, to take part in the 'Run for Unity' event. He asked the BJP workers to promote Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's ideals during Tuesday's event by sharing his thoughts and contributions with the "#Sardar150"

hashtag on social media.

"As Bharat Ratna Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's jayanti (birth anniversary) coincides with Diwali this year, the 'Run for Unity' event will take place tomorrow, Tuesday, October 29," Nadda said in a statement. "I urge everyone to participate in large numbers and spread the message of national unity as well as the importance of fitness," he said. The BJP chief asked party

workers to make "every effort" to ensure the event's success. "Additionally, I request all public representatives, including BJP MPs and MLAs, along with all party office bearers, to participate in this event and honour Sardar Patel ji," Nadda said. Sardar Patel's unparalleled role in ensuring the unity and integrity of India will always serve as an inexhaustible source of inspiration for all of us, he added.

Money laundering tends to affect economic aspects: HC

PNS ■ CHENNAI

The Madras High Court on Monday said money laundering tends to affect the economic aspects leading to a vicious cycle, whereby its consequential ill-effects burden the common man. Hence, a free and fair investigation into these offences was a prerequisite.

Allowing a petition filed by the Directorate of Enforcement, a division bench comprising Justices S M Subramaniam and V Sivagnanam set aside an order of a local court, accepting the closure report filed by Central Crime Branch (CCB) in the predicate offence against lottery baron S Martin and three others. Following the seizure of Rs 7 crore, the CCB filed a case against Martin and the others. Thereafter the ED filed case under PMLA.

"The facts established and the legal position considered made us to arrive at an irresistible conclusion that the Closure Report filed by the CCB dated November 14, 2022 accepted by the Judicial Magistrate-I, Alandur stands set aside", the bench added.

Further, previous research is also limited on how PM2.5 pollution affects people in low- and middle-income countries where populations are typically exposed to higher levels of air pollution and bear a greater burden of PM2.5, the researchers said.



tigation into such offences not only defeats the object of PMLA, but will prevent the course of a fair investigation, thereby saving the offenders from the clutches of PMLA.

Any legislation was ultimately for the benefit of the common citizen. The benefit of the legislation must serve the country and common man. The implementation of the legislation determines the effective functioning of the law. When execution was done in a fair and unbiased manner, it ensures that the fruits of the law reaches the common man. Even in PMLA, the object was to protect the economic strength of our nation.

Hence, it was essential the investigating agencies involved in the process of unearthing the offence pertaining to money laundering do so in a free and fair manner and work with an object to protect the interest of the common man, the bench added.

reopen a flyover near Nathu Colony Chowk in the national capital.

"If MLAs start coming to court, what will happen? He should raise the issue in the legislative assembly...The man has to know how to raise an issue. He has to get everyone's work done," it remarked.

The court granted time to the counsel for the authorities to seek instructions on the plea, but remarked the MLA should raise the issue in the assembly or explore other alternatives.

Secure release of TN fishermen, TN CM tells Centre

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Monday sought the Centre's immediate intervention in securing the release of 140 fishermen from the state including 12 from Nagapattinam, apprehended by the Sri Lankan navy, and also their fishing vessels that have been seized. The twelve fishermen were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy on October 26 and including this, there have been 30 such incidents this year, he said.

"As of today 140 fishermen and 200 fishing boats are in the custody of the Sri Lankan authorities. I urge your immediate intervention to take up this issue on a high-priority basis to secure the immediate release of all the arrested fishermen and their boats," Stalin said in a letter addressed to Union External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. "I am writing this to highlight the incidents of apprehension of Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan authorities. The arrests have become a festering issue that calls for constructive diplomatic efforts," the CM said. "This recurrent issue continued to pose a severe threat to the livelihood, safety, and security of the fishermen and their families in India, particularly in Tamil Nadu, he contended.

MANY ASTHMA CASES RELATED TO PROLONGED EXPOSURE TO PM2.5

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

About a third of global asthma cases reported in 2019 were related to prolonged exposure to pollution due to PM2.5 or fine particulate matter, a finding that researchers said provided "sufficient evidence" on the link between air pollution and asthma. The review of 68 studies conducted from 2019-2023 across 22 countries, including South Asian ones, showed that for every 10 micrograms per cubic metre increase in PM2.5, the risk of developing child-

hood or adult asthma increases by over 21 per cent.

The respiratory condition is marked by recurring symptoms of wheezing, coughing and breathlessness and can severely impair quality of life. "We estimate that globally in 2019, almost a third of asthma cases are attributable to long-term PM2.5 exposure, corresponding to 63.5 million existing cases and 11.4 million new cases," first author Ruijing Ni, from the Max Planck Institute for Chemistry, said. While evidence has suggested long-term exposure to



fine particulate matter pollution to be a risk factor for developing asthma, the researchers said that inconsistencies in earlier studies left potential health risk

of this exposure to debate.

However, their analysis, published in the journal One Earth, found that "long-term exposure to PM2.5 significantly increases asthma risk in both children and adults and is associated with (nearly) 30 per cent asthma cases globally".

There is now sufficient evidence and a high level of confidence in the link between long-term exposure to ambient PM2.5 and asthma, the researchers said. Children formed majority of the affected -- over 60 per cent, the study

found. Lungs and immune function are known to fully mature until early adulthood, which is why children are considered more vulnerable to air pollution, as exposure to it can lead to inflammation and over-reactivity in airways.

Further, previous research is also limited on how PM2.5 pollution affects people in low- and middle-income countries where populations are typically exposed to higher levels of air pollution and bear a greater burden of PM2.5, the researchers said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Scammed!

An increasing number of people are falling victim to online scammers who exploit fear to extort money

Digital scams are evolving into a growing menace, targeting people across India and robbing them of their hard-earned money. As more people rely on online platforms for communication and transactions, fraudsters are exploiting the digital landscape to orchestrate sophisticated schemes. A recent warning from Prime Minister Narendra Modi has highlighted the alarming rise of a new scam known as the 'digital arrest.' This scam involves tricking victims into believing they are under legal scrutiny for their misdeeds and asking them to remain isolated. The victims are placed under a 'digital arrest,' by the fraudster posing as a police officer. To get out of this they must cough up the money to drop the fabricated charges. The 'digital arrest' scam preys on fear and confusion. The term 'digital arrest,' sounds like a legitimate legal procedure. Recognising the severity of the issue, Prime Minister Modi issued a national warning to educate citizens about this fraudulent scheme. He clarified that the concept of a 'digital arrest' does not exist under Indian law, and no government agency would ever request personal details via phone or video call. PM Modi also provided a three-step action plan for anyone targeted by digital scammers: Victims should not panic but try to record the interaction if possible, which could help authorities trace the criminals later. No official agency will threaten or make demands online. Any such approach should be treated with suspicion. And lastly, Citizens should immediately report the incident to the national cyber helpline and local police. Several cases of 'digital arrests' have emerged across the country, underlining the scam's rapid spread. Recently, Malayalam film actor Maala Parvathi fell victim to the scheme when fraudsters, posing as Mumbai police officers, accused her of smuggling drugs to Taiwan. Fortunately, she recognised the ruse before any money was exchanged.



The cases of digital arrest scams are just tip of the iceberg. Everyday millions of people are getting calls from scamsters and losing their money. Digital scams like the 'digital arrest' are effective because they exploit common fears about the legal system. The scammers often impersonate authoritative figures such as police officers, Central Bureau of Investigation officials, or representatives from the central bank, making their threats seem credible. The use of deepfake technology, fake ID cards, and well-crafted backdrops adds to the authenticity of their claims, convincing many to comply out of fear. PM Modi's alert is timely, however the efforts must be made by the enforcement agencies to ramp up cyber security and nab these fraudsters. Cyber security must be given top priority at the highest level as it also concerns national security as well. The Government and law enforcement agencies must put their act together to combat the surge in digital scams. Awareness campaigns, cybercrime helplines, and increased collaboration with technology companies must be employed to take on these scamsters.

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PICTALK



Women compete in a boat race at the Dal Lake, in Srinagar

Chasing votes at the cost of social harmony



J S RAJPUT

In a nation as diverse as India, the relentless pursuit of electoral gains has overshadowed efforts to foster genuine unity and social cohesion

It is indeed disconcerting that every aspect of life in India is impacted by the process of garnering votes in the next election, and the unscrupulous politician never hesitates to use it to create a wedge between people of varied religious pursuits. I say this as I reflect upon the Bahaich clashes, these were indeed communal whether we like to use that term or not! And these are a continuation. Reports of stone pelting on religious processions are now considered routine, except by the real victims, no one cares much about what media reports with adequate caution. It is indeed disappointing to recall that the culture of wasting time and human resources that could better be utilised for deliberations on national concerns and issues is deliberately wasted, for presumed petty political gains. When parliament is disrupted, when the Supreme Court finds time to listen to frivolous repeated petitions from politicians who fight cases on public funds, the national interest ipso facto gets relegated to the background.

One could go on citing instances of the decline in the conduct of leaders - exceptions apart - who enter politics just to look after themselves, their family and their clan! They hardly care for the loss of public credibility of the elected representatives amongst people and the public! Not many would even be aware of the resignations of KD Malaviya, TT Krishnamachari and Lal Bahadur Shastri? Over the last seventy-five years people have learnt to comprehend the real intentions of the politicians of different hues, their proclamations notwithstanding, they know who is communal and who is not! This incisive analytical skill emerges from the realisation that India abounds in the presence of diversity, be it of races, climate, language, cultures, flora and fauna, and most prominently and importantly, of religions and faiths. The beauty lies in the presence of harmony, bonhomie and lasting unity that makes this nation unique in multiple ways. It is a robust democracy that was ushered in after independence and has survived a couple of upheavals, uncertainties and even the dreaded Emergency of 1975-77.



What makes India click? It is the eternal strength of the ancient culture that guides the organisation of the personal and social lives of individuals, families and communities through high moral, ethical and philosophical inputs that possess the strength to accept the universal unity of humankind. It prepares people to value caring for others including nature, the learned of the past and present, and remain ever grateful to the family, parents, community and the nation. The culture so strengthened exhorts the individual to remain ever prepared to sacrifice personal good for the community good. The Indic religions accepted, and propagated the philosophy of the 'Search for Truth' - the ultimate human pursuit of the ultimate perfect - by each religion being one of the many available paths to reach the same goal! If one accepts this premise, then there is no scope for any bitterness or any of the induced, lured or enforced religious conversions! Every Indian, irrespective of his religious persuasion, needs to realize that conversions were not part of ancient Indian philosophy and thought, as acceptance of diversity based on equality makes it irrelevant and irrational.

Organised efforts to convert people to one's religion were non-existent before the arrival of the Abrahamic religions. The tragedy of the current-day political discourse in India is its total concentration on irrelevant negativity and its total targeted focus on votes in elections. Gandhi ji had mentioned in 1922 that 'defects of elections' would weigh heavily on our people once the British left India! The citizens realise it, but politicians do not! Why not focus on the essentials of democracy, positive and forward-looking aspects of the national policies that would better the lives of the last man in the line who was the focus of Gandhi? The right path to be followed is known to all those in power, and also those eagerly awaiting people's mandate to grab the power again! Thus, the fact remains that apart from the memories of invasions communal hatred persistently ignited by the British, India could maintain social cohesion and religious amity. It is also a fact that to disrupt it, sustained attempts by the inept religious leaders to widen the wedge persist. They exploit the chilling scars of partition to augment the perceptions of 'being different' between the two communities. There are external agencies that openly interfere in disrupting the religious fabric of India. India opted for a secular state while Pakistan, created on communal lines, opted to become a theocratic state, mischievously pretending to give equal rights to the followers of other religions. The



WHY NOT FOCUS ON THE ESSENTIALS OF DEMOCRACY, POSITIVE AND FORWARD-LOOKING ASPECTS OF THE NATIONAL POLICIES THAT WOULD BETTER THE LIVES OF THE LAST MAN IN THE LINE WHO WAS THE FOCUS OF GANDHI?

partition of Pakistan created the possibility of minorities being treated better in Bangladesh. It has proved a myth after the recent change of government here. Hindus are being subjected to targeted killing and violence. Overall, it seems to be an irretrievable, human ingenuity could always find a way out, and it must do so. I interact with intellectuals who practice Islam and know its basic philosophy. They are convinced that Islam is being wrongly understood not only by persons of other faiths but unfortunately by numerous practitioners of Islam, including the devout religious persons! This they tell me unhesitatingly, is because of the firm foothold of the clergy unwilling to accept that times are changing fast, and dynamism is a compulsory component of human civilisation. May be, universal spread of modern education could help. Educated young persons shall have to shoulder a big responsibility. It is the initial home and family education that sows the seeds of acceptance of diversity in the child's psyche, and that determines his future approach and attitude towards other religions. It is well known that Pakistan is seriously deficient on this count. India too has work to do on this front. (The writer works in education, social cohesion and religious amity. He is an Atal fellow with the PMML, New Delhi; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DHARMA NEEDS REFORM

Madam — The Vice President of India has said that inequities have no place in a society ruled by Dharma (October 27). This statement requires a wider range of discussions and even debates. If his statement holds good, then the scene prevailing in the country disproves his statement. As per Puranas, the society in the country since ancient times has been under Sanatana Dharma. Social and economic inequalities were there, perhaps in their worst forms, that the persons from certain castes were not entitled to even enter the areas where the people of upper castes were living. The majority of the people were living under poverty, and dharma recommends providing alms as an integral part of life. The ruling dispensation of this day firmly believes in Sanatana Dharma. But inequities are abnormally present on the social as well as economic front. This negates the statement that links Dharma and inequities. This also means propagating Dharma is just an academic course and has nothing to do with ruling or shaping society. In most of the countries, religious scriptures are quoted but not adhered to. Such discourses seem to be to numb the victims and keep them under fear of being punished for raising voices of dissent. Therefore, if the society has to remain in peace, the social inequalities should be removed without any of their traces left unattended and the policy of the rulers should be shaped to ensure equal distribution of national wealth, unlike the present scene marked by producing one billionaire every five days and leaving 81 crore poor to continue to live in poverty with just 5 kg of free rice a month. Religion is an innate affair, but ruling is a public affair. Let us not confuse ourselves.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

HIGH POLLUTION LEVELS IN DELHI

Madam — It is with reference to the news article "BJP Chief hospitalised after taking dip in toxic Yamuna" (October 27). In the months of October and November, Delhi grapples with the stark dual challenge of

Threats disrupt flights



Since October 14, airlines have been receiving threats through social media and other platforms. Indigo, Air India, Akasa, and Vistara Airlines are still receiving these threats, causing confusion at airports and delayed flights. Due to these rumours, a total of 255 flights have been affected, leading to an estimated loss of 600 crore rupees in the aviation sector. This seems to be the first time such frequent threats have been heard. As

a result, the number of air marshals at airports has increased. The rise in social media usage has also led to an increase in "social issues" or problems, as those issuing threats are utilising these platforms. The Ministry of Civil Aviation is considering adding individuals identified for issuing bomb threats to a "no-fly" list. But what about the 600 crore loss? There should be a mechanism to recover damages by seizing the assets of those individuals or organisations responsible for such threats. Stringent action is expected against those who deliberately disrupt national transportation. Additionally, platforms like X and Meta play a role in spreading such rumours, so it's time for us to decide how much we should trust social media. Dattaprasad Shirodkar | Mumbai

CONGRESS ACCOMMODATES SP

Madam — Having lost the Haryana polls to the BJP in the recently held Assembly elections, Congress has announced giving up claims for its share of seats in favour of SP, the lead partner in the INDI alliance in the state. The withdrawal can be termed a tactical move from the alliance point of view, as the Congress hardly has any presence in the state, holding just two seats out of 403 seats in the UP Assembly. The reason advanced for the move that it wants to defeat the BJP to save the constitution and reservation does not hold any water as they have not followed the same strategy in Kerala in choosing to contest against CPI (M), their alliance partner in INDI alliance where as the alliance winning Lok Sabha seat is more important for their declared objective of 'saving the constitution and saving the reservation'. Congress's priority seems to be projecting Priyanka Vadra to the limelight. Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Why small steps matter in the battle against plastic

Many of us struggle to take even the simplest steps—like avoiding single-use plastic or segregating waste — essential for sustaining our planet



SANJAY CHANDRA

The natural resources of the planet are a treasure directly impacting our environment and climate. We need to withdraw judiciously and invest wisely for sustained growth. We can incorporate daily practices to grow this wealth. We live in a high-rise condominium complex. There was an animated discussion on the community WhatsApp group about a few residents feeding cows immediately outside the main exit. This causes the cattle to assemble when officegoers are in a hurry to exit. It is a potential traffic hazard. One gentleman rightly pointed out that the food dumped in plastic bags was also a health hazard. A few vehement voices of protest were raised. For them, feeding the bovine was an age-old tradition. We need to think differently to address issues of concern. A national campaign for a complete ban on single-use plastic was launched a few years back. Many of our smaller states have been conscious of the need for a long time. I travelled to



Sikkim a few years back. The shopkeeper rummaged through his shelves. He could barely manage a few old newspapers to wrap my provisions. Plastic bags have been banned in the state since 1998. We were also advised to bring empty bottles since packaged mineral water bottles were banned in north Sikkim. Individually we fail to be responsive to the urgent needs. Many residents in our complex still demand plastic bags from the fruit and vegetable vendors and the grocery stores. Despite repeated instructions, many stores refuse to do away with single-use plastic. My wife has been carrying cloth bags for the last 15 years whenever she steps out to buy groceries or vegetables, and even to the malls. Municipal

authorities in several cities have successfully implemented the management of segregated waste at the household level. I stayed in Indore for a couple of days a few years back. I was intrigued by a song following me when I stepped out for the morning walk. I noticed people coming out of homes with garbage bags in their hands. It was the garbage collection vehicle playing the melodious song. The song exhorted residents to segregate waste. The song was also a knock on the door about the van's arrival. I had heard so much about the unique model of Indore towards a cleaner and environment-friendly city. This was the living proof. I was surprised to notice construction and demolition debris stacked in front of the houses under construction or renovation. I was told that the municipal department collected waste from the doorstep and disposed of the same at designated sites. All of this has not happened overnight. Someone took the first step. Others joined, to make it a mass

movement. We have been struggling to implement waste segregation within our society for the past 8 years. The rules mandate it. We still manage to find reasons to justify inaction. Even the neighbours are not doing it, segregation is cumbersome, the timing for waste collection does not fit into the routine, and an individual cannot make a difference, are only a few of the excuses for not doing it. The first step is the most difficult to take. We spent a couple of days recently in Alibaug. My wife is passionate about the cause and does not get disheartened easily. I was surprised when she remarked, "It seems that we might not see a cleaner country in our lifetime!" I would remind her and others about Barack Obama's words, "We are the first generation to feel the impact of climate change and the last generation that can do something about it." (The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)





FIRST COLUMN WORKPLACE BULLYING: THE SILENT EPIDEMIC

It often leads to a toxic work culture that diminishes productivity and erodes employee morale



SAKSHI SETHI

Various studies have quite often revealed that around 30 per cent of employees experience bullying at every step they take at their workplace, while a significant portion of the workforce witnesses it without intervening. Unlike harassment, which is more likely to be reported due to the legal and policy frameworks that exist around it, bullying often lacks formal channels for redress. Workplace bullying is a serious and pervasive issue that affects individuals and organisations across various industries. It has become a silent epidemic where the victim's personal life as well as professional performance are often declined regarding mental health resulting in loss of self-esteem. Not only does the employee suffer but for the organisation too the consequences are equally severe. The stress of enduring repeated harassment results in physical health issues such as headaches, insomnia and a weakened immune system leading to decreased employee engagement and productivity. Now, workplace bullying manifests in numerous ways, from overt actions like public humiliation to covert tactics such as excluding someone from important meetings or withholding critical information. It may also involve power dynamics, where a manager targets a subordinate or senior staff and manipulates their junior colleagues. Unlike occasional conflicts or disagreements, this type of bullying is systematic and persistent, leading to a toxic environment for the targeted individuals. However, the psychological impact of bullying can be profound. Victims often experience stress, anxiety, and depression because of the ongoing harassment. This stress further manifests



in physical symptoms that include headaches, fatigue and even cardiovascular issues, as the body's stress response becomes consistently triggered. In extreme cases, the trauma can even lead to severe mental health conditions, affecting victims' self-esteem and overall sense of well-being. Over time, employees or the victim may develop symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) if the harassment is severe or prolonged. The victim may start avoiding their workplace altogether, resulting in absenteeism and some cases, may even resign to escape the toxic atmosphere.

This stigma, combined with the fear of being perceived as weak or incapable, can even prevent them from reaching out for help. The resulting isolation allows bullying to continue unchecked and causes the victims to suffer without the support they need. This isolation further perpetuates the silence surrounding workplace bullying, thereby turning it into a pervasive yet hidden problem. This reduction in productivity doesn't only affect the targeted individual but can also disrupt team cohesion, workflow, and project timelines. This culture of fear can sooner or later result in a breakdown of trust and respect among team members, reducing collaboration and open communication. As more employees become disengaged or demoralised, the organisation's overall culture will suffer, leading to lower employee satisfaction and retention rates. It can't be ignored that workplace bullying is a pervasive issue with wide-reaching effects on individuals, team dynamics and organisational success. Clear anti-bullying policies, coupled with effective reporting mechanisms, can empower employees to come forward without fear of retaliation. Organisations should also invest in regular training to help employees recognise and address bullying behaviours in themselves and others, fostering a workplace culture that discourages mistreatment. Only when an organisation emphasises respect, accountability, and open communication, can the incidence of bullying be reduced thereby leading to a more positive, productive and healthy work environment. preventing workplace bullying will benefit not only the victims but the organisation too, reinforcing a work culture that values employee well-being and mutual respect.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

India-China border pact: A cautious step forward



PARUL CHANDRA

India's path to restoring normalcy with China is fraught with challenges, including a significant trust deficit and complex border disputes



Now that India and China have reached an agreement on disengagement and patrolling in Depsang and Demchok in a step towards resolving the over four-year-long military confrontation in eastern Ladakh, can New Delhi sit back with a quiet sense of achievement? More importantly, can China be trusted to do what it has promised during bilateral meetings, including the recent one between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping on the margins of the recent BRICS summit? The answer is a firm 'No'. For, even though the two Asian giants have seemingly buried the hatchet for now with the new pact being endorsed by their top leaders at Kazan in Russia on October 22, the yawning trust deficit that now marks bilateral ties is unlikely to be bridged any time soon. To be sure, there is not going to be a repeat of the bonhomie witnessed during the Modi-Xi informal summit meetings in Wuhan and Mamallapuram in 2018 and 2019, respectively. When the two leaders met in Kazan, there was expectedly none of the warmth seen during the informal summits. The thaw may have happened, but a long road lies ahead for bilateral ties to warm up. Instead, what Beijing has to deal with now is a hard-nosed New Delhi that's wised up to China's perfidious territorial aggression. India has done well in standing up to Chinese belligerence in eastern Ladakh and in conveying to Beijing that it cannot be business as usual in the face of its brazen flouting of all bilateral border accords. The ongoing eastern Ladakh military confrontation, part of the larger boundary dispute along the 3,488 km long Line of Actual Control (LAC), is nowhere near de-escalation to the pre-April 2020 situation. While the phased disengagement at



WHAT HAS BEEN EQUALLY WORRYING FOR NEW DELHI IS CHINA'S TERRITORIAL AGGRESSION WITH NEIGHBOURING BHUTAN TOO. IT HAS SOUGHT TO BULLY THE TINY HIMALAYAN KINGDOMS AND APPROPRIATE ITS TERRITORY

Depsang and Demchok is a welcome development, New Delhi should not let its guard down. It can do so only at its peril, given Chinese machinations along the LAC and its "salami-slicing" tactics to grab disputed territories. In any case, disengagement is just the first step with de-escalation and finally de-induction of troops being part of India's roadmap for the restoration of status quo ante. It's also laid out the red line for Beijing - the need for "peace and tranquility on the border". What has been equally worrying for New Delhi is China's territorial aggression with neighbouring Bhutan too. It has sought to bully the tiny Himalayan kingdoms and appropriate its territory. With such moves posing a strategic threat to India, the Indian Army stepped in to block Chinese troops from building a road in the Doklam plateau area near the Sikkim-Bhutan-Tibet trijunction in 2017. The rival troops had disengaged after a 73-day face-off, but China has permanently deployed troops in north Doklam since then. What the Chinese PLA sought to do in eastern Ladakh with multiple incursions in the summer of 2020 too was part of its salami-slicing tactics. Bilateral ties went into a deep freeze soon after the bloody clashes in Galwan on June 15, 2020, which left 20 Indian soldiers and an unspecified number of Chinese personnel dead. With the slight easing of tensions now, India will need to tread cautiously. Normalcy in ties seems a long way off but even some measure of stability in the relationship between the two Asian rivals will be a positive development.

For India, this is especially important as it also has a nuclear-armed hostile neighbour in Pakistan on its western borders. A two-front military challenge can bog India down in the region, hobbling its aspiration to be a global powerhouse. The China-Pakistan collusive axis queers the pitch for India. With frosty ties with Pakistan, New Delhi must begin mending ties with Beijing. Towards this end, Modi and Xi have agreed to resume the meetings of the Special Representatives (SRs) of the two countries "to oversee the management of peace and tranquility in border areas and to explore a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to the boundary question". The SRs mechanism was set up in 2003, with 22 rounds of talks being held till now. It has not been met since 2019. However, given the complexity of the boundary question and Beijing's own feet dragging on a resolution, the SR mechanism at best serves as a means for the two sides to remain in dialogue. As New Delhi and Beijing work to bring down tensions, the boundary question will continue to bedevil ties. India's level of mistrust of China will remain high given that it has failed to adhere to previous agreements to maintain peace and tranquility on the border. Beijing, on its part, will remain watchful and wary of India's deepening ties with the US as well as other Quad members. Its active role in the Indo-Pacific construct and Quad - both seen as a counter to China's growing hegemony -- has Beijing worried. That said, India knows it has no

option but to deal with China, owing to its geographical proximity as well as Beijing's economic-industrial clout. The bilateral economic and trade relations are heavily tilted in China's favour. India imported \$101.7 billion worth of goods from China in 2023-24, way more than from any other country. On the other hand, India's exports to China were worth only \$16.7 billion, a mammoth trade deficit for New Delhi. India depends heavily on imports from China in many sectors, like industrial machinery, telecom, electronics, electrical equipment, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, iron, steel and the like. In certain sectors, like pharmaceuticals, Indian manufacturers will find it difficult to operate without imports from China. Despite many steps and policy decisions taken by the Indian government to move towards greater balance in trade, more so after the current border problem erupted, the imbalance has only further accentuated. In this, economics is trumping politics or national sentiment. On the military front, India should not slacken in dealing with China with a firm hand, as it has done since the Galwan clashes. It should also redouble efforts to push for a resolution of the different issues, including the border question. With the festering territorial dispute having long-term strategic implications for India, it needs to strike the right balance between rebuilding trust and proceeding with caution. (The writer is a senior journalist who writes on strategic affairs; views are personal)

Embracing Ayurveda: Bridging tradition with modernity on Ayurveda Day

Rooted in the principles of balance and harmony, Ayurveda guides individuals to achieve holistic wellness

World Ayurveda Day, celebrated each year on the auspicious occasion of Bhagwan Dhanvantari Jayanti, offers a profound opportunity to honour Bharat's rich heritage of health and well-being. This year, on October 29, 2024, we come together to recognise Ayurveda—not just as an ancient healing practice but as a living tradition that continues to inspire and transform lives worldwide. Rooted in the principles of balance and harmony, Ayurveda guides individuals to achieve holistic wellness by understanding their unique mind-body constitution and aligning with nature's rhythms. Its timeless knowledge promotes preventive care, natural treatments, and a lifestyle that sup-



PRATAPRAO JADHAV

ports physical, mental, and spiritual health. Ayurveda's reach has grown from ancient India to touch people across the globe, embodying Bharat's gift of wellness to the world. As we celebrate Ayurveda Day, let us commit to embracing and preserving this invaluable heritage. Ayurveda, the revered "science of life," represents one of the oldest and most comprehensive systems of

holistic medicine. Originating in ancient India, Ayurveda focuses on achieving balance within the body, mind, and spirit. In recent years, Ayurveda has gained remarkable global recognition, a testament to PM Modi's visionary approach to integrating AYUSH practices, including Ayurveda, with modern healthcare. His leadership, underscored by the establishment of the Ministry of AYUSH as an independent entity in 2014, set the stage for Ayurveda's transformation into a mainstream, globally respected healthcare approach. The government has since pioneered several initiatives to promote and expand Ayurveda's reach. Through partnerships with research institutions, academic centres,

and healthcare organisations worldwide, India has emphasised evidence-based studies, technological advancements, and policy support to bring Ayurveda to a broader audience. Moreover, the government's efforts to encourage innovative collaborations and cross-cultural exchanges have fostered an international appreciation of Ayurveda's preventive and holistic benefits. As we witness Ayurveda's evolution on a global scale, its emphasis on wellness, natural healing, and preventive care resonates more than ever, addressing modern health challenges and reasserting Bharat's invaluable contribution to the world of medicine and wellness. Ayurveda, often regarded as the "science of life," is deeply rooted in



ancient Indian philosophy, drawing from the foundational ideas of Sanatan philosophical schools around the 2nd century BCE. Its development was heavily influenced by the Vaisheshika school, known for its focus on natural principles and the categorisation of elements, and the Nyaya school, which emphasised logic, reasoning, and structured analysis. These schools laid a framework that allowed Ayurveda to

develop a systematic approach to health, emphasising diagnosis, observation, and inference based on natural laws. Furthermore, Ayurveda's conceptual foundation aligns with Samkhya philosophy, a school that delves into the nature of existence, consciousness, and the duality of mind and matter. Samkhya's insights into the interaction between Purusha (consciousness) and Prakriti (matter) provided Ayurveda with a comprehensive understanding of the body-mind connection, integral to its approach to health and wellness. Together, these philosophical influences cultivated Ayurveda's holistic view of human life, wherein health is perceived as an intricate balance between mind, body, and environment.

This synthesis not only strengthened Ayurveda's theories of doshas (biological energies) but also fostered an awareness of how lifestyle, diet, and mental states directly impact physical well-being. Thus, Ayurveda emerged as an interdisciplinary science, rooted in empirical observation yet deeply philosophical, ultimately offering a framework of healing that remains both relevant and insightful in understanding modern health. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been a pivotal force in promoting the integration of Ayurveda with contemporary health sciences, fostering a healthcare model that values both preventive and holistic approaches. His vision underscores a sustainable healthcare framework where traditional

systems of medicine, such as Ayurveda, play an essential role in enhancing the quality of life. This approach aligns with his broader agenda of sustainable health solutions for all, recognising Ayurveda's unique preventive and curative strengths rooted in millennia-old wisdom. Central to this vision are initiatives like the National AYUSH Mission and the establishment of Ayush Health and Wellness Centres (AHWCs), now known as Ayush Arogya Mandirs. These initiatives aim to reshape India's healthcare landscape, making AYUSH a socially viable, affordable, and complementary alternative to allopathic medicine. (The writer is Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare of India; views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS



Suzlon net profit nearly doubles to Rs 201 crore

Renewable energy solutions provider Suzlon's consolidated net profit almost doubled to Rs 201 crore in the September quarter compared to the year-ago period. A statement said the company reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 102 crore in the quarter ended September 30, 2023. Total income rose to Rs 2,121.23 crore in the second quarter of 2024-25 from Rs 1,428.69 crore in the same period a year ago. Girish Tanti, Vice Chairman, Suzlon Group, said, "Our core business is now on solid foundation to capitalise on the market momentum." Himanshu Mody, Chief Financial Officer of Suzlon Group, said, "In a relatively challenging environment due to prolonged heavy monsoons, we have been able to deliver consistent growth with robust margins and 96 per cent YoY profit."



Gold declines Rs 400 to Rs 81,100 per 10 gm

Gold prices fell Rs 400 to Rs 81,100 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday amid weak trends in the overseas markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9% and 99.5% purity had revisited its all-time of Rs 81,500 and Rs 81,100 per 10 grams, respectively, on Saturday. However, silver remained flat at Rs 99,500 per kg. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5% purity declined Rs 400 to Rs 80,700 per 10 grams on Monday. Ease in demand by jewellers and stockists in the local markets amid sluggish trend in the global markets led to a decline in gold prices, traders said. Meanwhile, in futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for December delivery decreased Rs 312, or 0.4%, to Rs 78,220 per 10 grams. "Gold prices experienced a decline at the beginning of the week, and weakened by Comex, as profit booking emerged amid signs of de-escalation in the Israel-Iran conflict," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said.



Amazon ties up with HPCL for low carbon fuels

Amazon India on Monday said it has signed an initial pact with state-owned Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd for pushing the development and adoption of Low Carbon Fuels (LCFs) for long-haul transportation in India. Under the collaboration, HPCL and Amazon will conduct a pilot to test fuels in the latter's long-haul transport vehicles and explore the possibilities of fuelling hubs and mobile refuelling stations for easy access to LCFs, Amazon India said. This alliance marks a significant step towards reducing carbon emissions in the transportation sector and also aligns with Amazon's global commitment to achieving net-zero carbon across its operations by 2040, contributing to India's national goal of net-zero carbon by 2070, Amazon India said. "Biofuels are key to India's energy transition and are set to contribute to jobs and economic growth. Amazon's collaboration with HPCL is a step toward empowering this transformational shift. "In line with The Climate Pledge's global goal to reach net-zero carbon by 2040, accelerating fuel alternatives in our transportation network reinforces our commitment to India's energy ambitions and is helping our mission to reduce emissions," said Abhinav Singh, vice president for operations at Amazon India.

Flipkart narrows loss to Rs 4,248 crore

According to the Tofler report, Flipkart's return on equity dropped to the lowest level in the last five years to negative 49.6 per cent. The return on capital employed for the company was also the lowest at negative 54.09 per cent in the last five fiscal years. The consolidated revenue of the Walmart Group firm increased by about 26 per cent to Rs 70,541.90 crore in FY 2024 from Rs 55,823.9 crore in FY 2023. An email query sent to Flipkart elicited no immediate reply.

India and Spain sign MoUs on infra, rail transport

PNS ■ VADODARA

India and Spain signed several memorandums of understanding (MOUs) during the bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Spanish counterpart Pedro Sanchez in Gujarat's Vadodara city on Monday. During the bilateral talks held at the iconic Laxmi Vilas Palace here, both leaders also discussed the situation in Ukraine and in West Asia, said Tanmaya Lal, secretary (west), Ministry of External Affairs.

"With respect to Ukraine, both sides exchanged their views on how they see the situation. PM Modi reiterated India's position that any such conflict can only be resolved by dialogue and diplomacy. This is not the time for war, this cannot be resolved on the battlefield. It is necessary that direct discussion takes place between both the parties," Lal told reporters.



India reiterated its position that it really looks for a free, open, inclusive, prosperous and peaceful Indo-Pacific, he said, adding more on the region will be covered in the joint statement to be issued soon.

India and Spain, during the bilateral talks, signed agreements on cooperation in key sectors like infrastructure, railways as well as culture and tourism, he said.

An MoU on rail transport was signed for cooperation in

planning, design, development, commissioning and operation of infrastructure, stations, railways facilities and equipment of long distance passenger and freight networks as well as urban and regional railway systems, an official release said.

Centre launches mobile app to address grievances of rice millers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Food Minister Pralhad Joshi on Monday launched a mobile application of FCI Grievance Redressal System (FCI GRS) for rice millers.

This is one of the measures taken by the government to enhance transparency, accountability and stakeholder satisfaction.

State-owned Food Corporation of India (FCI) is the nodal agency for the procurement and distribution of food grains.

Joshi noted that rice millers are important stakeholders and integral part of the food security system and said the government is "committed to their welfare". He said the mobile app will help in addressing their grievances.



This mobile application is available for download on the Google Play Store for Android users.

Joshi said the government is also working for farmers' welfare and also ensuring that consumers get food products at reasonable rates.

Aligned with the Digital

India initiative, the mobile application aims to improve responsiveness and accountability by providing rice millers with a convenient platform to lodge complaints, monitor their status and receive responses on their mobile devices in an end-to-end digitised manner.

Goyal's chat with German Vice Chancellor in metro on China goes viral

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal's chat with German Vice Chancellor Robert Habeck on raising an issue about China blocking sale of tunnel boring machine to India has gone viral.

The two leaders can be seen in a video, posted on social media platform X, talking about the issue.

"See your German company which is supplying us some tunnel boring machines, which they are making in China...but China is not allowing them to sell it to India...We should stop buying German equipment now," Goyal told Minister Habeck during a metro ride last week. The video of this has gone viral after being shared by a user named 'Lord Bebo'.

Habeck arrived here last week as a part of a high-level delegation led by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz. The German Vice Chancellor was sitting while Goyal was standing during the conversation.



After hearing Goyal's remarks, he stood saying, "I think I should listen to you".

IREDA offers support to Bhutan for RE projects

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned IREDA on Monday offered to support Bhutan with finance assistance for renewable energy projects in the neighbouring country.

IREDA can finance large hydro power projects to support Bhutan's clean energy goals, the company's CMD P K Das said at a discussion on "Access to Financing for Renewable Energy Projects", at the Bhutan-India Renewable Energy Roundtable in Thimphu.

The event, organised by the government of India in collaboration

with the government of Bhutan, provided a platform for fostering renewable energy cooperation between the two nations.

"IREDA stands ready to extend support to Bhutan's renewable energy initiatives within the regulatory framework of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)," he said.

Markets recovery makes investors richer by Rs 4.21 lakh crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Investors' wealth on Monday surged Rs 4.21 lakh crore as markets bounced back after five days of fall.

The BSE Sensex jumped 602.75 points or 0.76 per cent to settle at 80,005.04. During the day, it surged 1,137.52 points or 1.43 per cent to 80,539.81.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms jumped Rs 4,21,138.2 crore to Rs

4,41,20,059.86 crore (USD 5.25 trillion).

"Amid higher valuation concerns, markets had corrected sharply last week and hence the recovery was seen today. Also, short covering ahead of

the monthly expiry this week triggered a rally in domestic markets, although the undertone remains cautious," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research) at Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

From the 30 Sensex pack, ICICI Bank climbed 3 per cent after the private sector lender posted a 14.5 per cent growth in standalone profit to Rs 11,746 crore for the second quarter ended September 2024.

UK to support India hub for female-led businesses

PNS ■ LONDON

The UK has unveiled a package of measures designed to boost intra-Commonwealth trade and investment, including a Commonwealth Investment Network and a hub in India to support female-led businesses.

At the conclusion of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Samoa last

week, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) in a statement on Sunday set out Britain's vision to increase "shared prosperity" for the 56-member organisation made up of some of the world's fastest-growing economies.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Foreign Secretary David Lammy attended the summit which concluded on Friday.

Swiggy's Rs 11,300-cr IPO may open on Nov 6

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Food and grocery delivery major Swiggy is looking to raise Rs 11,300 crore through its initial public offering (IPO) opening for public subscription on November 6, sources said on Monday.

The shares would be available at a price band of Rs 371 to Rs 390 apiece.

The issue would conclude on

Price band at Rs 371-390/share

November 8 and the bidding for anchor investors will open for a day on November 5, they added.

Swiggy is one of the most valued new-age consumer brands to tap the Indian capital market. The company's Rs 11,300-crore IPO is a combination of fresh issue of shares

The issue would conclude on November 8 and the bidding for anchor investors will open for a day on November 5, they added

worth Rs 4,500 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of Rs 6,800 crore, they added.

Those selling shares in the OFS route are -- Accel India IV (Mauritius) Ltd, Apolletto Asia Ltd, Alpha Wave Ventures, LP, Coature PE Asia XI LLC, DST EuroAsia V B.V, Elevation Capital V Ltd,

Inspired Elite Investments Ltd, MIH India Food Holdings B.V, Norwest Venture Partners VII-A Mauritius and Tencent Cloud Europe B.V.

Early investors like Accel, Elevation Capital and Norwest Ventures are making up to 35 times in returns on the portion they decided to sell. On the other hand, SoftBank continues to stay invested.

India has entered cyclical growth slowdown: Nomura

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Japanese brokerage Nomura on Monday said the Indian economy has entered a phase of "cyclical growth slowdown" and the Reserve Bank's estimate of 7.2 per cent GDP expansion is "overly optimistic".

The brokerage said it sees "rising downside risks" to its GDP growth estimates of 6.7 per cent in the ongoing FY25 and 6.8 per cent in FY26.

"We believe India's economy



has entered a cyclical growth slowdown. Coinciding and leading growth indicators point

to a further moderation in GDP growth and the RBI's forecast of 7.2 per cent for

FY25 is overly optimistic," the brokerage said in a note.

The RBI maintained its FY25 growth estimate at 7.2 per cent earlier this month, even as some watchers have been coming out with lower numbers.

Nomura said urban consumption indicators have been softening lately, and pointed to the slump in passenger vehicle sales, moderation in airline passenger traffic and FMCG companies flagging weak urban demand.

Sericulture has transformed into thriving industry in NE: Union minister

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

Union Minister Pabitra Margherita on Monday said sericulture has transformed into a thriving industry in the northeast, boosting the local economy. He stressed on collaborative efforts among central and state government departments to further push forward the silk industry, an official statement said.

The Union Minister of State for Textiles, visiting the Muga Eri Silkworm Seed Organisation (MESSO) here, said the northeast sericulture is now a thriving industry, providing significant livelihoods, particularly for tribal women. He underscored the need

for collaboration among the various departments to drive sustainable silk industry growth, employment and traditional craftsmanship. Margherita also highlighted MESSO's efforts to expand Muga culture to cooler regions like Kalimpong in West Bengal and Uttarakhand to counter climate change impacts.

He encouraged increased seed production efficiency to meet the national demand for Muga and Eri silk.

The Central Silk Board's MESSO has 13 field units across the northeast and Tamil Nadu, playing a vital role in the region's sericulture industry, supporting the production of quality Muga and Eri silkworm seeds, the statement added

what's brewing?

Utkarsh Sharma's *Vanvaas* look raises eyebrows

The excitement around Zee Studios and Anil Sharma's upcoming family saga *Vanvaas* is constantly rising. Directed by Anil Sharma, the force behind blockbusters like *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha*, *Apne*, and *Gadar 2*, the film promises to immerse audiences in a unique blend of family sentiments and relationships like never before. Amidst the growing anticipation, lead actor Utkarsh Sharma has dropped a



new poster, counting down just 1 day until the teaser release on October 29. Utkarsh Sharma will now be seen in *Vanvaas* by his stellar performance in *Gadar 2*, where he starred alongside Sunny Deol. Taking to social media, Utkarsh Sharma shared his poster from the film with the caption: "#Vanvaas teaser drops tomorrow at 11AM! Aa rahi hai, apnon ki keemat ka ehsaas karane wali ek apni si kahani!" While legendary actor Nana Patekar recently treated fans to his look from the film, this new poster of the talented new star Utkarsh Sharma has further heightened excitement for his return to the big screen after the mega success of *Gadar 2*. Starring Nana Patekar and Utkarsh Sharma, *Vanvaas* is written, produced and directed by Anil Sharma and will be released worldwide by Zee Studios. The film will be a Christmas release and will hit theaters on 20th December 2024.



MIRZAPUR MANIA CONTINUES: MOVIE ARRIVES IN 2026

Expanding the quintessential world of *Mirzapur* and buoyed by the stellar performance of *Mirzapur* Season 3, Amazon MGM Studios and Excel Entertainment make a first-of-its-kind announcement with a theatrical movie based on the marquee and award-winning crime thriller OTT franchise—an Excel Entertainment production. Fans are in for a treat as their much-loved show gears up to make a monumental leap to the big screen, promising them a larger-than-life theatrical spectacle. Created by Puneet Krishna and directed by Gurmeet Singh, the *Mirzapur* film, scheduled for release in 2026, features the iconic characters of *Mirzapur*, Kaleen Bhaiya (Pankaj Tripathi), Guddu Pandit (Ali Fazal) and Munna Tripathi (Divyendu), along with Abhishek Banerjee, who plays the role of the compounder in the series, along with other actors.

Producers Ritesh Sidhwani and Farhan Akhtar of Excel Entertainment remark, "It is a landmark milestone for us to bring the quintessential *Mirzapur* experience to our audiences yet again, but this time on the big screen. Over the course of three successful seasons, this acclaimed franchise has struck all the right chords with fans through its powerful storytelling and memorable characters—from the likes of Kaleen Bhaiya, Guddu Bhaiya and Munna Bhaiya, to name a few. We believe that adapting such a treasured series into a film will undoubtedly make for an even more engrossing watch, allowing audiences to immerse themselves in the world of *Mirzapur* like never before."



Angelina Jolie finds kinship with character in *Maria*: 'There's loneliness'

During the *AFI Fest* premiere of her latest movie *Maria*, Angelina Jolie spoke about her strong bond with the iconic opera singer Maria Callas, whom she plays in the film. Jolie discussed the feeling of "specific loneliness" that arises from commitment and effort. The actress, who has been in a lengthy legal dispute with ex-husband Brad Pitt, admitted her flaws as she highlighted the significance of constant dedication.

Speaking at Hollywood's *AFI Fest* premiere, the Oscar winner shared she doesn't want to "speak too much about it because it's too personal, but there's definitely a loneliness and a work ethic." Drawing parallels to legendary Maria Callas she added, "I may be many things, but I'm a very hard worker, right?" "I'm an imperfect person, but I work very hard and she does," she continued further. Bringing attention to their shared identity as dedicated performers, she admitted, "We're probably both pretty hard on ourselves." The emotional depth of her role in *Maria* was on full display in August when Jolie received an eight-minute standing ovation at the *Venice Film Festival*.



Ajay Devgn's courageous comeback after near-blindness

Actor Ajay Devgn and filmmaker Rohit Shetty were guest stars on the most recent episode of *Bigg Boss 18*. While on air, Ajay discussed the specifics of his eye wound that he sustained while filming his upcoming movie *Singham Again*. While chatting with host Salman, he was asked, "The eye injury you suffered, was it during this one?" Rohit confirmed, "Yes, on this film." Salman later revealed information about Ajay's experience while filming *Singham Again*.

Recalling their conversation, Salman said, "Ajay showed me a scene where there was mistiming. Someone was supposed to hit him with a stick, but the timing was off and it struck him directly in the eye."

Ajay added, "I actually lost my vision for two or three months. I went through a little surgery also."

Salman further remarked, "These things happen when you do action scenes. Nowadays, it's much easier for the younger actors."



DHARMA PRODUCTIONS' DECLINING FORTUNE

Karan Johar's Dharma Productions caused excitement in the film industry by selling a 50% share to Aadar Poonawalla for 1000 crore. Being one of the largest and most powerful production companies in Indian cinema, Dharma was widely believed to be flawless and unstoppable. Nevertheless, the agreement revealed numerous issues within the company despite its flashy facade. The company's financial situation, revealed this week, demonstrates the severity of the predicament.

During the 2010s, Dharma Productions experienced growth under the leadership of Karan Johar. When the director transitioned to becoming a full-time studio head, the production company found success with movies such as *Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani*, *2 States*, *Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania*, *Dear Zindagi*, *Raazi* and *Simmba*. In 2019, Dharma's annual revenue exceeded 700 crore and it reported profits of about 27 crore in its annual reports submitted to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs. Next, the cinema industry was suddenly brought to its knees when the pandemic struck. Dharma experienced a significant 83% decline in revenue and a 75% decrease in profits, similar to numerous other production companies. However, the company recovered and regained its strength. Dharma surpassed its pre-pandemic earnings with successful movies like *Jugjugg Jeeyo*, *Brahmastra*, and *Sooryavanshi*, reaching an annual revenue of over 1000 crore in the financial year 2022-23. Its digital arm, Dharmatic, also saw success with hit shows such as *Fabulous Lives* and *Koffee With Karan*.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



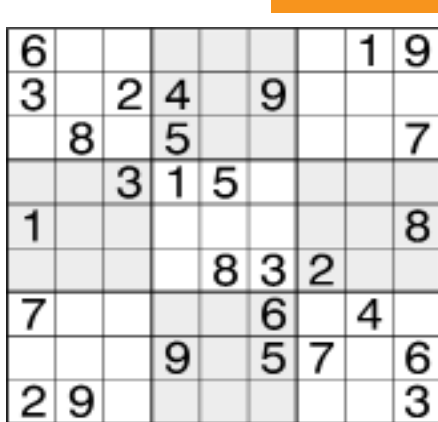
CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

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

- Nice, enjoyable
- Decays
- An animal with a shell
- Causes pain to
- A witch's power
- Footwear
- A hot drink
- A medical professional
- Lengthy
- Inspected closely

DOWN

- Bought
- Go in
- Takes part in a play

4 A violent storm with twisting winds

- Unwell
- Swapped
- Go to see shows here
- A king or queen wears this
- Length x width =
- Not at home



GINGER MEGGS



Huma Qureshi talks *Mithya: The Darker Chapter*

AARTI SREENATH
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Huma Qureshi's filmography is a daring tour through cinema's trickiest terrains. From her explosive debut in *Gangs of Wasseypur*, where she held her own amidst cinematic chaos, to *Leila's* dystopian depths and the noir-streaked *Monica, O My Darling*, she's made unpredictability her calling card. Huma has a way of grabbing the spotlight without fanfare, blending into each role with that uncanny mix of grit, grace, and a glint of mischief. Whether she's serving up fierce resilience or sly humour, she leaves audiences wondering: Where will she take us next? While the world only sees the final cut, there's a whole other story to tell about what happens after "cut" is called—especially when the scenes are psychologically intense and emotionally exhausting. For Huma Qureshi, her sanctuary was a quiet room with a fireplace in a heritage property, wrapped in the misty hills of Darjeeling. Shooting for *Mithya: The Darker Chapter* was an all-consuming experience, but her secret for winding down was far from glamorous—it was the small pleasures that brought her back to life every evening.

"Sleep is such an underrated thing," the *Jolly LLB* fame says, as if it's a reminder to herself as much as anyone else. "I love to sleep and I love to read." Every night after a day filled with heavy, brooding scenes, she'd return to her cozy corner of solace: the Princess Siam Room. Yes, you read that right—a room named after the Princess of Siam, who had once stayed in this beautiful, old-world heritage property. "It's a gem of a place," she recalls. "Fireplaces, minimal décor, a TV that I barely noticed—it had everything I needed and nothing I didn't." Most nights, Huma found herself curling up beside a fireplace that was so charmingly vintage as it was functional. "It wasn't one of those modern fireplaces where you just press a button," she laughs, clearly savoring the memory. "I had to actually put in coal and wood. There was something so grounding about it." With her book in hand and the gentle crackling of wood filling the air, she'd sink into the simplicity of the moment. In her words, "I even ended up taking countless pictures of my feet, or my socks, by the fire!"

Had it been possible, the *Dedh Ishqiya* fame jokes, she might have just permanently relocated to a fireplace-equipped haven in the mountains. "Honestly, it's probably a good thing I don't live somewhere with a fireplace. I'd end up parked in front of it all the time!" she laughs, adding, "It was the kind of peace you don't know you need until you have it."

This sense of quiet, it turns out, was vital to her creative process, particularly when approaching her character, Juhi Adhikari, a woman on a relentless journey that feels both intensely vengeful and deeply personal. Juhi's journey, as seen in the trailer, hints at layers of resentment, resolve, and transformation, a challenge for any actor. So how did Huma bring Juhi's inner turbulence to life without getting lost in it?

"There isn't a formula for this kind of thing," the *Maharani* fame says thoughtfully. "You read the script and try to emotionally ground yourself. If this happened to you, what would you feel? How would you react?" She believes in letting her character's motivations unfold naturally, without excessive overthinking. "The more you think about something, the more you take away from it. It's almost like a mystical approach; you have to let the character happen to you. The moment you stop overcomplicating, you realize that it just happens."

For the *Double XL* fame, acting isn't about calcula-

Huma Qureshi, the versatile actress known for her bold choices, pulls back the curtain on her latest obsession: *Mithya: The Darker Chapter*



lated methods or deep dives into obscure psychology; it's about being open to the emotional waves of the character's experience. "Sometimes actors complicate things too much, but it's about creating space for spontaneity. You have to let the story happen through you. When you do that, your instincts do most of the work." For all her grounding in routine and the daily comforts of a book, a fire, and the quiet, old-world room, the *Tarla* fame's approach to acting is anything but ordinary. It's a process of discovery, an unscripted journey. It's about being present in the moment, both on and off set and allowing her character to live without forcing the narrative. That natural fluidity—and a little old-fashioned downtime—may just be the secret to her success, whether the scene calls for a quiet resolve or a fierce vengeance.

As she gears up for the second season of *Mithya*, the *Ek thi Daayan* fame reflects on how the show's evolution mirrors her own journey. "Season 1 felt like spring or summer, while Season 2 brings in the essence of autumn and winter. That was the vision

behind our styling choices. In the first season, I embraced soft pinks and peaches, capturing the lightness of spring. Now, as the story deepens and becomes more serious, the colour palette reflects that shift to the richer tones of the colder seasons."

With the anticipation of the new season comes a familiar weight of expectation. "After a successful first season, there's always the pressure to make the second one even bigger and better. We were all set to elevate the show. Avantika has been my constant throughout this journey, my adversary, my half-sister, my student, my enemy; she's worn many hats. We worked hard to enhance our performances and make them more impactful."

The cast returns with beloved characters, and Huma is excited about their new dynamic. "All the beloved characters are back, including Indraneil Sengupta and Rajit Kapur, along with the talented Avantika ji, who plays my mother. We also welcomed Naveen Kasturia this season, whose charisma added a fresh dynamic. Together, we aimed to create a show that's edgier, darker, and more thrilling."

DELVE INTO THE ARTISTIC JOURNEY OF AKSHATH ACHARYA, WHOSE *NADAANIYAN* MESMERISED AUDIENCES WORLDWIDE. *THE PIONEER* PRESENTS A CAPTIVATING CONVERSATION ON MUSIC, INSPIRATION AND THE INTERSECTIONS OF CREATIVITY, OFFERING A GLIMPSE INTO THE MIND OF A CONTEMPORARY MAESTRO

Mind behind viral hit *Naadaniyan!*

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Does anybody recall the singer of *Nadaaniyan*, Akshath Acharya? The song was popular on Spotify and Instagram, where many celebrities, such as Shraddha Kapoor and Remo D'Souza, made a reel about it. Akshath and Jonita Gandhi recently worked together to produce a feminine rendition of the song. That, then, was our next indication for an exclusive interview!

"I didn't have any preconceived notions. To be honest, I had no inspiration for this song other than the fact that I was sitting with my guitar when I came up with this little four-bar riff. I felt it had promise, so I knew I could compose good compositions over it. I wrote five or ten various lines and melodies for the song before settling on "kaise tu gun guna wala." I then released it for public and it was warmly received. I realised then that I was holding something worthwhile," says Akshath, whose *Nadaaniyan* had garnered significant popularity, especially on platforms like Spotify and Instagram.

Akshath was genuinely shocked and delighted when it first began to happen. Now that he's looking back, he can state with certainty that there are 2.4 million, or some insane number, reels created on the song and he feels that each one is equally significant to him. At the time, he would always think, "Oh my God, this is so unbelievable," whenever he saw a reel featuring a well-known someone working on a song. "I have always been a huge fan of Jonita, so it goes without saying that she thought the music was great. And it was merely a partnership that we were both somewhat supportive of. And because Jonita is as skilled an artist as she is, it went smoothly right away. She is kind and modest as a human being. And you need that in a studio environment. You see, you need two artists that appreciate each other equally. In that case, you click and you vibe right away, which is, in my opinion, the most crucial thing to have because, when you are presenting or showcasing any creative ideas you have, you want to make sure that the person in the room is also in a collaborative mood and won't just judge or, you know, shut down your ideas right away. And I never experienced that with her because she was a very cooperative person, so everything went smoothly right away," says Akshath.

All of his analysis is evidently post-based. It's not as though he had planned it like a genius, keeping in mind all of this, knowing that, oh, if he does this, then this, this will occur. He won't act as though that was the case. However, he is now able to reflect and reach a respectable conclusion. He believes that the song's popularity on social media stems from the fact that it simply appeals to a wide range of listeners. The melody itself is comparatively memorable, so he gives it a shot. Women creating reels in which they simply lip-synced the words because they truly connected with the songs was the first niche in which it gained popularity. He believed that the most important line there was "Choti moti baton pe muh fulaye," since most people thought, "Hey, that's me." That kind of thing, then. That, therefore, was how things began for *Naadaniyaan*. After that, they had dance reels because it was just a tune that people could create beautiful choreographies for. Following that, there were numerous spoofs that emerged, in which many of *Nadaaniyan's* lines were slightly altered to create amusing renditions.

Composing *Nadaaniyaan* was a creative process that, "was like whatever challenges I faced were actually really fun challenges. The hook was composed by myself and I shared it on Instagram. I thought, 'You know, I need to get the momentum going and get the song

out as soon as possible.' I spent 48 hours writing the remaining lyrics. Writing the song's words, music, production and even recording were all included in that. So it had to happen fast. And the reason it happened so fast is because I was just following my instincts when it came to this specific song. When I release a song, I usually play it for my family, friends and a few individuals I can trust. I take their advice, consider their suggestions and adjust as necessary. But I didn't have that choice because I just didn't have the time for this specific one. I therefore did exactly what my instinct told me to do, following it to the letter. And as a result, the procedure went smoothly, and I believe it was for the best."

He's really got a lot going on. He is also working on some wild collabs. Additionally, a song titled *Tu Hai Kya* has been released by him. That's what you can anticipate from him right away. "The best part about listening to music, in my opinion, is that you may interpret it any way you see fit and associate it with your own feelings and memories. Therefore, I'm just content as long as they're connecting with the song and my music in general. For the others, they can experience it and create their own memories around it. That, in my opinion, is what distinguishes a song," he adds.

Speaking of *Tu Hai Kya*, he provided additional information regarding the song, stating, "I was writing the song when I truly wanted to offer an appreciation for a particular few people in my life. I'm not a really expressive person in general. However, there are some exceptions to that rule and there are a select few individuals in my life with whom I can truly be honest. These are the folks I can openly laugh, cry, complain, or do anything else in front of. And they will be open to that at all times. That is always an option for them. I always get their attention. In summary, it is simply a song for those who hold a special place in my heart. For instance, I had just posted a brief excerpt of it a day or two ago. Additionally, I'm seeing comments from individuals who say things like, 'This song seems like it's for mothers.' 'You know, this is a song for my daughter because she's my world,' read another comment. That's what the song is, then. It is only for those who are there to look after your heart, soul and you."

He also believes that, in the past, there was a certain element of a God complex amongst cinema stars, artists and fans, whatever that may have been. That has now diminished and he believes that authenticity and the genuine connection you are able to establish with your audiences are now the key factors. Moreover, he believes he can roughly divide his musical influences into two groups. A prime example would be the Bollywood music of the 2000s, which we all love. Many of his creations, melodies and writings have been influenced by that. He began his job, in a sense, as a hobby by just posting song covers on Instagram. These covers are mostly Bollywood songs from the 2000s. It would therefore fall under one group. The other would be this particular music, or musicians or bands with whom he has had a particular affinity. Linkin Park is therefore one of them. There's John Mayer. One well-known band that had a significant influence on his musical taste was *Pink Floyd*. They still kept the CD of this John Bon Jovi record when Akshath was a child. Thus, that had a significant impact on him. He can basically classify it this way and state that, you know, all of this coming together has influenced the music he does.

India's education system at crossroads



India's higher education system is undergoing a significant transformation. We are seeing rapid expansion with more universities and educational institutions being established across the country. However, challenges such as infrastructure deficits, faculty shortages and unequal access to quality education remain. While urban areas have access to advanced learning environments, rural regions still lag behind, and bridging this gap is essential. There is also a growing need to shift the focus from rote learning to a more research-oriented and experiential learning model, said Govind Narayan Singh, Secretary at Gopal Narayan Singh University.

In your opinion, how is technology transforming the landscape of education in India?

Technology has revolutionised education, especially post-pandemic. We have incorporated hybrid learning models that combine both online and offline elements to provide students with a more flexible learning environment. University has invested heavily in digital infrastructure, including smart classrooms, AI-driven learning management systems and virtual labs, making it possible to deliver high-quality education regardless of geographical constraints. The use of data analytics is also helping us track student progress and personalise learning experiences.

What role do universities have in bridging the gap between industry and academia in India?

The industry-academia gap has been a long-standing issue in India, but universities have a crucial role to play in narrowing this divide. Universities are focused on offering industry-aligned curricula, engaging industry professionals in advisory roles and fostering collaborations with companies for internships, live projects and placements. We have launched skill-development centers and signed MOUs with leading corporates to ensure that students are job-

ready from day one. We also emphasise entrepreneurial development, encouraging students to create startups while still studying.

India has seen a rise in interdisciplinary courses and degrees. How important is interdisciplinary learning in the current educational context?

Interdisciplinary learning is vital in today's world, as it allows students to approach problems from multiple perspectives. It fosters innovation and creativity, preparing students for complex real-world challenges. We have recently introduced programs that combine fields like artificial intelligence with healthcare or law with technology to cater to emerging sectors. The integration of different disciplines enables students to acquire diverse skill sets, making them more adaptable and versatile in the job market.

With increasing competition in the education sector, how can one differentiate itself from others?

We differentiate ourselves through a focus on experiential learning, global exposure and strong industry linkages. Campus facilities are state-of-the-art. Moreover, we offer students opportunities for international internships, exchange programs and collaborative research with global institutions. Innovation in pedagogy is another area where we excel, utilising case studies, simulations and projects to provide hands-on learning experiences.

What do you see as the future of international collaborations in Indian higher education?

International collaborations will be pivotal in shaping the future of higher education in India. They not only provide students with exposure to

global best practices but also foster research and innovation. The university has already established partnerships with several leading universities across the US, Europe, and Southeast Asia for student and faculty exchanges, joint research projects, and collaborative degree programs. I believe that these collaborations enhance the global competitiveness of our students while fostering a rich exchange of knowledge.

Given the rise of online education and edtech platforms, do you see these as competitors or complementary to traditional universities?

I see online education and edtech platforms as complementary to traditional universities. While online platforms provide flexibility and access to information, traditional universities offer a holistic experience of social learning, peer interaction, and hands-on experiences, which are essential for personal development. By integrating edtech into curriculum through blended learning models, using online tools to supplement in-class teaching, it ensures that students get the best of both worlds.

What do you think about the role of private universities in shaping the future of education in India?

Private universities have a critical role to play in shaping the future of education in India. They often have more flexibility in designing curricula, adopting new technologies, and forming global partnerships. They also invest significantly in research and infrastructure, which can set new benchmarks for quality in the sector. Additionally, private institutions contribute to innovation in pedagogy and offer specialised programs that public universities may not be able to implement due to constraints.



INDIA WOMEN NEED TO RESOLVE BATTING VULNERABILITIES TO SEAL SERIES AGAINST NZ

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

India will be hoping to resolve their batting brittleness in their quest to win the third and final women's ODI and seal the series against New Zealand here on Tuesday.

It was clear from the first match, which the hosts won by 59 runs through a fine effort by the bowlers, that India's batting is not in top shape, and the second one-dayers underscored that reality. India's batting went a notch down on Friday as they were bundled out for 183 while chasing 260.

It was a tough target indeed, but not improbable in nature as Indian batters succumbed to spot-on White Ferns bowlers and to their own indiscretions. It required a record ninth-wicket stand of 70 runs between Radha Yadav and Saima Thakor to add a touch of



respectability to India's run chase. Even the overall picture is not a rosy one, as Indian batters are yet to score an individual fifty across two matches. Radha's 48 in the second ODI

is the highest individual score from India's side during this series, and the home team will require a drastic turnaround in the final match. For that, India's power troika upfront -- openers Smriti

Mandhana, Shafali Verma and skipper Harmanpreet Kaur -- will have to fire in unison. It can have a ripple effect in a strong-on-paper middle-order consisting of Jemimah Rodrigues, Deepti Sharma and

Tejal Hasabnis. Mandhana's form continues to be a bit of concern as she hardly looked a pale shadow of her customary gracefully dominant batter. She is yet to reach two-figure score against New Zealand, and a series decider could be a perfect occasion for her to rewrite the script.

On the other hand, Indian bowlers continued their good effort despite conceding 259 in the previous match. At one stage, the visitors were 87 for no loss in 14 overs and 139 for 3 in 30 overs, but the Indian bowlers did well to rein them back and limit to a total less than 280-290 that at one stage looked achievable. The left-arm spinner Radha has once again been impressive with a four-wicket haul to go with the three wickets she plucked in the first game. She will need to be at her best once more to keep the free-

flowing New Zealand batters in check. New Zealand have also been bolstered by the presence of veteran pacer Lea Tahuhu who replaced injured Moly Penfold in the eleven and immediately impressed with a three-wicket haul.

THE TEAMS (FROM):

India: Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Smriti Mandhana, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma, Deepti Sharma, Richa Ghosh (WK), Pooja Vastrakar, Renuka Thakur Singh, Radha Yadav, Meghna Singh, Devika Vaidya, Amanjot Kaur, Anjali Sarvani, Taniyaa Bhatia, Yastika Bhatia.

New Zealand: Sophie Devine (C), Suzie Bates, Maddy Green, Lauren Down, Brooke Halliday, Katey Martin (WK), Hayley Jensen, Jess Kerr, Fran Jonas, Hannah Rowe, Molly Penfold, Lea Tahuhu, Izzy Gaze, Georgia Plimmer.



Gary Kirsten resigns as Pakistan's limited-overs coach

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan's white-ball coach Gary Kirsten on Monday stepped down after developing a rift with the country's cricket board within six months of his appointment.

The 56-year-old South African, who coached India to victory at the 2011 ODI World, was appointed by the PCB (Pakistan Cricket Board) in April end this year.

"The Pakistan Cricket Board today announced Jason Gillespie will coach the Pakistan men's cricket team on next month's white-ball tour of Australia after Gary Kirsten submitted his resignation, which was accepted," the PCB posted on X.

Red-ball coach Gillespie, however, has made it clear to the PCB that he can only manage things for the white-ball tour of Australia which starts November 4 and is not interested in a permanent role as the limited overs coach, a reliable source aware of the development said.

"Gillespie has informed the board they should look for a replacement for Kirsten for the white ball games in Zimbabwe and onwards," he added. Though the PCB didn't

give the reason for Kirsten's sudden resignation, the source confirmed that it was because he was not involved when the board announced the squads for the Australia and Zimbabwe tours and the new captain of the white ball format on Sunday. The PCB has withdrawn the coaches selection powers. Selection is now exclusively the domain of the selection committee.

"Kirsten was not happy with the abrupt manner in which the board took away his powers in selection and other team matters and made this very clear to Chairman Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday before sending in his resignation," another insider said.

He expressed fear that even Gillespie might end up resigning soon as he is also not happy with the current shift in how teams are selected now solely by the selection committee and coaches have no role in this.

Kirsten had been working as a batting coach with the Indian Premier League franchise Gujarat Titans before taking up the role in Pakistan. The team is riding high on a come-from-behind 2-1 triumph over visiting England in a Test series that concluded last week.



Rayhan Thomas finishes seventh in Thailand

PTI ■ BANGKOK

India's Rayhan Thomas registered a second top-10 finish on the Asian Tour, ending up tied-seventh at the International Series Thailand after being three off the lead after 54 holes.

The UAE-based golfer was unable to replicate the magic of the second and third rounds of 63-64 as he shot 2-under 68 on the final day to total 16-under. He had four birdies, three of them between the 14th and the 17th.

Among the other Indians, Gaganjeet Bhullar (67) finished tied 19th and Karandeep Kochhar (67) tied-24.

Chinese-Taipei's Lee Chieh-po finally claimed his maiden title on the Asian Tour after sensationally overtaking hot favourite Peter Uihlein at the very end. Lee birdied the final two holes at the Thai Country Club to beat Uihlein, after the American had led from the second day.

The champion, playing in the

penultimate group, fired a seven-under-par 63 to finish on 21-under, while Uihlein closed with a 67 to tie for second place with Canadian Richard T. Lee, who carded a 62.

The 29-year-old grew up playing golf with Kevin Yu, a winner on the PGA Tour this year, and sees him as an inspiration.

For Richard T. Lee it was yet another near miss. Since the Tour resumed after the global pandemic, he finished second twice, third on three occasions and has been in the running on numerous occasions.

Last week's winner of the Black Mountain Championship Michael 'MJ' Maguire closed with a 62 to tie for fourth, three behind the winner, along with fellow Americans Paul Peterson, in with a 63, and Christian Banke, who fired a 64.

The action shifts to next week's BNI Indonesian Masters where India's Gaganjeet Bhullar is the defending champion.

T20I Australia Captain vs Pakistan yet to be name



PTI ■ SYDNEY

Australia have rested their Test regulars for their home T20I series against Pakistan with a captain yet to be named, choosing to focus on the marquee Border-Gavaskar series against India next month.

Australia host Pakistan for three ODIs starting November 4, followed by the three-match T20I series, from

November 14. The series concludes on November 18, just four days before the first Test against India in Perth.

With T20I captain Mitchell Marsh, Travis Head and ODI and Test skipper Pat Cummins unavailable, Australia are yet to appoint a captain for the series. None of the players named in the squad announced on Monday have captained Australia in any format before but the

likes of Glenn Maxwell, Adam Zampa, Matthew Short and Aaron Hardie have led their sides in the Big Bash League. Josh Inglis is also in the mix to lead the side.

Pacers Xavier Bartlett (side strain), Nathan Ellis (hamstring) and Spencer Johnson (side strain) return to the squad after recovering from injuries. "It is particularly encouraging to have Xavier, Spencer and Nathan back in the national setup," said selection chief George Bailey.

"It's another opportunity for them to continue to show their ability on the international stage, as they have done in the past." Andre Borovec will serve as the coach for the team, a position he held during a five-match T20I series against India that followed last year's ODI World Cup.

AUSTRALIA T20I SQUAD
Sean Abbott, Xavier Bartlett, Cooper Connolly, Tim David, Nathan Ellis, Jake Fraser-McGurk, Aaron Hardie, Josh Inglis, Spencer Johnson, Glenn Maxwell, Matthew Short, Marcus Stoinis and Adam Zampa.

Inglis 'in mix' for Test debut in Border Gavaskar Trophy: Chief selector Bailey

PTI ■ SYDNEY

In red-hot form, Australian white-ball wicketkeeper-batter Josh Inglis is "in the mix" to make his Test debut as a specialist batter in the upcoming Border-Gavaskar Trophy next month, hinted chief selector George Bailey on Monday.

India, unbeaten in the marquee series on the previous four occasions, will face Australia in a five-Test series beginning in Perth on November 21.

"There's no doubt that the form is really fantastic at the moment... The ability to jump back into domestic

cricket and dominate has been fantastic," Bailey told reporters.

"I think in different series at different times of the year, he would firmly come into the mix purely as a batter the way he's been going."

"If the right opportunity opened up throughout the summer, in the spots where we think he's most capable of performing, I think he'd be firmly in that conversation as well." The 29-year-old, who is Australia's incumbent keeper in ODI and T20Is, has scored four centuries in last seven Sheffield Shield matches.

But with Australian Test wicketkeeper Alex Carey in



rich form, Inglis has emerged as a specialist middle-order batter, but not for the vacant opening slot, Bailey said.

Australia's move to promote Steve Smith at the top following David Warner's retirement did not work out and with Cameron Green ruled out of the India series because of a back injury, there's a vacancy alongside Usman Khawaja.

However, Bailey has ruled out Inglis for the opener's role. "I've spoken to Josh on this. Not in the short term, I don't think that he's someone that we would be looking to place at the top of the order," Bailey said. Inglis, in fact, is one of

the contenders to lead Australia's T20I side in the upcoming three-match series against Pakistan. All-format players, including regular T20 skipper Mitchell Marsh, are sitting out of the Pakistan series to prepare for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

"We've been really clear that we are prioritising the preparation for individuals around the Test summer and that will be the first time that we get that group together," said Bailey.

"So, rather than switching guys in and out and becoming quite messy, it was just deemed more appropriate for a number of reasons to separate them out."

This will be Australia's first Test series in the ongoing WTC cycle since defeating New Zealand 2-0 in a two-match away series in March.

Rinku, Rana shine as UP gain control over Punjab

PTI ■ MULLANPUR

Rinku Singh and Nitish Rana powered Uttar Pradesh to a commanding position against Punjab with entertaining fifties on day three of their Ranji Trophy Group C match here on Monday. After opener Madhav Kaushik's career-best 163, the visitors came up with four more half-centuries to declare their first innings for a massive 556/9, taking a lead of 346 runs. At stumps, Punjab were struggling at 49/1, trailing by 297 runs.

The Kolkata Knight Riders duo of Rana and Rinku laid the foundation with a crucial 120-run partnership for the third wicket. Rana struck an aggressive 66 off 106 balls, hitting 11 fours, while Rinku made 68 off 131 balls, with eight fours and a six.

Saurabh Kumar joined the onslaught with a brisk 67-ball 69, smashing three sixes and five fours, while Shivam Sharma contributed an unbeaten 50 off 58 balls, including four sixes and two fours, to further frustrate the Punjab attack. Harshal, Yuzi lift Haryana past MP. In Indore, Harshal Patel's unbeaten 72 at No. 9 and Yuzvendra Chahal's gritty 27



off 142 balls helped Haryana secure a vital first-innings lead over Madhya Pradesh. Responding to MP's 308, Haryana ended the day at 431/9, with Patel still at the crease alongside last man Aman Kumar (4). Opener Lakshay Dalal hit his maiden century (105 off 271 balls), while Dheeru Singh fell just short of three figures with a well-crafted 94. Himanshu Rana (90) also

missed his hundred in the nineties, but Dalal and Dheeru's 143-run partnership for the fourth wicket laid a solid foundation. However, a collapse ensued before Patel steadied the innings with his resilient knock.

For MP, left-arm spinner Kumar Kartikeya was the standout bowler, finishing with 4/117. Kerala fight back after Porel

High 5 In Kolkata, Bengal pacer Ishan Porel took 5/83 to secure his fifth five-wicket haul in first-class cricket, reducing Kerala to 83/5. However, Kerala's middle-order, led by seasoned campaigner Jalaj Saxena, staged a resilient recovery to reach 267/7 at the Jadavpur Salt Lake Campus ground. Saxena's fighting 84 off 162 balls, alongside a determined

64 from Salman Nizar, added 140 for the seventh wicket, frustrating Bengal's bowlers. Nizar, who faced 205 deliveries, was accompanied by wicketkeeper-batter Mohammed Azharuddeen (30 off 48 balls) at close of play. Porel's disciplined bowling proved effective on a flat pitch, where he dismissed Kerala's new signing Baba Aparajith for a golden duck and skipper Sachin Baby for 12. Ton-up Mayank leads Karnataka to big lead.

BRIEF SCORES

In Mullanpur: Punjab 210 and 49/1; 19 overs. Uttar Pradesh 556/9 declared; 141.1 overs (Madhav Kaushik 163, Saurabh Kumar 69, Rinku Singh 68, Nitish Rana 66, Shivam Sharma 50 batting). In Indore: Madhya Pradesh 308. Haryana 431/9; 150.5 overs (Lakshay Dalal 105, Dheeru Singh 94, Himanshu Rana 90, Harshal Patel 72 batting; Kumar Kartikeya 4/117). In Kolkata: Kerala 267/7; 102 overs (Jalaj Saxena 84, Salman Nizar 64 batting, Mohammed Azharuddeen 30 batting; Ishan Porel 5/83) vs Kerala. In Patna: Bihar 143. Karnataka 287/7; 51 overs (Mayank Agarwal 105, Manish Pandey 56; Himanshu Singh 4/51).

Man United fire manager Erik ten Hag after troubled start to season



AP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester United fired Erik ten Hag on Monday after a troubled start to the season left the 20-time English champions in 14th place in the Premier League and the club's new leadership unimpressed with the pace of change under the Dutchman. Ten Hag, who was hired in 2022, paid the price for leading United to just three wins in nine league games in the opening months of the campaign. There have been four defeats, the 2-1 loss at West Ham on Sunday being his last game in charge. United finished in eighth place last season, its lowest in the

Premier League era, and appears to have little hope of challenging for the title this campaign. It already leaves the storied team in danger of missing out on qualification for the lucrative Champions League once again.

"We are grateful to Erik for everything he has done during his time with us and wish him well for the future," said United, which added that Ruud van Nistelrooy, one of Ten Hag's assistants, would be taking over as interim head coach while a permanent head coach is recruited. Ten Hag joined from Ajax and was tasked with the responsibility of bringing the good times back to a club that

has been in decline since former manager Alex Ferguson retired in 2013. Despite winning the League Cup and the FA Cup in Ten Hag's first seasons at Old Trafford, United was showing no sign of improving on its worst league campaign in 34 years.

Ten Hag only held onto his job following an unexpected victory over fierce rival Manchester City in the FA Cup final in May and an extensive end-of-year review by United. He was then handed a one-year extension to his contract to 2026. His departure comes amid a period of major change at United under new minority owner Jim Ratcliffe.

The British billionaire has taken over control of United's soccer operations, with a new CEO, sporting director and technical director all installed in recent months. Ten Hag was United's fifth permanent manager since Ferguson's departure, following David Moyes, Louis van Gaal, Jose Mourinho and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer. United's next game is at home to Leicester in the English League Cup on Wednesday.



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Meenakshi Chaudhary is one of the leading actresses in Telugu cinema at present. Last year only one film of hers was released and this year three of her films were released and three more are releasing in the coming two months. Suddenly Meenakshi Chaudhary is all over the Down South! Her upcoming film *Lucky Bhaskar* is releasing on October 31, in which she played opposite Malayalam star Dulquer Salmaan. "It's a young team from the director to the technical team to actors and more than that, it is a fresh concept with good writing," said Meenakshi about the film.

"The team had done so much preparation, which is a great thing, because Dulquer and I are not from the Telugu states, so it is important to us to get full clarity about the characters, dialogues and many other aspects. Because of that preparation work, our job becomes very easy from day one," said Meenakshi. She added that everyone knows that

'I CAN'T LIMIT MYSELF TO ONLY PLAYING ROLES OF MY AGE GROUP'

Meenakshi Chaudhary has had a successful year with the release of *Guntur Kaaram* with Superstar Mahesh Babu, *Goat* with superstar Vijay and an upcoming film *Lucky Bhaskar* with Malayalam superstar Dulquer Salmaan. Two additional films will also premiere this year and Meenakshi is ubiquitous. She discusses her career, working with superstars and more

Bhaskar, *Matka* and *Mechanic Rocky*. "They are all very different from each other," she added. The actress is playing different characters and says that the audience also feels that it is not the same person playing these roles after watching her movies.

"I think to keep growing in your craft, what you can do variations. I am so grateful that at such a young age I got to do this kind of role and that has always been my goal—to try different roles and challenge myself and keep becoming an actor. Because if not now, then when?" said Meenakshi. In her early career, Meenakshi gets a chance to work with superstars from Telugu, Tamil and Malayalam. She worked with Mahesh Babu in *Guntur Kaaram*, *Goat* with Vijay and now *Lucky Bhaskar* with Dulquer Salmaan.

"Though they are all Superstars, they never behave like one. They are very down to earth and they are so normal. But they take their job seriously and they always come on time. In fact, Vijay sir comes five minutes early and I have to run to get ready. Whenever there is a dance, I am practicing to match his dance steps, but he does it in just one take. Telugu is not Dulquer Salmaan's first language, but he is well prepared with his lines. Mahesh sir is just a pro. He will add to the scene with his individuality and with his own understanding of the character, which I saw in *Guntur Kaaram*. Punctuality, hard work, discipline and consistency—these are the four qualities that I learn from these superstars," she said about them.

The actress is playing a middle-class mother in this film, while she shared her thoughts about the middle-class family. "My father is working in the Army and my mother is a simple housewife who studied 10th grade. We hail from a village in Haryana and I am the first person to become an actor, doctor, and Miss India from my village. We don't have much money, but education is a very important thing for us and today whatever I achieved, all of that was possible because of my parents," she said. She shared a funny middle-class mentality thing. "There are certain things about which I can say that when I was in a new class I had to buy a new uniform, so we would always buy a size bigger, because it will be useful for the next class also," said Meenakshi.

She shared that *Lucky Bhaskar* will connect with everyone as most Indian families are middle-class and the film presents it with utmost sincerity and honesty. What are her criteria: character, production house, money? "If it was about money, I would have done a lot of films that were offered to me. But I was choosy about my projects, for which I picked up roles that helped as an actor. I have been always working and my idea is to just keep doing work. If the director thinks that I fit into the character, then I will do. I would like to do different, challenging and memorable roles. Money will come when you keep doing good projects," she said.

The actress said that apart from *Lucky Bhaskar*, two of her films, *Matka* and *Mechanic Rocky*, are ready for release. She also signed two Tamil films and some more films are in the pipeline.



Kiran pins high expectations on KA

PNS| HYDERABAD

Kiran Abbavaram has put all his hopes on his upcoming film *KA*, directed by Sujith and Sandeep. The film stars Nayan Sarika and Tanvi Ram as the female leads. Now, ahead of the release, the actor is confident that he is coming up with a new concept with this film.

"I am playing a postman Vasudev in this film," revealed Kiran. He added that the story is a period drama dated back to 1977 from a remote village. "I was more connected to this role because I come from a village."

The director duo Sujith and Sandeep narrated the story to Kiran; he was spellbound after the climax. "Why we put the title *KA* and the story of this film will be revealed to you in the climax. When the directors told me this story, I thought when was this going to happen, there was another twist. With such a point, I felt that a new movie could be planned against the backdrop of the '70s. We believe that the audience will surely receive this story well," said Kiran. The actor was all closemouthed when it comes to sharing insights about the story or title. "I can only say that the film is completely about who, what and where. It is a complete suspense thriller," said Kiran.

With over one year of preparations that went behind the film, there was not much of a challenge. However, Kiran had to face a few challenges. "For me, the challenge was the action sequences that come during the end—35 minutes of the film. There's a lot of action and it is a complete physical task. That's the biggest challenge for me. The rest I did with complete ease. I get into the role when the director narrates it to me. More than that postman giving letters to the people, which I didn't see in Telugu in the last 25 years," said Kiran.

He said in this film, every character is important. "Tanvi Ram plays Radha while Nayan Sarika plays Satyabhama and she is my love interest in the film," said Kiran. He added that

Young actor Kiran Abbavaram is confident that his upcoming film *KA* will definitely enthrall the audience. He didn't reveal much about the film's story or backdrop; however, he shares it's going to bring a completely 'new' experience for the audience

many compare this film with *Virupaksha* and *Kanthara*, but they are different compared to *KA*. "There are no devotional points in this film," said Kiran. The actor agreed that his last two films were disappointing. "I am confident that this film is going to bring a new experience to the audience. I am saying 'new' so many times, because of the content and it's a fresh one. The movie will have a rustic feel, with fights and songs. We have revealed the suspense in the climax and we believe it will genuinely reach the audience," said Kiran.

The film is going to be released on October 31, during the Diwali festival. The film, is however, not going to release in multiple languages on the same day because, "There are many film releases and we don't get many screens," said Kiran. For the Malayalam version, Dulquer Salmaan bought the rights and his film *Lucky Bhaskar* is also releasing on the same day. "That's another reason, we are not releasing in Malayalam," said Kiran.

The actor recently got married to his co-star of the film *Raja Vaaru Rani Gaaru*, Rahasya Gorak. "But I am spending only little time as I was busy with this movie and now with the promotions. *KA* will stand as a significant film in my career. After this film's release, I wanted to take a short break and spend time with my family and then get into my next film," said Kiran Abbavaram.

VD IS MY LUCKY CHARM: DULQUER



On Sunday evening, the film *Lucky Bhaskar* pre-release event was held at a convention center in Hyderabad. Apart from the team unit, Vijay Deverakonda and director Trivikram Srinivas attended as the special guests. On this occasion, Dulquer surprised everyone speaking in Telugu.

"Director Venky is looking like a college student, but he writes so mature dialogues and the script," said Dulquer. He added that while shooting this film, he feels like family. "Nearly one year we shot the film and every time we came back for a new schedule, I felt that I was coming home," he said. The actor praises Meenakshi Chaudhary for taking this role. "It takes a lot of security and honesty as an artiste at somebody at Meenakshi's age to play a mother in her early career; she had no inhibitions, no issues, when Venky approached her for this role," said Dulquer. Dulquer said that he dubbed his own voice in three languages for this film, so he watched the film three times. "Everytime I watched, there were amazing Meenakshi scenes in my memory; she played a full-length role that everybody remembers for so long," said Dulquer about the actress.

"VD is my 'thammudu', my brother. I don't know you have realised that you are my lucky charm in Telugu. I was introduced to the Telugu audience for the first time in a pre-release function. Vijay came on the stage and introduced me. "This is Dulquer Salmaan acting in *Mahanati*. Next *Sita Ramam* again, he was there at the music launch; he graced our function. Now, he was again for this *Lucky Bhaskar*. Thank you, brother, for being there for me," said Dulquer about Vijay Deverakonda. The film is releasing on October 31.



Pooja Hegde bounces back with new films

Pooja Hegde is currently occupied with projects in South Indian cinema as well as Bollywood movies. The actress faced challenges in Telugu films following her blockbuster success with *Ala Vaikuntapuramlo*. In that movie released in 2020, she acted alongside Allu Arjun in a film directed by Trivikram Srinivas, which was a major success. She then starred in *Most Eligible Bachelor* with Akhil Akkineni followed by *Radhe Shyam* with Prabhas. Both movies flopped at the box office and the actress has yet to commit to any Telugu film. The actress went on a complete break from Tamil and Hindi as well. The actress was set to star in *Guntur Kaaram* and *Ustaad Bhagath Singh* with Mahesh Babu and Pawan Kalyan, but she exited the projects and was substituted by Sreeleela. However, following a hiatus, Pooja Hegde appears to be making a comeback in both Southern and Bollywood films. The actress recently finished working on a movie with Suriya and now she is currently filming with Tamil Superstar Vijay. This will be the actor's final film before transitioning into a full-time political career. The actress has also agreed to act in a Hindi movie alongside Shahid Kapoor and there are now rumours circulating that Pooja Hegde has also signed on for another Hindi film. "The actress is now almost confirmed to play opposite Varun Dhawan in a film directed by the actor's father David Dhawan," said a source. With four films in her kitty, Pooja Hegde is also in talks with a Telugu film, added the source.

Balakrishna's shocking remuneration

Nandamuri Balakrishna, the actor who used to prefer setting his remuneration in the past, is now also increasing his remuneration. The actor is reluctant to increase his salary until *Ruler* and *Akhanda*. After the massive success of *Veerasimha Reddy* and *Bhagavanth Kesari*, the actor has chosen to increase his payment.

As per a report, Balakrishna is currently receiving a payment of Rs 50 crore for his role in the newly released movie *Akhanda 2*. The actor is demanding a steep price for the movie directed by Kollu Bobby and produced by Sithara Entertainments.

"Balakrishna films are now doing good business at the box office and also in demand, so the actor decided to hike



his remuneration," said a source. Actors such as Prabhas and Allu Arjun earn around Rs 100 crore as remuneration, but senior actor Balakrishna now charges Rs 50 crore for a film.

Balakrishna is currently the host of a popular reality show called *Unstoppable*.

STANDALONE



In a glorious convergence of cinematic legends, Amitabh Bachchan bestowed upon Chiranjeevi the esteemed ANR Award, commemorating his iconic impact on Indian cinema. As the spotlight shone bright, two of India's most beloved superstars shared a moment of mutual admiration, their combined legacy spanning decades of blockbuster films and unforgettable performances. With Bachchan's iconic baritone and Chiranjeevi's captivating charisma, the evening was an ode to the magic of Indian movies. As the curtains drew open, the ANR Awards ceremony transformed into a grand celebration of Chiranjeevi's unwavering dedication, versatility and unparalleled stardom.