

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**  
 The pioneer  
 If only Congress has that right, why was Telangana Liberation Day not celebrated till now? Congress ruled the state for 50 years when it was part of United AP. Why was it not celebrated then? Why not remember the Telangana fighters of yesteryears? Do you remember Sardar Patel who conducted Operation Polo to liberate Telangana? When the Congress and the BRS are not in power, they say one thing about Telangana Liberation Day. When they come to power, they say something else. This is the way of the Congress and the BRS. The Congress is organising 'People's Governance Day.' It is better if the Congress calls the day 'Betrayal of Peoples Day'  
 — Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs

**Bangladeshi, Rohingya infiltration major threat to Jharkhand: PM**

**FROM INDIE BEATS TO INDUSTRY FEATS: SALONI BATRA ROCKS KHALBALI RECORDS**

**Jr NTR compliments Janhvi on HER WORK**

**DON'T MISS...**

**Special arrangements...**  
 Special arrangements have been made for Metro travel to meet the Ganesh Utsav rush. The daily passengers have exceeded to five lakhs and the Khairatabad Ganesh festival contributed to this increase, with 94,000 passengers at the Metro station on Saturday. To manage this, HMRL MD NVS Reddy met with L&TMRHL MD KVB Reddy and officials and planned extra trains with higher frequency during peak hours until Ganesh Nimajjanam. Trains will run past midnight on September 17, with the last train at 1:00 am. More police and...  
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**Saini is BJP's CM face in Haryana...**  
 Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini is the BJP's CM face and the party will score a hat-trick of wins in the state under his leadership, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan asserted on Sunday after his senior leader Anil Vij said he will stake claim for the CM's post if the party returns to power after the October 5 assembly polls. "Being a party worker he may have said so but Nayab Singh Saini is the BJP's CM face," Pradhan, the Union Education Minister who is also the party's incharge for...  
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**90 pc of financial institutions...**  
 Ninety per cent of Indian financial institutions are focusing on artificial intelligence (AI) and GenAI (Generative Artificial Intelligence) as the primary technology enablers of innovation, according to a PwC India report. As per the PwC India report titled, 'Mapping the FinTech innovation landscape in India' data analytics also continues to emerge prominently across nearly 74 per cent responses, underscoring its integral role in driving insights and decision-making within the financial services (FS) sector. It said that 31 financial...  
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**Khawaja relishes his on-field...**  
 Australian opener Usman Khawaja has over the years relished his on-field battles with star Indian spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, who according to the southpaw is a man who always has a plan up his sleeve. Ashwin (39 wickets) is the third-highest wicket-taker among Indian bowlers in Test matches in Australia, only behind Anil Kumble (49) and Kapil Dev (51) apart from topping the charts across all bilateral series (home and away) with 114 scalps which also includes seven five-for. "Ravi is a very good bowler...  
 -SPORTS



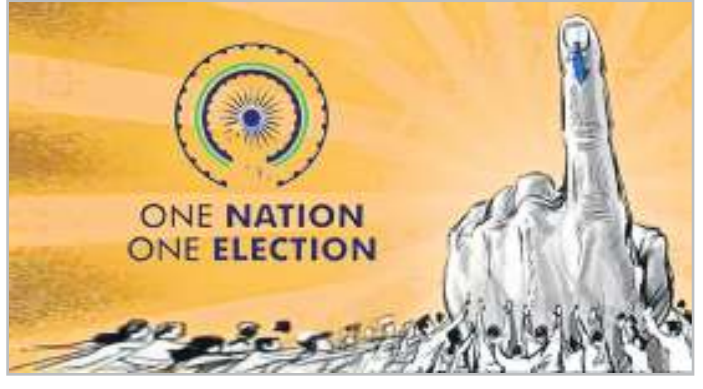
**Kejriwal to seek 'certificate of honesty' Says he will resign as CM in two-days**  
 PNS ■ NEW DELHI  
 Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced on Sunday that he would resign after two days and sought early polls in the national capital while vowing not to sit in the chief minister's chair till people give him a "certificate of honesty". The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) described the AAP supremo's move as "drama" and a "confession of crime" and wondered whether he has offered to quit because of infighting within his party. Kejriwal said he would hold a meeting of the AAP MLAs in a couple of days and one of his party colleagues would take over as the chief minister. The AAP national convener said he would become the chief minister and Manish Sisodia his deputy "only when people say that we are honest".  
 Who will be Delhi next CM?  
 P2

**Pharma City must be built with its full capacity intact: KTR**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD  
 BRS Working President KT Rama Rao (KTR) wrote a letter to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy saying that the Hyderabad Pharma City project should be executed with its full capacity intact as envisioned without any scaling down. He said the BRS government had embarked on a journey to develop the world's largest integrated pharma cluster. He said that as soon as the Congress formed the government it said that it has decided to scrap the globally recognised project. "This abrupt decision raised concerns, not only among investors who have shown immense interest being taken without any clear roadmap or consultation with farmers and local communities who contributed their land for this project," he said. "Given the recent High Court directive, we seek clarity on your stance regarding Pharma City. The court's intervention has made it clear that the land acquired for Pharma City cannot be given for other ventures," he said in the letter. "In this context, I would like to know your government's decision on the Pharma City project. We also demand that if you intend to continue with the project, it should be executed with its full capacity intact, without any scaling down."

**'One Nation, One Election' to be implemented in current tenure of NDA govt: Sources**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI  
 The BJP-led NDA government will implement 'one nation, one election' within its current tenure, sources said, exuding confidence that the reform measure would receive support across party lines. As the third term of the NDA government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi completes 100 days in office, the sources said that the cohesion within the ruling alliance will continue for the rest of the tenure. "Definitely, it will be implemented in this tenure itself. It will be a reality," one source said, speaking on condition of anonymity. In his Independence Day address last month, the prime minister made a strong pitch for 'one nation, one election', contending that frequent polls were creating hurdles in the country's progress. "The nation has to come forward for 'one nation, one election', Modi had said in his address from the ramparts of the Red Fort. The prime minister urged the political parties "from the Red Fort and with the national tricolour as a witness to ensure the nation's progress".



**Why BRS leaders not quitting**

GOVT HAS IMPLEMENTED LOAN WAIVER... WHERE IS HARISH NOW, QUESTIONS CM REVANTH SAYS CONGRESS WILL TEACH BRS LEADERS A LESSON IF THEY DARE TO TOUCH PARTY ACTIVISTS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD  
 Chief Minister Revanth Reddy reacted to the incident involving BRS MLA Padi Kaushik Reddy and warned BRS leaders that the Congress would teach them a lesson if they dared to touch Congress activists. The CM said that some political rivals tried to assault Congress workers. "Some BRS leaders said that they will come to our leader's residence. But they didn't come. But our leaders went to their leader's residence. However, the BRS leader is now saying that our leader attacked him after inviting him to his residence. Some BRS leaders said that they will come to our leader's residence. But they didn't come. But our leaders went to their leader's residence. However, the BRS leader is now saying that our leader attacked him after inviting him to his residence. Some BRS leaders said that they will come to our leader's residence. But they didn't come. But our leaders went to their leader's residence. However, the BRS leader is now saying that our leader attacked him after inviting him to his residence."  
 resign if the Congress government waives farm loans. "Where is Harish now? The government has waived the loans of 23 lakh farmers by depositing Rs 18,000 crore in the bank accounts of farmers as per the word given to them," the CM said. "Harish said that he would resign his MLA post if the government waives farm loans up to Rs 2 lakh by August 15. Why are BRS leaders hiding and not quitting their posts," the CM said. The CM said the government will give Rs 500 per quintal as a bonus for fine variety paddy and that the Telangana government is credited



**Bag found near CM's house creates tension**  
 PNS ■ HYDERABAD  
 A suspicious bag found near Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's house in Jubilee Hills on Sunday created tension among security personnel deployed at the spot. After noticing the bag, security officials seized it and began inspecting it. After information was given to higher officials, the police strengthened security at the CM's residence. Security officials are investigating to find out who brought the bag. The officials are checking CCTV cameras too.

**Mahesh takes charge as TPCC chief Says HYDRRAA must extend operations to other dists**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD  
 Declaring that BRS leaders including MLAs, MPs, MLCs and other public representatives encroached on lakes, tanks and lands indiscriminately in the last 10 years, TPCC President B. Mahesh Kumar Goud said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's move to launch HYDRRAA is a historical decision.  
 B Mahesh Kumar Goud taking charge as TPCC president on Sunday at Gandhi Bhavan



**SRIDHAR ASKS KTR Settle BRS' internal squabbling first**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD  
 Industries Minister D. Sridhar Babu countered BRS MLA KT Rama Rao for describing him as a 'Smart Minister' on Sunday. Sridhar said that it is clear who is behaving smartly and reminded him of Serilingampally MLA Arekapudi Gandhi's comment that he is a BRS MLA. He also said that Congress leaders will not enter into other issues like BRS leaders. Sridhar asked KTR to settle the BRS's internal fights first. People are watching the BRS's internal matters and will tell who is smart, he said. He said that everyone living in Telangana are Telanganites after the formation of the Telangana state and the Congress will respect everyone irrespective of region of origin. He said that BRS leaders are trying to spoil Hyderabad's image.

**'HARASSMENT' OF ACTRESS 3 senior AP IPS men axed**



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA  
 The Andhra Pradesh government on Sunday issued separate orders suspending three senior IPS officers, including a DG rank, for their alleged involvement in 'hastily arresting' and 'harassing' a Mumbai-based actor-cum-model without proper investigation in a case filed against her. Former intelligence chief P Sitharama Anjaneyulu (DG rank), former Vijayawada Police Commissioner Kranthi Rana Tata (IG rank) and Vishal Gunni (SP rank), then Deputy Commissioner

**Political row over 'Telangana Liberation Day'**

IF SARDAR PATEL BELONGS TO CONGRESS, WHY LIBERATION DAY NOT CELEBRATED: SANJAY



PNS ■ HYDERABAD  
 Asking the Congress to answer why "If Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel belonged to the Congress, why was Telangana Liberation Day not celebrated," Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar criticised the Congress for saying that the BJP has 'no right' to observe Telangana Liberation Day. "If the Congress only has that right, why was Telangana Liberation Day not celebrated till now? Congress ruled the state for 50 years as part of united Andhra Pradesh. Why was it not celebrated then? Why not remember the Telangana fighters of yesteryears? Ever remember Sardar Patel who conducted Operation Polo to liberate Telangana? When the Congress and the BRS are not in power, they say one thing about Telangana Liberation Day. When they lose power, they say something else. This is the way of the Congress and the BRS. One party says 'Integration Day on September 17,' Sanjay said.

**CM echoing BJP ideology, says BRS**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD  
 BRS leader Dasoju Sravan Kumar said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is distorting history and echoing BJP's ideology regarding September 17. This date, which marks the merger of the erstwhile Hyderabad State into the Indian Union on September 17, 1948, carries historical and political dynamics. Dasoju released an open letter to the Telangana people criticising the Telangana government's decision to commemorate September 17 as the 'People's Governance Day' (Praja Palana Dinotsavam). He said that Revanth's actions not only reflect a significant deviation from the ideology of the Indian National Congress but also strongly echo the BJP's political tactic of historical revisionism.



# Monday Mirchi

## DATA-DRIVEN MASTERSTROKE WOVES EVEN BIG GUNS WITH STIFF UPPER LIP

At a time when data is being hailed the world over as the 'new oil' to signify its value as an essential resource in the 21st century, it augurs well for Telangana that Ramakrishna Rao, the Special Secretary of Finance, has quietly yet firmly cemented his place as one of key financial strategists of the state. The word around the corridors of power is that even those with a stiff upper lip don't mind hailing him in glowing terms, including economist Arvind Panagariya, for Ramakrishna Rao's wizardry with incontestable numbers. The buzz is that, during his recent visit to TG as the chairman of the Sixteenth Finance Commission, Panagariya was very impressed—yes, you read that right, "very impressed"—by the depth of preparation and the data-driven arguments put forth by Rao and his team. The story goes that Rao's team, fully aware of the financial tightrope that Telangana walks, pulled out all the stops. One example making the rounds is how they cleverly used data streams, starting from that of the 10th Finance Commission, to show how states like Bihar are benefiting, while Telangana, despite its strong per capita income, is losing out under the current system of giving weightage, which appears to be skewed by its use of uniform yardstick for bracketing both performers and non-performers. Insiders say the evidence-based data left Panagariya and the Commission members nodding in approval. For a state that is under a brand-new government, a pat from someone like Panagariya is no small feat. And, as its sutradhari -- Ramakrishna Rao's stock cannot but rise further in the hierarchy of those holding the purse strings of the state.

## GOOD WORK IS SEEN AND APPRECIATED, BOTH ON AND OFF SOCIAL MEDIA

Good work stands on its own; whether appreciated or not and whether advertised (posted on social media for the digital generation) or not. It looks like policing is back under netizens' glare with Hyderabad's top cop back in the saddle! Ever since CV Anand took charge as Commissioner of Hyderabad Police, the CP's social media handle has been buzzing with updates, information, and all things law and order. Insiders say it is quite a shift from the ways of his predecessor, Kothakota Srinivas, who perhaps chose not to capitalize on the kothadanam of social media. He wasn't too fond, if not shy, of the digital limelight. Nosy parkers among newshounds did sound him about his digital disconnect, but Kothakota stayed silent during his tenure. Now, with CV Anand in the chair, it is as if the entire department's digital presence has received fresh infusion of energy. No boss can afford to remain blind to good work. At a recent passing-out parade, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy did not miss the chance to mention Kothakota's name. He brought it up while talking about worthwhile new initiatives like schools for police children, subtly indicating that maybe, just maybe, things were not as bad as they seemed under the former CP's watch. Some may read it as a casual mention or giving Kothakota 'some' credit for the record; yet

the name dropping was enough to get people talking. Whatever it be, Hyderabadis want good work from cops to continue, whether seen or not, and whether placed on record or not. Those for whom work is worship, human praise can hardly be an incentive, much less a stimulant.

## A LETTER TO PM THAT SHOCKED THE CMO

In a bizarre turn of events, a seemingly innocuous letter from Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to Prime Minister Narendra Modi concerning the specifics of flood relief sought from the Center by the state has caused quite a stir within the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) and elsewhere. Typically, copies of such letters, deemed strictly official communication, are shared with the media as a matter of convention. However, this time, the official letter, complete with letterhead, was notably absent from public view, raising eyebrows across political and administrative circles. The buzz is that the letter, crudely drafted by officials left many in the CMO, especially newcomers, shell-shocked. A little birdie whispered that this was not just any routine correspondence, but a letter meant to reflect the urgency and solemn mood of the flood-hit state. Unlike under the Bharat Rashtira Samithi regime, when letters to the Prime Minister were often written just for the heck of it, the Congress government seemed intent on capturing the true situation and convince the Prime Minister to grant substantial flood relief. The grapevine has it that nature is taking its toll, if one goes by the dictum: "You lose what you don't use". This best applies to human faculties and endowments. Under the BRS regime, with KCR allegedly stifling bureaucratic performance, some officials may have even lost touch with the basic protocols of drafting such important letters. The larger question for the Congress government is: How to correct learned inaction?

## AKUN SABHARWAL AT HOME AS ITBF IG NE FRONTIER

Akun Sabharwal, who shook stars and great personalities of Tollywood, Sandalwood and other tinsel towns with his single-minded pursuit of destroying drug syndicates some time back, has just gotten into a position where he is bound to feel 'at home' and highly elated, pun not intended. He has just taken over as ITBP Northeast Frontier HQ Inspector General (IG). The formal announcement from the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) was re-shared on social media by none other than his wife, Smita Sabharwal, also an IAS officer. The extensive cultivation of poppy and cross-border drug trafficking from Myanmar to India has been a thorn in the flesh of the Union Home Ministry for quite long. The Centre has acknowledged that drug consumption in northeastern India is a 'serious problem'. What is more disturbing for the Centre now is the growing collusion between Nigerian cartels and drug syndicates as well as narcotic smugglers. With Akun in place, the 'Seven Sisters' can have a sigh of relief now. That apart, with Akun Sabharwal now leading the NE Frontier, the chances of Smita pushing for her Central deputation seem to be quite high.

--Yours truly

## TG Medical Council discovers fake doctors during inspections

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Medical Council (TGMC) discovered fake doctors during inspections in Hyderabad on Sunday. TGMC C chairman Dr K Mahesh Kumar and Vice-Chairman Dr G Srinivas conducted inspections in LB Nagar, Sarur Nagar, Murambagh, Vanasthalipuram, Gurram Gadda and Shaheed Nagar areas. They found 20 individuals illegally giving antibiotics, steroids and narcotic injections without proper qualifications. The evidence showed that these fake doctors were targeting poor and middle-class people, causing harm through misuse of medicines.

## TODAY

### ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:	Sukla Paksha
Trayodashi:	Sep 15 06:12 PM to Sep 16 03:10 PM
Chaturdash:	Sep 16 03:10 PM to Sep 17 11:44 AM
Nakshatram:	
Dhanishtha:	Sep 15 06:49 PM to Sep 16 04:33 PM
Shatabhisha:	Sep 16 04:33 PM to Sep 17 01:53 PM
Rahukalam:	7:38 AM to 9:09 AM
Yamagandam:	10:40 AM to 12:10 PM
Varjyam:	10:57 PM to 12:22 AM
Gulika:	1:41 PM to 3:12 PM
Amritakalam:	07:08 AM to 08:35 AM
Abhijit Muhurtham:	11:46 AM to 12:35 PM

## HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Partly Cloudy  
Temp: 30°  
Humidity: 67%  
Sunrise: 6:04 AM  
Sunset: 6:17 PM

Updated: September 15, 2024 5:00 PM

# Kishan rejects CM's Sept 17 invite

## Dubs it an attempt to erase history

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Thanking Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for extending an invitation to attend the 'Praja Palana Dinotsavam' being observed on September 17, the Union Minister of Coal and Mines, G. Kishan Reddy, sent a letter on Sunday to the CM saying that as the son of this soil, the CM should be aware that the people of Hyderabad Samsthan fought for years to liberate their land from the Nizam and his private army of Razakars. Many people laid down their lives during the struggle and thousands suffered indescribable violence.

He said that the liberation of Telangana is a heart-wrenching story of courage, sacrifice and martyrdom. Therefore, we need to commemorate September 17 in a manner that befits the sacrifice of the martyrs. The commemoration should inspire the current generation and infuse them with nationalist fervour, he added. He said that CM's intent however seems to be to deflect the attention of the people from the core aspects of the struggle which is evident in the very name given to the day. Describing the liberation of Hyderabad as just a transition of power from a monarchy to a democracy not only subverts the heroic struggle but also

continues the politics of appeasement.

Kishan said that on the contrary, the Modi Government over the last few years has been commemorating September 17 by giving it the recognition that it deserves in a form and manner that pays homage to the sacrifices and valour of those who made the liberation possible. I therefore cannot be party to an insincere ritual which blatantly attempts to hide the truth, Kishan said.

He said that he sincerely believes that acknowledging September 17 as a day of immense significance is the first step in the journey to eventually understand and accept the truth of liberation.

## Govt not observing Sept 17 as Liberation Day as it fears Owaisis: Maheshwar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress government is not commemorating September 17 as Telangana Liberation Day as it is afraid of the Owaisis, BJP leader Alleti Maheshwar Reddy said. Speaking to the media on Sunday at the State BJP office, Maheshwar said that in the past, the BRS also did not organise Telangana Liberation Day fearing the Owaisis. It was commemorated as Integration Day

when the BRS was in power, he said and added that now the Congress government is calling it Praja Palana Day.

He criticised both the BRS and the Congress for ignoring the sacrifices of Telangana's fighters. The state government has an opportunity to honour the sacrifices of TG martyrs who fought against the Razakars. Instead of calling it Praja Palana Day, it should be observed as Telangana Liberation Day.

## VH asks TPCC chief Mahesh to give senior leaders their due

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Senior Congress leader V. Hanumantha Rao appealed to the new TPCC President B. Mahesh Kumar Goud to give priority to leaders working for the party during the last three to four decades besides giving priority to new ones.

He appealed to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy who had attended the meeting, to take up the caste census as

soon as possible. Addressing the meeting and the oath-taking ceremony of the new TPCC president B. Mahesh Kumar Goud on Sunday at the Gandhi Bhavan, VH said that it is good for the party if old and new leaders worked together.

He appealed to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to withdraw the cases filed against Congress leaders including him during the BRS regime.

## Rajiv Gandhi's statue to be unveiled today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's statue will be unveiled in front of the Secretariat on September 16 Monday at 3.45 pm.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, AICC in-

charge General Secretary Deepa Das Munshi, TPCC President Mahesh Goud, Ministers, MPs, MLAs, MLCs, Government Advisors, Mayor, DCC Presidents, leaders of affiliated societies and former public representatives are expected to attend the function.

## Don't fall into Revanth's trap, warns KCR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS chief K. Chandrasekhar Rao asked BRS leaders not to fall into the trap of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and to keep the government on its toes regarding its assurances. On Sunday, a key meeting

of the BRS was held at KCR's farmhouse. The meeting, led by KTR, was attended by former ministers, MLAs, and other important BRS leaders. They discussed the latest political developments, plans of the party and strategies concerning the Congress.

# Infrastructure, agri key focus areas of 100 days of Modi 3.0

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP-led NDA government has approved infrastructure projects worth Rs 3 lakh crore, including linking 25,000 unconnected villages to road networks and building a mega port at

Wadhawan in Maharashtra, during its first 100 days in office.

Besides infrastructure, the focus of the government has also been on agriculture by increasing the minimum support price (MSP) for Kharif crops, removing of minimum export

price (MEP) on onions and basmati rice and hiking the duty on the import of crude palm, soybean and sunflower oils. Prime Minister Narendra Modi assumed office for the third consecutive term on June 9 this year.

# An actress' epic showdown with Andhra's lawmakers

The role of law enforcement in protecting the vulnerable has come under intense scrutiny following the high-profile case of Mumbai actress Kadambari Jethwani in Andhra Pradesh. This case exposes troubling issues of power, influence, and the duty of the police, raising the question: what happens when those tasked with upholding the law instead act against it?

Kadambari Jethwani's ordeal began after she had filed a sexual assault complaint against prominent industrialist Sajjan Jindal in Mumbai. According to Jethwani, she subsequently faced immense pressure to withdraw her allegations, reportedly orchestrated by top leaders of the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) and certain police officers.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has initiated an investigation, acting swiftly on Jethwani's online complaint. However, the incident also

reveals a disturbing trend where political connections can give room for influencing legal processes, compromising the very foundations of justice.

As for Jethwani's harassment claims, two conflicting narratives have emerged. The first suggests that her relationship with YSRCP leader Kukkala Vidyasagar turned sour when she pressed for marriage, leading to a personal dispute that spiraled into a legal battle. The second, however, posits a more insidious motive: a deliberate effort to shield Sajjan Jindal from the fallout of Jethwani's allegations by framing Vidyasagar instead.

As Jethwani navigated these murky waters, she reported being illegally detained by the Andhra Pradesh Police under the previous YSRCP regime. She alleges she was coerced to drop her sexual assault case. If true, these actions of the police not only undermine the rule of law but also reflect

**Kadambari Jethwani's ordeal began after she had filed a sexual assault complaint against prominent industrialist Sajjan Jindal in Mumbai. According to Jethwani, she subsequently faced immense pressure to withdraw her allegations, reportedly orchestrated by top leaders of the YSR Congress Party and certain police officers**



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

a broader issue within the force—an alarming willingness to prioritize political loyalty over constitutional duties.

When police officers, who are supposed to protect citizens, instead become instruments of oppression, the safety and security of individuals, especially the vulnerable, are severely compromised.

The Andhra Pradesh Police's decision to investigate these allegations against their own officers is a critical move toward restoring public trust. By appointing a

special team to handle the inquiry, the police force acknowledges that the misconduct of a few can tarnish the entire institution's reputation. However, the real test will be ensuring that this investigation is conducted with transparency and impartiality, free from political interference. The public's trust in law enforcement depends on their ability to act without bias and uphold justice above all else.

Jethwani's case has attracted significant media attention, drawing both public interest and scrutiny. As this

relationship between politics and law enforcement in India. If police officers, entrusted with the impartial administration of justice, succumb to political pressure, it sets a dangerous precedent. Corruption and abuse of power can become rampant, undermining democracy and the rule of law. When those in positions of authority prioritize political allegiance over their duty to the public, the most marginalized and vulnerable are left unprotected.

For the Andhra Pradesh government, the ongoing investigation offers an opportunity to demonstrate a genuine commitment to justice. This involves not only addressing Jethwani's allegations but also implementing reforms within the police force to prevent future abuses. Emphasizing transparency, accountability, and training on ethical conduct is essential to ensure officers understand their responsibilities to the public. A police force perceived as fair and

just is crucial for maintaining public confidence and ensuring the safety of all citizens.

In conclusion, the case of Kadambari Jethwani serves as a stark reminder of the importance of impartiality and integrity in law enforcement. Police officers must embody the principles of justice and protection for all, especially the most vulnerable. The allegations against YSRCP leaders and IPS officers illustrate the potential for abuse when political power intersects with the legal system. As this case unfolds, the Andhra Pradesh government must uphold its constitutional duty, ensuring those who violate the law are held accountable, and the rights of all citizens are protected. The integrity of the justice system hinges on law enforcement's unwavering commitment to serving the public without bias, guaranteeing that everyone, regardless of status, receives the protection and justice they deserve.

## Who will be Delhi's next CM?

Sunita, Atishi among possible candidates

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's unexpected announcement to resign after two days kicked up a strong buzz on Sunday over the names of his wife Sunita and his ministers Atishi and Gopal Rai as his possible replacement.

Kejriwal, who was earlier this week released on bail from the Tihar Jail in the excise policy graft case, said

## CM Revanth greets Muslims on Milad-un-Nabi

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy extended greetings to the Muslim community on the occasion of "Milad-un-Nabi" festival on Monday (September 16). Milad-un-Nabi is an annual festival commemorating the birthday of Prophet Muhammad. On the holy day, the Chief Minister said that the teachings of Prophet Muhammad - peace, brotherhood, compassion and righteous living, are guiding the world.

Madhapur on Saturday. This made it the most expensive laddu in Hyderabad. Kondapalli Ganesh from Khammam won the bid, securing the laddu for Rs 29 lakh.



**CITY EVENTS**

**Rivaayat**

An evening of Sufi and classical musical journey with Ustad Puran Chand Wadali and Lakhvinder Wadali. After two decades, the legendary Wadali family returns to Hyderabad for an unforgettable evening of Sufi and classical music.

**Venue**

Shilpakala Vedika, Madhapur  
Sunday September 21, at 6.30 pm

# City Pioneer



HYDERABAD | MONDAY | SEPTEMBER 16, 2024

03

**TG Gov wishes people on the eve of Milad-un-Nabi**

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**  
Telangana Governor Jishnu Dev Varma extended warm greetings to the Hyderabad residents on the occasion of Milad-un-Nabi, the birth of Prophet Muhammad. He stated that Prophet Muhammad's noble teachings of compassion, tolerance, unity, harmony and universal brotherhood may continue to inspire us in working for the well-being of all. May there be peace and prosperity all around. The most venerable Prophet's mission is fulfilled when we serve our fellowmen with faith, trust, care, kindness and compassion. On this occasion, let us all resolve to promote unity, harmony, peace, universal brotherhood and prosperity in the society. 'I wish all of you to celebrate the Milad-un-Nabi in its true spirit', he added.

**GANESH UTSAV RUSH**

## Special arrangements for Metro travel, says L&TMRHL MD

**600 special buses for Ganesh immersion**

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**  
Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) will be arranging 600 special buses for the Ganesh immersion procession at Tank Bund and other places in the city on September 17.

A total of 130 buses would be run from Khairatabad to various other parts of the city. In all, 160 buses would be run from Indira Park to various places in the city and 80 buses would be run from Old MLA Quarters. From Basheerbagh, 40 buses will be run for various stops in the city. For any information, passengers can call Koti bus station through 9959226160 and Rathifile bus station through 9959226154 numbers.

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Special arrangements have been made for Metro travel to meet the Ganesh Utsav rush. The daily passengers have exceeded to five lakhs and the Khairatabad Ganesh festival contributed to this increase, with 94,000 passengers at the Metro station on Saturday.

To manage this, HMRL MD NVS Reddy met with L&TMRHL MD KVB Reddy and officials and planned extra trains with higher frequency during peak hours until Ganesh Nimajjanam. Trains will run past midnight on September 17, with the last train at 1:00 am. More police and security at key stations. Additional ticket counters at select stations. NVS Reddy urged commuters to cooperate with the security.

Meanwhile, the Khairatabad Metro, which was running with a minimum number of people in the morning, saw a huge crowd on Sunday noon for a visit to the Bada Ganesha. The station was filled with over a hundred people exiting, pushing L&T authorities to organise the crowd into queues. Many families came to visit Bada Ganesha, as it was going to be immersed on Tuesday.



Due to the large crowd, L&T staff opened scanner gates (which normally open only when a ticket is scanned), allowing people to stand in queues and pass through the exit. They collected paper tickets at one exit and let others pass through without proper checks even E-tickets at another, weakening ticket inspections. One exit toward Lakdikapal was closed, inconveniencing regular metro travellers. Staff explained that the police were in control of the station, though officers were seen sitting at the desk while a few helped with

crowd control. Many people grew frustrated as the crowd increased, and some missed two to four Metro trains that were filled to the doors. The same situation occurred at Ameerpet station for the trains towards LB Nagar. Several women felt insecure travelling in the congested trains. When asked, five students from JNTU, expressed disappointment at the Metro's poor crowd management as they did not expect stating the L&T maintains very well during normal days.

**Ganesh Utsav Samithi members break open barricades on Tank Bund**

Hyderabad High Court order holds no importance as members of Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi break open the barricades on Tank Bund and immerse PoP Ganesh idols in it on Sunday. As the committees forcibly immersing the idols there were arrangements being made indicating the cranes will be arranged on the side of the water body where the High Court has not granted permission. There are videos of Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi members walking with the slogans of Jai Ganesh and thrashing the barricades, stepping on them in public.

One of the members, Sasidhar, said that over the years Ganesh idols were being immersed on Tank Bund and there is no need for the State government and police to set new rules which will disappoint the devotees. He recalled that during 2022 and 2023, the imposed restrictions on Tank Bund were relaxed later. Other members have said that the State government should make necessary arrangements for the immersion of Ganesh idols on Tank Bund and if not the members will call out for all devotees and immerse their idols by themselves.



## Vande Bharat Express to Nagpur from Sept 19

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

South Central Railway (SCR) will organise an inaugural launch of Vande Bharat service between Nagpur and Secunderabad on Monday and the regular services of the train will commence on September 19, 2024. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the train virtually. The train will cover a distance of 585 kms between Nagpur and Secunderabad in seven hours 15 minutes. It consists of two executive class coaches and 18 chair car coaches with a combined seating capacity of 1,440 seats. The

train provides convenient timings facilitating day time travel from Nagpur, Balharshah and other towns to reach Secunderabad. Accordingly, the Train No. 20101 Nagpur - Secunderabad will depart from Nagpur at 5:00 am and arrive at Secunderabad at 12:15 pm. Train No. 20102 Secunderabad - Nagpur Vande Bharat Express will depart Secunderabad at 1 pm and will arrive at Nagpur at 8:20 pm. In between, the train stops at Sevagram, Chandrapur, Balharshah, Ramagundam and Kazipet railway stations in both directions.

**Woman dies in road accident**

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

A 43-year-old woman died on the spot, when the auto she was travelling in, rammied into a car at Malkam Cheruvu road in Raidurgam police station limits on Sunday. According to the Raidurgam Police, the deceased has been identified as Rathna Bai, working as housekeeper in a nearby place. The accident happened when the auto tried to avoid collision with the motorbike and it rammied into a car.

## Nature lovers plan protests to save Chevella banyans



**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Nature lovers in Hyderabad gathered to discuss the next steps in their ongoing campaign to save the Chevella banyans. During the meeting, members considered organising a protest at Dharna Chowk to pressure the government into addressing the urgent need for action. Currently, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has

directed the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to conduct an environmental impact assessment (EIA) to minimise tree loss due to the expansion of National Highway 163 between Hyderabad and Bijapur. The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has been given four months to issue terms of reference and complete the assessment process.

As the deadline approaches, the group is determined to protect the Chevella banyans. One member highlighted that they were invited to meet with the Chief Minister in Telangana but the interaction has not yet taken place. They remain hopeful, planning to escalate their protests and campaigns to bring the issue to the government's attention.

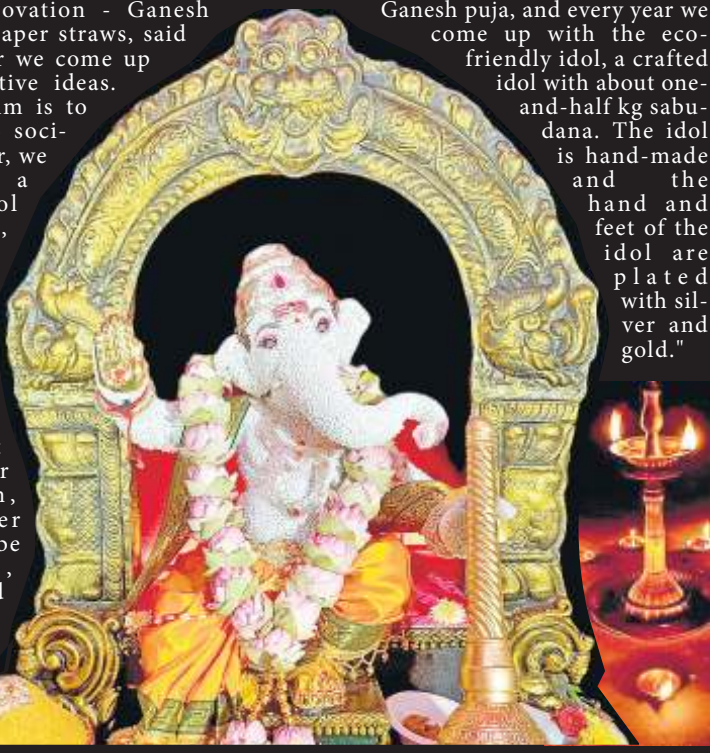
During the meeting, a five-minute film was shown, documenting their years-long fight to protect the banyans. One of the youngest members proposed engaging with local villagers to explain the environmental consequences of tree loss and encourage their participation in the campaign. The group also discussed plans to amplify their message by tagging Central ministers in social media posts about the Chevella banyans.

Natasha Ramarathnam, a volunteer, noted that despite filing an RTI request regarding the situation of the banyans, they have yet to receive a response. She stated that the group is preparing to file another RTI, as part of their efforts to hold authorities accountable and protect the endangered trees.

## Eye catching eco-friendly Ganeshas

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Unlike Ganesh idols made out of clay, Hyderabad residents came up with their creative innovations of Ganesh idols - Ganesh made out of Sabudana and Ganesh made out of paper straws. Surya Prakash, the founder of Vigna Vinayaka Youth Association, Nacharam, who has come up with a creative innovation - Ganesh idol out of paper straws, said, "Every year we come up with innovative ideas. Our main aim is to give back to society. This year, we have made a Ganesh idol with straws, and around 10,000 paper straws were used to make this idol. It weighs 20 kg and is 10 feet tall. After immersion, the paper straws will be collected, dried and sent for recycling. The entire decoration was done by the colony children and students and the theme is attracting many people to visit the pandal and seek Lord Ganesha's blessings." Sainath, the organiser of Ganesh Utsav Samithi at Rangopalpet, has crafted a three-foot Ganesh idol using sago (sabudana) which is attracting huge crowds. Speaking to Pioneer Correspondent he said, "For the past 25 years, we have been organising Ganesh puja, and every year we come up with the eco-friendly idol, a crafted idol with about one-and-half kg sabudana. The idol is hand-made and the hand and feet of the idol are plated with silver and gold."



## SHE Teams catch 285 people at Bada Ganesh

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

SHE Teams have nabbed 285 individuals within a week, who were misbehaving with devotees, attending the Bada Ganesh festival at Khairatabad. These respondents were apprehended for their indecent behavior towards women in public places. They will be produced before the magistrate for further action. The SHE Teams are working with commitment to ensure the safety and security of all citizens, particularly women during this Hyderabad Ganesh festival.

This initiative underscores the ongoing efforts to maintain public order and protect the community, emphasising that such misconduct will not be tolerated. If any indecent behavior is noted, raise your voice, don't tolerate any kind of improper behavior in public. Can bring to notice of the SHE Teams immediately. SHE Teams are moving in the area and they are always there for the safety and security of women.

## TG Medical Council discovers fake doctors during inspections

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

The Telangana Medical Council (TGMC) discovered fake doctors during inspections in Hyderabad on Sunday.

TGMC Chairman Dr K Mahesh Kumar and Vice-Chairman Dr G Srinivas conducted inspections in LB Nagar, Sarur Nagar, M u r a m b a g h, Vanasthalipuram, Gurram Gadda and Shaheed Nagar areas. They found 20 individuals illegally giving anti-

otics, steroids and narcotic injections without proper qualifications. The evidence showed that these fake doctors were targeting poor and middle-class people, causing harm through misuse of medicines. TGMC officials stated that cases will be filed against these fake doctors under the NMC Act, Sections 34 and 54. So far, around 300 FIRs have been filed across Telangana, with more inspections planned. Dr Srinivas emphasised that RMPs and PMPs have no qualifications to practice.

## Startup Vapra plans to preserve water bodies

**DEEPIKA PASHAM**  
deepikapasham2015@gmail.com  
■ HYDERABAD

A startup, Vapra, is proposing eco-friendly solutions to address water pollution during festivals, particularly targeting the large water bodies like Hussain Sagar, which are often left littered with debris. Vapra is urging the government to adopt their waste management strategies to plan for festivals and prevent pollution.



**Despite efforts, many individuals continue to throw waste-flowers and other materials into lakes, causing water pollution and harming aquatic life**

So far, only two municipalities and a few like-minded individuals

have partnered with them to maintain cleaner lakes.

Speaking to The Pioneer, Lolla Pavani, founder of Vapra, said, "We currently have an agreement with Uppal Municipality for managing flower waste during baby pond Ganesh immersions. The left-over flowers are collected and transported to our plant in Uppal, where they are converted into compost."

Despite efforts, many individuals continue to throw waste-flowers and other materials into lakes, causing water pollution and harming aquatic life. Pavani pointed out that, traditionally, people would consume fruits placed near Ganesh idols and flowers and green leaves were composted in house gardens.

With their agreement in Uppal, Vapra has already collected over 6,500 kgs of flower waste, which is processed at

their plant by an all-women workforce to create compost. The startup also has an arrangement with Ameenpur Municipality to manage household waste, which is segregated and processed for further use.

"We want to support the government as partners because our products have impacted many farmers. By turning household waste into high-nutrient compost, we are providing significant agricultural benefits," Pavani added. Some communities, such as gated housing societies, have taken the initiative to drop off their waste at Vapra's plants without expecting anything in return. As part of their collaboration with Ameenpur Municipality, Vapra provides 10 per cent of the compost they produce for the Haritha Haram programme, a State-led afforestation initiative.

## Neglect plagues Nizam College students

At Hyderabad's iconic Nizam College, students are grappling with far more than just the challenges of academia. Allegations of administrative negligence and an alarming lack of basic facilities are creating an atmosphere of frustration and confusion among students about their future. From outdated computer labs to the absence of permanent teaching staff, the grievances are many.

Apart from food and hostel issues, students of Nizam College are facing a lot of hurdles in their academic tenure. The students alleged the administration's carelessness and not meeting the demands of students is leading to frustration among the students.

Ruchit, a student of Nizam College, said, "Students coming from various geographical regions and financial backgrounds face several issues in Nizam College. Apart from hostel issues, the main issue in the college is no permanent teaching staff.

The college doesn't have 85 per cent of permanent staff. There is no serious recruitment process for permanent government and contract-based lecturers.

Apart from the lack of proper permanent teaching faculty, basic facilities like labs, especially computer labs, don't meet the students' needs. For instance, in the case of computers, most of them are still operating in outdated versions. Also, there are fewer computers, thereby not fulfilling the demands of the students who want to learn and develop their skills, especially the latest ones like Python, AI, coding languages, etc. Outside the hostel premises, many students are engaged in drugs and intoxicants such as alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana, as they are frustrated or confused about their future.

Saraswati, another student of Nizam College, said, "Whenever we question the administration about any issue, the administration simply points

out the particular person who is active in questioning the administration and threatens us about the attendance and exams. The main thing is that the administration is not working in a good way whenever we question the authorities. Our issues fall on deaf ears when we insist; they simply state that they have no funds; that's why the college is like this. Despite being a government institution, there are over 14+ self-financed courses in the college and students should pay for these courses at the time of admission.

The fee for these courses is nearly Rs 40,000. Students belonging to these self-finance groups don't have a proper hostel. Students from lower economic background are not getting fee reimbursement and scholarships have become a major issue at the college. Scholarships have been pending for the last three to four years."

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## Mystery shrouds death of 12-year-old boy

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

The body of a 12-year-old boy who went missing since last Wednesday was found on Saturday, the police said. The boy belonged to Chittapur village in the district. The police suspect that it could be case of foul play. The boy could have died by blow on his head, the police said.

The police reportedly took a person into custody in connection with the incident on the suspicion that he could be responsible for the death of the boy. The person reportedly took the body on his motorcycle on the pretext of taking him to Ganesh festivities.

The family members of the boy lodged a complaint with the police. The police during the search came to know about the body being found. The boy has been shifted to the government hospital post-mortem.

Investigation is underway.



## Loss to irrigation infra pegged at Rs 10,300 crore

Minister for Irrigation N Uttam Kumar Reddy inspected repair works to irrigation sources in Suryapet district

PNS ■ SURYAPET

Minister for Irrigation and Civil Supplies N Uttam Kumar Reddy has said that the government's first priority is to provide water to farmers on a war-footing by taking up repairs to the Nagarjunasagar project (NSP) left canals and tank bunds that were damaged in the recent rains.

On Sunday, the Minister, along with District Collector Tejas Nandlal Pawar, inspected the renovation work of NSP left canal at Kagita Ramachandrapuram in Nadigudem mandal. Speaking on the occasion, Uttam Kumar Reddy said that the State has suffered a loss of Rs 10,300 crore. He said that he is confident that the State would get good help from the Centre as a full report of the damage caused by the rains in the State has been sent by the Central team. The Minister said that the government has sanctioned R. 2.10 crore for the construction of the pit immediately and floodlights have been installed for night work.



Minister for Irrigation N Uttam Kumar Reddy visiting flood-affected areas in Suryapet district on Sunday

The Minister said that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, along with Ministers and the entire administration and took measures to prevent flood damage. Uttam Kumar Reddy took a

tractor ride, along with farmers, to inspect the restoration work of the Redlakunta major canal at Arlegudem in Chilukur mandal. A sum of Rs 96.60 lakh has been sanctioned and the officials have been instructed to desilt the pit and supply water to the farmers

within a week.

The Minister said that 20,000 acres are being cultivated in the following areas through this canal and if the irrigation is delayed, the crops will dry up.

The RDO instructed the tahsildar to provide machinery required for the repair work of the canal. Revenue officials and Irrigation officials have been asked to coordinate and desilt the dam at the earliest. He also said that compensation would be given to the affected farmers soon.

Later, the Minister, along with the District Collector, inspected the Muktyala branch canal at Karakkayalagudem in Huzurnagar mandal. The minister said the government has sanctioned Rs 34 lakh for the construction of the canal. RDOs Suryanarayana, Srinivasulu, Irrigation SE Ramesh Babu, Tehsildars Sarita, Dhruva Kumar, Nagender, Irrigation DE Raghu, officials, public representatives, staff and others participated in this program.

## Warangal Police arrest cybercriminal from Rajasthan

As many 12 cases, including two in Telangana, are registered against him

PNS ■ WARANGAL

The most wanted cybercriminal against whom 12 cases - including two in Telangana - were registered, was nabbed in Rajasthan on Saturday and brought to Warangal, the police said on Sunday.

A team of police personnel, headed by Assistant Commissioner of Police Vijay Kumar, investigated the case and arrested the alleged cybercriminal.

The arrested was identified as Kalu Ram (33). He hailed from Degana town in Rajasthan.

According to Vijay Kumar, Kalu Ram enticed people to invest huge money in Ponzi schemes promising high returns. He thus earned crores of rupees.

He lured a prominent doctor from Hanamkonda to invest Rs 21 lakh online and



Warangal Assistant Commissioner of Police Vijay Kumar giving details of the arrest of cybercriminal from Rajasthan, in Warangal on Sunday

duped him. Realising that he had been duped by the fraudster, he lodged a complaint with the cyber police.

City police commissioner Amber Kishore Jha appreciated cyber crimes ACP Vijay Kumar, inspector Ravi Kumar, SIs Charan and Siva Kumar, AAO Salman Pasha, constables Kishore Kumar, Anjaneyulu and Raju for

## Ambulance used to smuggle marijuana seized

PNS ■ KOTHAGUDEM

Smugglers seem to have been devising innovative methods to smuggle marijuana. The Kothagudem police were surprised to find marijuana worth Rs 2,50 crore in a speeding ambulance here on Sunday. The police found the marijuana in the ambulance when it broke down on the Kothagudem-Vijayawada highway after one of its tyres got punctured.

When the police, on suspicion, searched the vehicle, they stumbled on the contraband. The vehicle seemed to have belonged to Tamil Nadu. The police said that local people, who noticed the ambulance coming to a halt after one of its tyres had a puncture, suspected that the vehicle was smuggling contraband and alerted the

The marijuana is estimated to weigh about four quintals. The police have yet to make a statement.



Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy inspecting the repair works to Palair left canal under Kusumanchi mandal on Sunday

## Ponguleti inspects progress of Palair canal repair works

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy has directed the Irrigation officials to speed up works related to plugging the breach to the Palair left canal bund. The Minister inspected the progress of the works related to closing the breach to the left canal at Hatya Thanda under Kusumanchi mandal of Palair constituency on Sunday.

He interacted with the officials discussing the technical details of the breach, temporary works taken up to

close it and permanent restoration works to be taken up later. He asked the engineering officials to execute the works speedily to provide water to the farmers through the canal.

He wanted the works to plug the breach should be carried round the clock, if necessary, make arrangements to deploy workers in shifts. Simultaneously, canal excavation works and lining works should be implemented, he said. Irrigation Chief Engineer Vidyasagar, Superintending Engineer Narsinga Rao, officials concerned and others were present.

## Spiraling price of edible oil sting middle class, poor

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

In view of the Centre increasing the import duty on edible oil, the oil dealers have been trying to exploit the situation to loot the public by increasing the prices of edible oil by at least Rs 20 per litre during the current festival season.

Moreover, the traders are also trying to create an artificial shortage of edible oil in association with the government officials, it is alleged.

Oil dealers selling edible oil at prices at exorbitant rates is attracting flak from all sections of society. The hike in edible oil prices put additional burden on the common man during the festival season, forcing the common man to reduce the use of edible oil during the daily cuisine.

In the past, there was a concessional import duty on palmolein oil, sunflower oil, soya bean oil. The Center increased the import duty by 20%.

There are reports of hoarding of edible oil by unscrupulous traders. But there are no signs of officials taking steps to check hoarding.

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

## Cellulitis scare escalates in undivided Karimnagar dist

Apart from seasonal diseases, the surge in cellulitis cases in undivided Karimnagar district has caused fear and alarm among people. The symptoms include rashes on the skin. But these rashes further progress into bruises and pose problems to patients.

During the past one month, hundreds of patients suffering from cellulitis are being treated in hospitals. It is primarily a bacterial infection, but as it progresses it becomes hazardous, cautioned doctors. It shows a significant impact on the skin on the legs. Doctors advise the patients of the skin disease to immediately undergo treatment as and when the symptoms surface.

The area where the cellulitis occurs on the skin, the patient suffers from itching. The itching spreads to adjacent places. The

patient feels pain in the area. They also develop fever and some patients develop chills. The patient experiences swelling in the area where the disease occurred on the skin. The blisters appear on the skin where the cellulitis appears. In some patients, skin shows the signs of developing depressions and skin becomes loose.

Cellulitis is an infection of the deeper layers of the skin most commonly caused by bacteria that normally live on the skin's surface. One has an increased risk of developing cellulitis if he or she has an injury, such as a cut, fracture, burn or scrape.

The symptoms include fever with chills and sweating, fatigue, pain or tenderness in the affected area, skin redness or inflammation that gets bigger as the infection spreads, skin sore or rash that starts suddenly, and grows quickly in the first 24 hours.



## Library building work at snail's pace

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

The branch library building in Banswada town in the district was demolished as it became very old, relocating the library to the stadium building on an ad hoc basis. In fact, the stadium also houses an urban clinic and shuttle-badminton court. The foundation stone for a new library building was laid with much fanfare. Later, the construction did not progress beyond the foundation stone laying stage as the contractor did not

commence works on the library building. Apparently, he did not get assurance on the sanctioning of the bills leading to works remaining a non-starter.

The students are not able to focus their attention on academics because of the disturbed atmosphere prevailing there.

As per the rules, the contractor who won the bid should commence works within a year. Otherwise, the engineering officials should serve notice on the contractor seeking an explanation for the delay in grounding works. If the contractor is not favourably disposed to initiate the construction, the officials should cancel the tender and a new contractor should be appointed.

The Panchayat Raj engineering officials have been soft-peddalling the issue as there is no pressure on them from the elected people's representatives and the job seekers.

At the time of the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections, the people's representatives went on a foundation-stone laying spree for various development works. But, once the elections are over they paid no interest in taking the matters to the logical conclusion. Meanwhile, the number of job seekers visiting the library has increased with the government releasing the job calendar. Daily at least 200 students visit the branch library here. For want of basic

amenities, they are forced to sit in the open air. For want of amenities the aged and employees are not visiting the library.

Panchayat Raj engineer Banswada, Prabhakar, said that notice would be served on the contractor who won the bid for execution of the library building with SDF funds. The negligence on the part of the contractor would be taken to the notice of higher authorities. If the contractor is not willing to execute the works, the tender would be cancelled and another contractor would be appointed, he said.

## 8,000 eye surgeries conducted in mega medical camp

PNS ■ KUMURAM BHEEM ASIFABAD

A mega medical camp held on Sunday at Patel Gardens in Kagaznagar in the district in connection with the 25th death anniversary of praja Bandhu Palvai Purushottam Rao evoked overwhelming response. The medical camp was held under the aegis of the Praja Bandhu Foundation.

MLA Palvai Harish Babu lighted the traditional lamp and paid floral tributes at the portrait



of Palvai Purushottam and paid glowing tributes to the eminent leader. Addressing the gathering, the MLA said that such service-oriented programmes would be conducted in future too to fulfil the ideas of late Palvai Purushottama Rao.

Eye surgeries were conducted on 8,000 patients under the aegis of the Praja Bandhu Foundation.

Deputy District Medical and Health Officer Dr Sitaram, cardiologist Dr Kiran Kumar, neurosurgeon Dr Arun Seshu, kidney diseases specialist Dr Rakesh, urologist Dr Revanthvarma, gastroenterologist Dr Sridhar, general physician Dr Sai Vivek, general surgeons Dr Raj Kumar, Dr Sudhakar, Dr Om Prakash, Dr Sravan Kumar and others were present at the mega medical camp.

## Traffic advisory in Tri-Cities for Ganesh idols immersion

PNS ■ WARANGAL

City police commissioner Amber Kishore Jha has said that restrictions on movement of traffic are imposed in Warangal, Hanakonda and Kazipet cities to avoid any traffic hurdles along the route of movement of the Ganesh idols.

The restrictions would be in place from 12 noon on September 16 till 10 am on September 17.

Heavy vehicles coming from Mulugu and Bhupalapally and those proceeding towards Hyderabad should proceed via Outer Rig Road at Arepalli. Those travelling towards Khammam from Bhupalapally and Parakala should proceed via Karunapuram, Madikonda,

Kadipikonda and Naidu Petrol pump.

Heavy vehicles coming from Bhupalapally and Parakala but proceeding towards Narsampeta should take the route via Kothapeta, Reddypalem and Gorrekunta.

Heavy vehicles coming into the city from outside are not allowed inside. They should halt on the city outskirts. At the time of Ganesh idols' immersion, major vehicles are not allowed inside the city, he said.

For vehicles moving about in Warangal city, the Amber Kishore Jha said that the buses entering the city from Mulugu and Parakala should reach the bus station via Peddammedda, KUC, CPO, Ambedkar Center and Asian Sridevi



mall. The buses proceeding towards Mulugu and Karimnagar from Hanamkonda bus station should proceed via Asian Sridevi Mall, Ambedkar Center, CPO and KUC junction.

The buses from Hanamkonda but travelling in the direction of Narsampeta, Kothagudem, Bhadrachalam, Toruru and Khammam should travel via Balasamudram, Adalat and Hunter Road. Buses travelling from Warangal bus stand towards Hanamkonda should travel via ChintalBirdge, Rangasapeta, Naidu Petrol Pump Center, Ursugutta, Adalat, Balasamudram Road.

The restrictions for vehicles carrying Ganesh idols in the city are as follows:



PNS ■ KUMURAM BHEEM ASIFABAD

Activists of Sangh Pariwar on Saturday night intercepted a lorry illegally transporting 35 cows from Maharashtra to Hyderabad via Chintalmanepally and Kagaznagar.

Activists of the VHP and Bhajarang Dal of Kagaz Nagar and Rebbena apprehended the vehicle near Rebbena and alleged that the police were not taking any action against the middlemen involved in the illegal trade.

There were many instances of cows dying en route to their destination as they are mercilessly packed into the lorries violating the rules, they said asking the police to stem the practice. The Sangh Pariwar activists wanted the police to nab the raked with the help of the owners of the lorries illegally transporting the cows.

Frequently, only the VHP and Bhajarang Dal activists were apprehending

Lorry transporting cows was caught at Kagaznagar on Sunday

the cows, they said wondering how can the lorries carrying cattle illegally cross so many check posts in other states. If the illegal trade of cows is not stopped immediately, the Sangh Pariwar activists threatened to intensify the agitation. Rebbena sub inspector Chandrasekar took the lorry driver into custody and took steps to send the apprehended cow to a cow-shed.



ACROSS THE STATES



President greets citizens on eve of Milad-un-Nabi

President Droupadi Murmu on Sunday greeted citizens on the eve of Milad-un-Nabi and asked all to imbibe the "pious teachings of the Holy Quran and resolve to build a peaceful society". "On the birthday of Prophet Muhammad, celebrated as Milad-un-Nabi, I extend my warm greetings to all fellow citizens, especially our Muslim brothers and sisters," she said in her message. Prophet Muhammad inspired us to strengthen the feelings of love and brotherhood, the President said. "He stressed on the importance of equality and harmony in society. He encouraged people to be compassionate towards others and serve the humanity," Murmu said. "Let us imbibe the pious teachings of the Holy Quran and resolve to build a peaceful society," she added.

Bangladeshi, Rohingya infiltration major threat to Jharkhand: PM

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday accused the ruling JMM-led coalition in Jharkhand of encouraging Bangladeshi and Rohingya infiltration for vote bank politics.

He asserted that these infiltrators pose a significant threat to the state by altering the demographic landscape of Santhal Parganas and Kolhan regions.

"Bangladeshi and Rohingya infil-

trators have become a major threat to Santhal Parganas and Kolhan regions. The demography of these regions is changing fast. The tribal population is on the decline. The infiltrators are establishing control of the panchayat system, grabbing land, indulging in atrocities on daughters of the state...Each Jharkhand resident is feeling unsafe," the Prime Minister said while addressing the Parivartan Maharally of the BJP at Gopal Maidan here.

He also alleged that the JMM was "supporting infiltrators" and that "illegal immigrants from the neighbouring country have managed to gain influence over the ruling party in the state."

Modi criticised the Jharkhand government for refusing to acknowledge the ongoing infiltration, despite a High Court order to establish an independent panel to investigate the "infiltration of Bangladeshi immigrants" in the state.



India no longer a sleeping giant; its rise unstoppable: Dhankhar

PNS ■ NAGPUR

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Sunday said India was no longer a "sleeping giant", emphasising that the country's ascent is now unstoppable.

Addressing a gathering after inaugurating a digital tower at Ramdeobaba University in Nagpur, Dhankhar asserted that education is service and not commerce. "The quality education defines democracy and the quality education you are getting defines development which will fast-track our attainment of a fully

developed nation by 2047," he said.

Referring to the International Day of Democracy, observed on September 15, the vice president said artificial intelligence was a tool for good governance.

"India was earlier called a sleeping giant which is no longer the case. India is on the rise. Its rise is unstoppable," Dhankhar added.

India's economic rise has been exponential and according to global institutions, the country is a favourite destination for investment and opportunities, he said.



J&K Cong leader's brother, several others join BJP

Several people, including the brother of Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) working president Raman Bhalla, joined the BJP here on Sunday, said a spokesperson of the saffron party. Bhalla's brother Vinod along with former Block Development Council chairman Dilip Kumar and several former panches and sarpanches were welcomed into the party fold by Union Minister G Kishan Reddy, Jammu and Kashmir BJP working president Sat Sharma and other senior leaders. "The joining is a big boost for the BJP as most of the new entrants belonged to R S Pura-Jammu south assembly constituency where the Congress has fielded Bhalla," said Reddy, urging the voters to support the BJP to "save Jammu and Kashmir". Reddy, who is the BJP's election in-charge for Jammu and Kashmir, said the main reason for his party's growing popularity is its developmental approach and ensuring justice with deprived sections of the society. "BJP is the guarantee of a bright future while other parties want to push J&K into darkness again," he said.

Fire breaks out at shoe factory in Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A fire broke out at a shoe manufacturing factory on Lawrence Road Industrial Area in northwest Delhi on Sunday afternoon, officials of the Delhi Fire Services said.

According to the officials, no casualty was reported as the fire was brought under control.

"We received a call regarding a fire in a factory at 12.19 pm. A total of 19 fire tenders were pressed into service and the blaze has been brought under control. No injuries have been reported," the official said.



Thick fumes of smoke were seen emerging from the top floor of the multi-storey factory. The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained.

"We have informed the local police about the matter to investigate the case," the official said, adding that the team faced many difficulties while dousing the blaze.

"Our motive was to douse the flames immediately and to rescue people, if any, trapped inside. Due to high power electricity poles, our teams had to take extra precautions. There was a thick black smoke, thus our team had to use oxygen masks to enter the building," he said.

It took more than three hours to douse the flames completely and the cooling process is underway.

Police said that they got information about the fire and teams were immediately rushed to the spot to maintain law and order. We sent PCR, ambulances and additional force at the spot to keep onlookers at the bay.

'He's number one terrorist' Union Minister Bittu sparks controversy while attacking Rahul Gandhi

PNS ■ BHAGALPUR

Attacking Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi over the statements he made in the US about the condition of Sikhs in India, Union minister Ravneet Singh Bittu on Sunday said that if those "manufacturing bombs" were supporting him, he is the "number one terrorist".

Bittu, the MoS for railways, made the remark in Bihar's Bhagalpur where he came to attend the flagging-

off ceremony of a Vande Bharat Express train to Howrah.

Condemning the statement, the Congress said he was talking "like a senseless man".

Speaking to reporters, Bittu said, "Rahul Gandhi spent most of his time outside the country. His friends and family are there. I think he does not love his country much because he goes abroad and says negative things about India. I think he is not a Hindustani."

Saini is BJP's CM face in Haryana, asserts Pradhan

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini is the BJP's CM face and the party will score a hatrick of wins in the state under his leadership, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan asserted on Sunday after its senior leader Anil Vij said he will stake claim for the CM's post if the party returns to power after the October 5 assembly polls.

"Being a party worker he may have said so but Nayab

Singh Saini is the BJP's CM face," Pradhan, the Union Education Minister who is also the party's incharge for Haryana polls, told reporters in Karnal when asked about Vij's comment.

Earlier, Vij, who is a six-time MLA and former minister, said he would stake a claim for the CM's post due to his seniority, and the party will take a call.

"I never sought anything from the party till today... people from Haryana are com-

ing to meet me. Even in Ambala, people tell me that I am the senior-most, so why did I not become the CM. On the people's demand and on the basis of seniority, this time I will stake claim to become chief minister," he said.

When pointed out that Saini has already been declared the chief ministerial candidate, 71-year-old Vij told PTI, "There is no bar on staking the claim. I will make my claim, let the party take a call."

India launches 'Op Sadbhav' to help Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Sunday sent urgent relief supplies to Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam under an operation christened 'Sadbhav' to assist them in dealing with the devastating impact of a major typhoon.

Various parts of Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam have been reeling under massive floods after Typhoon Yagi, said to be Asia's most powerful storm this

year, hit the three countries.

The typhoon that originated from the South China Sea made landfall over a week back reportedly killing over 170 people in Vietnam and around 40 in Myanmar.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said 10 tonnes of aid including dry ration, clothing and medicines were dispatched to Myanmar onboard Indian naval ship INS Satpura.

A C-130J military transport



aircraft of the Indian Air Force is carrying 35 tonnes of aid to

Vietnam and 10 tonnes of relief materials to Laos. "India launches #OperationSadbhav. Demonstrating our solidarity with the people affected by Typhoon Yagi, India is dispatching aid to Myanmar, Vietnam and Laos," Jaishankar said on X.

"10 tons of aid including dry ration, clothing and medicines left for Myanmar onboard @indiannavy INS Satpura today," he said.



2 get 'double' life imprisonment for killing couple in Latur

Two persons were sentenced to "double" life imprisonment by a court in Latur in Maharashtra for killing a couple, an official said on Sunday. District and Sessions Judge RB Rote, in his order of Friday, convicted Nishant (40) and Nitin Yadav (44) for killing Ashok Raut and Ashwini Yadav on November 9, 2014, the official said. Nishant and Nitin were sentenced to two life sentences that will run consecutively, public prosecutor Santosh Deshpande said. It is the first time such double life sentences have been handed down by any Latur court, he said. A total of 13 persons were examined by the prosecution during the trial, including an eyewitness and a doctor who provided expert testimony.

Settle BRS's..

Continued from page 1

The Congress will protect Hyderabad's image even if the BRS tries to damage it. He said the Congress admin would improve the image of Hyderabad and appealed to everyone to improve the city's image irrespective of political affiliations.

Earlier in the day, KTR posted on X, "Very smart Minister. According to your logic, is your Chittanaiddu still in TDP or in Congress? Well let's assume you're right for a minute; and who is the monk who went around the houses of our BRS MLAs and offered them with Congress scarves? Why is politics so unethical? Why the inductions, then why these dramas? Is it due to fear of losing the posts? It is a pity to see the pain of those whom you have enticed and cannot claim to be ours.

Political row over Telangana..

Continued from page 1

"The Congress is organising 'People's Governance Day'. The Congress ruled the state for 50 years and is that rule called betrayal of the people? It is better if the Congress observes Betrayal of Peoples Day," Sanjay said. He wondered what the rea-

CM echoing BJP..

Continued from page 1

The BJP celebrates September 17 as Hyderabad Liberation Day, emphasising the end of the Nizam's oppressive rule. The Communists refer to it as 'Telangana Betrayal Day' or 'Telangana Vidroha Dinam.' He said the BRS refers to that day as the Telangana National Integration Day

son was for changing the name of Telangana Liberation Day to 'Telangana Peoples Governance Day?' Whether the BJP is in power or not is the same thing. The BJP's aim is to celebrate Telangana Liberation Day. If Telangana Liberation Days are officially observed BJP leaders are ready to participate, Sanjay said.

emphasising the Ganga-Jamuna Tehzeeb.

He said that the CM conveniently forgot the fact that as the TPCC President he had announced in the year 2022 to organise year-long celebrations of 'Telangana Vilina Dinam (Merger Day) Vajrotsavulu' commemorating the accession of Nizam's Hyderabad State into the Indian Union on September 17 and even demanded that the Centre should sanction Rs 5,000 crore for the celebrations.

Why BRS leaders..

Continued from page 1

The CM said the Government is determined to win Olympic medals and action has already been initiated.

"We will set up a Sports University in Telangana soon. The government will take the responsibility of winning gold medals for the country in the 2028 Olympics. Prime Minister Modi should be 'ashamed' as India could not win a single gold medal although the country has a population of 140 crore. South Korea, a small country equal in area to Telangana, won 13 gold medals," he said.

Revant said that steps are being taken to promote Hyderabad as a cosmopolitan city. "The Fourth City will be developed at Mucherla. The government and the party should take forward welfare programmes in a coordinated manner," he said.

Mahesh takes charge as..

Continued from page 1

He said that HYDRAA will become a super success if the government rehabilitates the poor who lose their houses due to HYDRAA operations.

Addressing a meeting after taking charge as the TPCC President on Sunday, Mahesh said that Hyderabad is a city of rocks and lakes and there is a need to protect them for future generations. The Chief Minister has taken up that responsibility, Mahesh said.

"HYDRAA should not be confined to Hyderabad. There is a need to expand it to districts. The government should give houses in other places for the poor who purchased houses in the FTL area and buffer zones of water bodies," he said. The new TPCC President said that Communist parties have more immovable assets than any other political party. "There is a need to con-

3 senior AP IPS men axed..

Continued from page 1

of Police (Vijayawada) were suspended after an inquiry revealed their role in the alleged harassment of the model.

She accused the police officials of threatening her with dire consequences during the previous government if she did not withdraw a case she earlier filed against a top executive of a corporation in Mumbai.

"The government, after careful consideration of the report and having due regard to the circumstances of the case, concluded that there is prima facie evidence and that the disciplinary proceedings are warranted for his grave misconduct and dereliction of duty and therefore,

consider it necessary to initiate disciplinary proceedings and to place P Sitharama Anjaneyulu, IPS (1992), under suspension," said one of the GOs.

The model was arrested earlier this year during the previous regime based on a complaint by a YSR Congress leader who accused her of cheating. The then intelligence chief, instructed the two other officials to arrest her, although no crime was registered against her as of that date.

According to the GO, as per the records, the FIR was registered against the model on February 2 at 6.30AM, whereas Anjaneyulu passed on instructions to Kanthi Rana Tata and Vishal Gunni on January 31 well before register-

ing the FIR. She recently complained to some police officials alleging that a false case was foisted against her and that she was subjected to harassment.

Based on her complaint with AP police, the state government suspended two officials.

The three officials were among those 16 IPS officers who were issued a memo directing them to mark their 'attendance' in DGP's office twice a day, without any post.

During the Assembly poll campaign in April, the TDP pointing fingers at Anjaneyulu, alleged that the previous YSR Congress government was tapping the phone of its general secretary Nara Lokesh, using Pegasus spy software.

'One Nation, One Election' to..

Continued from page 1

He also asked the parties to ensure that national resources are used for the common person and said, "We have to come forward to realise the dream of 'one nation, one election'." 'One nation, one election' is one of the key promises made by the BJP in its manifesto for the Lok Sabha elections.

A high-level panel headed by former president Ram Nath Kovind in March this year rec-

ommended simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and state assemblies as the first step followed by synchronised local body polls within 100 days.

Separately, the Law Commission is likely to recommend holding simultaneous polls for all three tiers of government -- Lok Sabha, state assemblies and local bodies like municipalities and panchayats -- starting with 2029 and a provision for unity government in cases like hung house or no-confidence motion.

Kejriwal to seek 'certificate of..

Continued from page 1

Sisodia got bail in the excise policy case last month.

The Delhi Assembly's term ends on February 23 next year and the polls are expected to be held sometime early February. Seeking a referendum on his politics of honesty, Kejriwal pointed out that Delhi will go to polls in a few months.

"I will resign after two days and ask people whether I am honest. I want to appeal to the public, if you think Kejriwal is honest, vote for me. If you think Kejriwal is guilty, do not vote for me. Every vote of yours will be a certificate of my honesty," he said. The chief minister said the Delhi Assembly election is due in February but he demands that

it be held in November, along with the Maharashtra polls.

"I will only sit in the chief minister's chair after the people give me a certificate of honesty. I want to give 'agnipariksha' (trial by fire) after coming out of jail... When Lord Ram returned from exile after 14 years, Sita Maiyya had to undergo 'agnipariksha'. I have come out of jail and I am ready to undergo agnipariksha," he said.

Accusing the BJP of trying to prove that he is corrupt, Kejriwal claimed that the saffron party could not provide good schools and free electricity to people because its leaders are corrupt. "We are honest," he asserted. Addressing the party workers, Kejriwal sought to explain the reasoning behind his move.

Krishnaiah calls for 'Chalo Collectorate'..

Continued from page 1

42 per cent as promised during the election campaign. "Will Rahul Gandhi fulfil his promise," he said.

He demanded that the government increase reservation for BCs from 20 to 42 per cent in Panchayat Raj municipal

elections as the Congress promised in its Kamareddy Declaration.

He criticised the government for neglecting fee reimbursement during the last three years. Due to non-payment of fee arrears, the certificates of students are not being issued by colleges, he said.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## India inundated

The unprecedented rains have wreaked havoc across the country, serving as a stark wake-up call for urban planning

India's major cities, including Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru, are reeling from the aftermath of unprecedented rainfall, leading to widespread flooding, loss of life, property damage, and severe disruptions to daily life. As heavy monsoon showers continue to batter these urban hubs, residents are grappling with submerged streets, gridlocked traffic, and power outages, exposing critical flaws in the country's urban infrastructure. This year's torrential downpour has been particularly devastating. In Mumbai, water levels have risen to waist height in low-lying areas, while Bengaluru's once-bustling tech corridors resemble rivers. Over 100 lives have been lost in flood-related incidents across the country, with thousands displaced from their homes. Many families have seen their life savings washed away in a matter of hours as homes and vehicles succumb to rising waters. Besides, the northern cities like Meerut, which hardly ever reported water-logging, have been partially submerged. The economic toll is equally staggering. Shops, offices, and industries have faced forced shutdowns. Public infrastructure has borne the brunt of the floods. Urban centres in India are no strangers to traffic congestion, but the flooding has exacerbated an already dire situation. In Delhi, where rainwater has clogged major arterial roads, commute times has increased manifold.



The inconvenience is compounded for those who rely on daily wages for their livelihood, as the disruptions prevent them from working. The scale and intensity of these floods underscore the urgent need for India to rethink its urban planning. Many problems are rooted in poor drainage systems, encroachment on natural water bodies, and unregulated urban sprawl. In cities like Mumbai and Chennai, where floods have become an annual menace, experts have long warned of the consequences of unchecked development in flood-prone areas. Indeed the rains have been unprecedented but they have exposed the slackness of urban planning which is ill-equipped to deal with heavy downpours in the monsoon season. Drainage are clogged, necessary equipment is either unavailable or non-functional, and poor planning in executing operations only exacerbates the situation. City drainage across the country are either outdated or inadequate to handle the massive volumes of rainwater. Local governments must invest in upgrading this critical infrastructure, ensuring that water can be efficiently channelled away from residential and commercial areas. Besides the builder-bureaucrat nexus has stolen away the water bodies. Many lakes, rivers, and wetlands that once absorbed rainwater have been lost to unplanned illegal development. It goes without saying that urban planning should incorporate green spaces, permeable surfaces, and sustainable construction practices that allow water to seep into the ground rather than accumulate on the surface. This includes promoting rainwater harvesting and stormwater management solutions. Cities must build climate resilience into their long-term plans.

... (continuation of the article text)

### PICTALK



Caparisoned elephants participate in the 'pooram' festival as part of the Onam celebration, in Kochi

## Life's unplanned pathways: A journey through coincidences

Sometimes life unfolds in ways that we cannot foresee, shaped by a mix of choices, opportunities, and coincidences

I joined a premier engineering and science institute after my schooling. I quit two years later as I failed to secure an engineering seat. I joined another engineering college and then the prestigious railway services. My entry into the railways could also be attributed to good fortune as the organization increased the number to be inducted. My inability to join the civil services was a sore point with my parents. I would often tease them that I might have done much better had I continued to pursue science.



They would retort that I might have been working as a clerk in some obscure government department. Who knows! I might have worked harder to clear the civil services examinations had I continued to pursue science in the premier institute or had I not been selected for the railways. My father often narrates the story of his friend, a civil engineering graduate from his college, who joined the state services. He was afraid that the

bridge that he had designed might collapse. He followed my father's advice to join academics. He is now an internationally recognized geotechnical engineer in America. My father is an electrical engineer who joined the engineering college a year into post-graduation. He had wanted to pursue his MSc and then enter academics if he could not join the prestigious IAS. My father does not regret his choices. He does have one memory that he regrets whenever he remembers about it. This also is from his college days. A few of them decided to indulge themselves with an evening out. My father went to the friend's room to take him along. This young boy appeared cheerful but refused to accompany

the admission forms for the postgraduate course, to realise that the studies were as structured and disciplined as his engineering course. He completed his engineering, joined the railway services, and successfully headed a leading metro rail organization in India at the time of his retirement. We were walking to our car after a beautiful laser show in Connaught Place in Delhi a few years back. I was approached by a lady requesting if she could use my mobile phone to contact her husband. They had got separated in the crowd. The husband spoke to me to thank me for the courtesy. It turned out that we were together during training in my first job. Douglas Coupland, Canadian novelist and designer, said, "Every single moment is a coincidence." It is up to us to use this joker in the pack to play this game of life. (The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)



SANJAY CHANDRA

... (continuation of the article text)

# The art of problem solving

Those in decision-making roles must be equipped with the necessary skills, attitudes, and awareness to meet the demands of their tasks

Problem-solving is more than an art. It is a matter of resources, teamwork, and timing. Behavioral interventions in problem-solving need to keep this in mind. This applies equally to training programs on problem-solving. Many training programs tend to believe that if their techniques are right the results will surely follow. This is a palpably comforting approach but with limited truth in reality. Amongst the foremost requirements of problem-solving is the need for all the people involved in the process to have the necessary skills to handle the job. The job itself has to be neatly reduced to manageable levels of skill clusters, and the persons allotted the responsibility for it must have the necessary attitude, skills, and approaches to handle the job. Unfortunately, not all in key decision-making situations have the competence to embrace this simple truth.

They seem to have arrived in that position either through regular promotion, seniority, hierarchy, or indeed, simply by chance. While the logic that brought them there is understandable, it does not meet the requirements for getting the tasks done. The result is therefore all to see. Not only do accidents take place, but delays and ineptness also become the hallmarks of a situation. It is important to remember this while planning an activity. It is important to build this into training programs, and above all, it is important to remind those who control the resources to be conscious of this requirement. Even when all the skill columns and more are regularly accounted for, it stands to reason that the resources of the supply chain must be intact and in position. As it happens in organizational setups, the supply chain side and the engineering side need effective dialogue, communication, or exchanges with the human resources side, the skill formation side, and control and monitoring methodologies. Thus, it is that ineptness becomes an inevitable part of the scene in organizations not so well linked together on these dimensions. It



is therefore necessary to create a culture of effectiveness and an appreciation of the requirements to deliver. To deliver requires, to the extent possible, objective and manageable resource mobilization, skill availability, sensitive monitoring, and linking up with the results in the time set. If this is not done, effectiveness is impaired, and others who can organize themselves will surge forward, and then the institutional returns of the defaulting group will continue to diminish. It may ultimately reach a point where there may be no surpluses to distribute even for salaries or to administer. This is a point of view to which no exceptions can be made. Considering this in the current and growing crescendo on reservations is something that can be avoided only at the grave risk of creating further problems for oneself. Struggle for the decision-making process is often termed as 'politics' and political processes in a country like India are often determined by numbers. Hence, the push to enhance the numbers of one's following and pander to political rising waves, even though it may not be sustainable in the long run. This is such an obvious warning and caution that it cannot be over-emphasized. The tragedy is, not only that so many people seem to

GRADUALLY, THROUGH POLITICAL COMPULSIONS AND OTHERWISE, THE FOCUS OF RESERVATION-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES WAS EXPANDED TILL THE SUPREME COURT HAD TO STEP IN AND SAY THAT NOT MORE THAN 50% OF POSITIONS COULD BE MADE IN THE RESERVED CATEGORY.

overlook this point. It appears, at times, that many otherwise knowledgeable people do it purposefully to gain political advantage. Little do they realize that what they gain on the swing, they will lose on the round. In this context, two observations need to be made, one concerning the constitution and the other concerning the practices of reservation for social equity in other parts of the world. The constitution in its initial draft was very clear and forthright on the reservation as a policy only for a limited period, even the period for which was indicated. Gradually, through political compulsions and otherwise, the focus of reservation-affected communities was expanded till the Supreme Court had to step in and say that not more than 50% of positions could be made in the reserved category. Pressure has been on for a while, in political terms, to loosen this limit. Should this happen, it could have implications, not just politically but also in terms of perhaps affecting the results of performance. This could jeopardize the total volume of resources, then, available for distribution. To consider the issue of social equity in other communities and countries beyond India may be worthwhile. Limited examples may be found across



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

the world where the total availability of jobs is parcelled off in reserved blocks. Some nations have a parallel stream for reserved categories and a definite stream where only talent could be a criterion for selection. This amalgam seems to have worked for both productivity and distributive justice. There is a clear case of streaming of jobs in India, being examined from this point of view also. Not to look at this option would be limiting the possibilities of growth with equity. That may be risky and unwise. The logic of preferential treatment has many caveats, and one of them is that preferential treatment could become a matter of habit and expectations, and when not granted, it could be seen as akin to 'rights' being violated. The time has come to seriously ask whether the slogan-mongering of several political groups may not be tantamount to throwing the baby out with the water. Every approach can be considered for and against, but the ultimate solution should preferably incorporate requirements of universal equity, and sustainability amongst various criteria of performance and results. (The writer is an internationally acclaimed management consultant. The views expressed are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### BAIL IS THE RULE, NOT EXCEPTION

Madam — It is indeed a welcome move on the part of the SC to quote Article 21 of the Indian Constitution which enables an Indian citizen protection of life and personal liberty and orders bail to the leaders with the often quoted words of SC "bail is a rule and jail is an exception. While one would not disagree with this ruling the SC may be reminded of the pending cases where several political leader's cases have been pending for more than two or three decades.

These leaders use the powers they wield and resources in their command and with the aid of the top most lawyers frustrate the system and ensure the trial is delayed for some decades. The pending DA cases of TN ministers and the verdict in the case of Jagdish tyler will vouch for this fact. SC should also lay guide lines for speedy trial in cases such as these while ordering bail. Gopalswamy J | Chennai

### PORT BLAIR IS NOW SRI VIJAYA PURAM

Madam — Reference: "Centre renames Port Blair as Sri Vijaya Puram" (the pioneer September, 14). Centre's decision to change the name of Port Blair to Sri Vijaya Puram showcases an indication that they want to acknowledge and celebrate the rich historical and cultural past of India. With reference to the former waterborne empire of Sri Vijaya, this plan is meant to laud the maritime heritage as well as regional pride within India. Nonetheless, such a name change trend would evoke some discussions that are wider in scope regarding modifying names with regard to more contemporary backgrounds. Some people would see it as a bidding to claim back lost histories while others think it disturbs ancestral practices and community memory too much. It is therefore important for the government world to balance them so as to keep themselves including everybody in their stories. Garima Singh | Kanpur

### CAGED PARROTS

Madam — The Supreme Court's scathing

## India's booming bioeconomy



In reference to 'Indian bioeconomy hits US \$151 billion, contributes 4.25% to GDP' (14 Sept), the remarkable growth in key sectors like biopharma, biofuel, and biotechnology could be further accelerated through enhanced government support in the form of funding, tax incentives, and mandatory policies on ethanol-blended petrol and biofuels in agriculture. Tier-II and Tier-III cities offer significant

opportunities for biofuels in the agricultural sector, reducing costs, creating jobs, and fostering local entrepreneurship through dealership networks.

A strategic approach could also be applied to biofuel exports, particularly to neighboring countries. Additionally, there is vast potential for bio-based household products, such as cosmetics, provided there is proper standardization. Universities and research institutions should be encouraged to pursue innovative research in areas like marine biology, space, and vaccines.

The growth of the bioeconomy is a result of joint efforts by the corporate sector, industry, research institutions, and the government. This progress also aligns with India's goals for COP 28. Vinod Johri | Delhi

comment on the CBI might as well apply to nearly all of the government's institutions (Ref: Supreme Court again compares CBI to caged parrot, p3, Sept. 14). The "caged parrot" remark, now made by Justice Bhuyan, was first made by the Supreme Court way back in 2013, during the investigation of the "Coalgate" scam. A lot of water has flown down the Ganges, but nothing seems to have changed on the ground.

The reiteration of this sarcastic and stinging remark affirms that even the highest investigating agency in the country is beholden to the powers that be. The same remark may be extrapolated to other institutions to a greater or lesser degree. Take the police department as just one example. Cases are doctored, expedited, closed, or hushed up, depending on signals that originate from the political leadership in a particular state.

The recent RGK hospital crime in Kolkata bears shameful testimony to this. No Investigating Officer dares to rub his political masters the wrong way by insisting upon following the rule book. Justice

is given a short shrift because the department in question, in this case the police department, is a "caged parrot", much like the CBI. Sports and Education are no exceptions. The Brij Bhushan Saran Singh saga bears ample testimony to the fact that political bigwigs run their departments much like their fiefdoms. If sportsmen and sportswomen of repute have to resort to "dharanas" in the country's capital for the redressal of their grievances, the lot of the common man seeking justice can well be imagined. There is nobody to red flag the minister for higher education, M.P. when he rubbishes well established historical facts and claims that we had trade relations with America in the eighth century, even before Columbus discovered America in the fifteenth. The saddest part is, even the fourth estate is playing along, instead of questioning our elected representatives on our behalf. Sad and shameful, to say the least. Avinash Godbole | Dewas

Avinash Godbole | Dewas

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com





### FIRST COLUMN

## SPORTS BOOST MENTAL HEALTH

Engaging in sports strengthens emotional stability and cognitive growth



SAKSHI SETHI

Sports have since long been celebrated for their physical benefits, but their impact on mental health is equally profound. Engaging in sports activities is more than just a means to maintain physical fitness. It is one of the powerful tools to enhance mental well-being. In an age where mental health challenges are increasingly common, the role of sports in fostering a healthier mind is more relevant than ever. One of the most significant mental health benefits of sports is their ability to reduce stress and anxiety.

Engaging in various physical activities increases the production of neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine, which play a crucial role in regulating the mood and emotions of an individual and being consistent in sports routine can lead them to a more stable mood, thereby helping them in reducing symptoms of depression and promoting overall emotional well-being. Furthermore, achieving personal goals in sports, such as running a faster mile or mastering a new skill, provides a sense of accomplishment that boosts not only self-esteem but also confidence to a large extent. Sports such as basketball, soccer or tennis that involve strategy, coordination as well as decision-making require quick thinking and concentration can help improve cognitive skills over time.

Studies too have shown that regular physical activity can enhance memory, problem-solving abilities as well as attention span, which are all critical components of mental health. By keeping the brain active and engaged, sports help in maintaining cognitive function and prevent age-related decline. Moreover, they also teach individuals how to handle failures, manage stress and push through adversity—skills that are invaluable in everyday life. Whether it is dealing with a loss, overcoming an injury or working hard to achieve a goal, sports challenge individuals to grow stronger



and mentally. This process of overcoming obstacles builds resilience and equips individuals with the mental fortitude to face life's challenges more effectively. Not only this, engaging in team sports, cycling and aerobic activities are particularly effective in reducing anxiety symptoms caused likely due to the combination of physical exertion and social interaction.

When talking about different stages of life, there is no denying the fact that sports play a crucial role in enhancing mental health across various stages of life—whether in school, college or professional settings. Schools can be a stressful environment for children due to academic pressures, social dynamics and extracurricular demands so engaging in sports offers an effective outlet for releasing stress and pent-up energy. Regular participation in the same helps manage stress by releasing endorphins and promoting relaxation, which leads to better focus and productivity in academic pursuits. Sports not only improve physical health but also boost mental acuity. This improved cognitive function can translate into higher productivity and better problem-solving abilities at work. Regardless of age or stage, engaging in sports provides a holistic approach to maintaining and enhancing mental health, making it an invaluable tool for personal well-being and development. Thus, the benefits of sports extend beyond physical fitness thereby contributing significantly to emotional well-being, cognitive development and social integration. By fostering resilience, enhancing emotional regulation and encouraging positive social interactions, sports provide a comprehensive approach to mental health care. In a world where mental health challenges are increasingly prevalent, the importance of sports as a tool for mental well-being cannot be overstated. Encouraging participation in sports at all levels, from casual play to competitive athletics, can be a powerful strategy for improving mental health across all age groups.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

# Nothing undemocratic about PM's visit to CJI's pooja



GOURAV VALLABH

In a nation where governance and justice work in tandem to uphold the Constitution, such an event signifies the harmony necessary for collective effort



The Prime Minister of India attending a Ganesh Pooja at the residence of the Chief Justice of India (CJI) is an act that should be seen as a symbol of respect and unity rather than an event warranting criticism. In the complex structure of Indian governance, where the judiciary and the executive function as distinct but interdependent pillars, such gestures are appropriate and reflective of the harmony essential for the nation's progress. To criticise this act would be to adopt a narrow-minded approach, ignoring the more profound significance of the occasion. The judiciary and the executive are two of the most important pillars of Indian democracy. While they are distinct in their functions, they share a common purpose: the preservation of the Constitution and the welfare of the people. The Prime Minister, as the head of the executive, and the Chief Justice of India, as the head of the judiciary, embody the leadership of two vital branches of government.

Their personal or religious event participation reflects mutual respect and understanding of their respective roles in the country's governance. The Ganesh Pooja, a significant religious event in India, represents the invocation of wisdom, prosperity, and the removal of obstacles. By attending such an event together, the two leaders are sending a message that they are united in their goals for the nation, seeking divine blessings for the common good. To view this act as inappropriate would be to overlook the fact that it is not merely a personal gathering but a reflection of shared responsibility in upholding the constitutional fabric of India. Critics of the Prime Minister's participation in the Ganesh Pooja at the Chief Justice of India's residence should remember that performing the Ganapati Pooja is not a crime, but a deeply ingrained part of India's cultural and historical heritage. The significance of Ganesh Pooja, especially when viewed through the lens of its revival by the great freedom fighter Bal Gangadhar Tilak, is a reminder of its deeper objectives—unity, nationalism, and collective strength. In this context, the Ganesh Pooja is not just a religious ceremony but a powerful cultural symbol that has historically promoted social



BY COMING TOGETHER AT A RELIGIOUS EVENT, THEY DEMONSTRATE THAT DESPITE THEIR INSTITUTIONAL SEPARATION, THEY WORK TOWARDS THE SAME LARGER AND GREATER GOAL—THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE AND THE STRENGTHENING OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY

cohesion, unity, and nationalism. By criticising such an event, the critics undermine the values that Tilak sought to instil through this festival. In Indian tradition, the term "Karta" refers to the head or manager of a family, responsible for the well-being of the entire household. Similarly, the Prime Minister and the Chief Justice act as the 'Kartas' of their respective domains: the executive and the judiciary. While their roles are different, their objectives often align, especially concerning matters of national interest, law, and justice.

By coming together at a religious event, they demonstrate that despite their institutional separation, they work towards the same larger and greater goal—the welfare of the people and the strengthening of Indian democracy. As the Karta of the executive, the Prime Minister is responsible for running the government, implementing laws, and ensuring the country's development. The Chief Justice, as the Karta of the judiciary, ensures that justice is upheld and that the laws are interpreted and applied in a fair and just manner. These roles complement each other, and public gestures of respect and unity, such as attending a religious event together, only strengthen the understanding and coordination between these two pillars of governance. Only a narrow-minded perspective would find fault in the Prime Minister's attendance at the Ganesh Pooja. Such criticism is often rooted in a limited understanding of the executive and judiciary's roles in the country's broader governance. Criticizing such gestures of goodwill and unity overlooks the significance of collaboration between these branches, which is essential for a well-functioning democracy. By attending the Ganesh Pooja, the Prime Minister and the CJI are reinforcing their commitment to work together for

the nation's greater good. It is well-known that Congress, during its tenure in power, had multiple instances where it was accused of attempting to influence or interfere with the independence of the judiciary. One such example that comes to the mind of every informed citizen is when Chief Justice S.M. Sikri retired on April 25, 1973, the day after the Supreme Court's landmark Kesavananda Bharati judgment, which ruled that Parliament could not alter the "basic structure" of the Constitution. Displeased by this limitation on her plans for constitutional amendments, Indira Gandhi swiftly responded by superseding three senior judges—Justices K.S. Hegde, J.M. Shelat, and A.N. Grover—on April 26.

Justice A.N. Ray, who was less critical of the government's stance, was appointed Chief Justice. This supersession sent a clear message, influencing the Supreme Court's subsequent ruling in the ADM Jabalpur case (also known as the Habeas Corpus case). During the Emergency declared on June 25, 1975, which suspended fundamental rights including the right to life and personal liberty, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court heard challenges to the presidential order. Attorney General Niren De argued that no judicial remedy could be sought during the Emergency. Justice Khanna questioned the Attorney General about remedies for severe abuses, like police killings, during the Emergency. The Attorney General admitted there would be no judicial recourse during this period. Despite this troubling admission, the majority ruled that citizens had no right to life or personal liberty during the Emergency. Justice Khanna dissented but was later superseded by Justice M.H. Beg as Chief Justice in January 1977. In November 1976, Congress passed the 42nd

Amendment, aiming to undermine judicial independence and establish a more authoritarian regime. The Prime Minister's participation in Ganesh Pooja at the Chief Justice of India's residence underscores mutual respect and recognition of each other's roles and powers.

Unlike Congress, which historically attempted to undermine judicial independence, this gesture reflects a healthy relationship between the executive and judiciary. It demonstrates that both leaders acknowledge and uphold the boundaries of their respective roles, ensuring a collaborative rather than confrontational dynamic in governance and judicial matters. The Prime Minister's attendance at a religious function does not imply interference in the judiciary's functioning or decision-making. There is a significant difference between engaging in respectful cultural or religious participation and attempting to subvert judicial independence for political gains, as seen during the Congress era. To equate the two is to distort history and misrepresent the present.

The Prime Minister performing Ganesh Pooja at the Chief Justice's residence is an act that reflects India's values of cultural unity, mutual respect, and inclusiveness. Only those with a narrow-minded view or divisive political motives would criticize such a gesture. This event represents the healthy relationship between the judiciary and executive, reaffirming their shared commitment to upholding the Constitution and promoting the welfare of the nation. Rather than being a cause for criticism, it should be seen as a celebration of the harmony and unity at the heart of India's democratic and cultural ethos.

(The writer is professor at XLRI and a BJP Leader; views are personal)

# The hidden toll of climate change: India's struggle with eco-anxiety and mental health

Rising temperatures and erratic weather patterns are not only threatening the nation's economy but also fueling anxiety, depression and trauma

India's diverse landscape is one of its greatest assets, but it also makes the country highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. The consequences are increasingly evident in events like wildfires, violent storms, unseasonal rainfall, melting glaciers, air pollution, and heatwaves. These phenomena not only damage the environment but also have serious implications for public health. Heatwaves, for instance, have led to a 53.7% increase in heat-related deaths among people aged 65 and above between 2000 and 2017. Additionally, the growing heat stress could result in an estimated 34 million job losses, while air pollution is expected to cause 6.6 million premature deaths by 2050.



VARADA MADGE

Climate change poses a significant threat to India's economic stability as well. Implementing adaptation strategies will come at a staggering cost of ₹85.6 lakh crore (approximately \$1.065 trillion). While these economic challenges are daunting, the mental health implications of climate change are often overlooked. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth

Assessment Report, shifts in economic, social, and food systems triggered by climate change will lead to long-term mental health impacts, including rising levels of anxiety, depression, and stress. One of the most alarming consequences of climate change on mental health is the rise of "eco-anxiety." Defined as a persistent worry about the current environmental crisis and the bleak future it suggests, eco-anxiety is affecting millions globally, especially the younger generation. A study by The Lancet across ten countries, including India, surveyed 10,000 young adults aged 16-25 years. The results were sobering: over half of the participants reported feeling 'sad', 'anxious', 'angry', 'powerless', 'helpless', 'insecure', and

'guilty' about climate change. Furthermore, 45% admitted that these emotions disrupted their daily lives, while 75% expressed serious concerns about their future. Most disturbingly, 83% believed that humanity had failed to take adequate steps to protect the planet. The Lancet Countdown report of 2022 further highlighted the mental health consequences for younger people, including increased levels of phobias, drug dependency, sleep disturbances, emotional dysregulation, and cognitive impairment. Children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable to eco-anxiety, as they are growing up in an era where the effects of climate change are becoming more apparent with each pass-



ing year. India has already witnessed numerous climate-induced disasters that have exacerbated mental health issues. According to the National Institute of Disaster Management, India experienced 1,058 climate-related events, including floods, cyclones, droughts, cold waves, and heatwaves between 1995 and 2020. These disasters often

result in severe psychological consequences. For example, the prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in flood-affected populations is estimated to be around 50%. Frequent droughts, for instance, have been linked to high suicide rates among farmers. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reported over 10,000 farmer suicides in 2019. A study also found that when temperatures rise above 20°C, a 1°C increase in a single day's temperature is linked to approximately 70 additional suicides. Over the past three decades, rising temperatures and droughts have contributed to the suicides of around 59,000 farmers in India, accounting for 6.8% of the overall upward trend in suicides.

The future also appears bleak in terms of water security. A 2018 report by Niti Aayog predicts that 21 Indian cities will run out of water by 2030, affecting 100 million people. By that time, 40% of India's population may lack access to clean drinking water, leaving communities stressed and insecure. The mental health impact of such crises is particularly severe for indigenous communities, whose lives and livelihoods are closely tied to their natural surroundings. Sadly, these communities and their experiences remain underrepresented in mainstream discussions about climate change, calling for more focused research to understand their specific vulnerabilities. Addressing these challenges

will require coordinated efforts across sectors. Communities, climate activists, organizations, policymakers, and mental health professionals must collaborate to develop solutions. Initiatives like planting trees, reforestation, and recycling can empower communities and provide a sense of agency, helping alleviate the psychological burden of eco-anxiety. Policymakers must prioritise the environment by enforcing carbon emission reductions and investing in renewable energy. Mental health surveillance should be integrated into climate policies at every level of governance.

(The writer is Fellow Environment and Health Assessment, TERI; views are personal)



IN BRIEF



Black Box to increase biz share, hire 400 people

Essar Group's IT arm Black Box expects the share of India business to grow by 1-2 percentage points in its course to become a USD 2 billion revenue company by 2027-28, a top official of the company said. The company specialises in building IT infrastructure for critical technology applications including hyper-scale data centres and planning to bring its learning to the Indian market as many of the company's global customers are looking to invest in the country, Black Box CEO Sanjeev Verma said. He said that the company plans to increase employee headcount across all levels in India to around 1,000 people from about 600 people at present. "Currently, India is 6 per cent of our business. We do not expect it to become much larger, but if we have to go to USD 2 billion then it will be significantly important for us to move it to 7-8 per cent," Verma said. The company has reported revenue of around USD 750 in FY2024.



JSW Energy arm commissions 300 MW wind project

JSW Energy on Sunday announced that its step-down subsidiary, JSW Renew Energy Two Ltd, has successfully commissioned a 300 MW wind power plant at Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu. The ISTS-connected (Inter-state transmission system) wind power project was awarded by Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) in tranche X, a company statement said. This marks the first-ever greenfield wind power plant commissioned by the company for the SECI, it noted. The newly commissioned wind power project will contribute significantly to the renewable energy portfolio, supporting the vision of a greener and sustainable future, the company said. The additional 150 MW of wind capacity awarded under SECI Tranche X located at Dharapuram, Tamil Nadu, is also nearing completion with 138 MW already commissioned, it informed.



Polymatech to set up semiconductor in Bahrain

Semi-conductor chip manufacturer Polymatech Electronics would invest USD 16 million in Bahrain to establish a semi-conductor manufacturing facility in the gulf country, the company said. The facility to be set up as 'Atri' in Bahrain Industrial Area - Hidd - would play a critical role in producing essential 5G and 6G components and marks Polymatech Electronic's first step in expanding its global footprint. "We, at Bahrain EDB are pleased to welcome Polymatech alongside several leading multi-sector companies to business-friendly Bahrain. Bahrain continues to maintain momentum in delivering on its vision of developing a digital-first, intelligent economy, fostering a future-ready ecosystem that prioritizes the development of next-generation technologies, advanced manufacturing and a highly skilled workforce," Minister of Sustainable Development, Chief Executive of Bahrain Noor bint Ali Alkhalifa said. Polymatech establishing a semiconductor facility in Bahrain is set to usher in a new era of innovation and technological advancement across sectors.

REPORT BY OCT 30

GST forms GoM to review tax rate on health, life insurance

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The GST Council on Sunday constituted a 13-member Group of Ministers (GoM) to suggest GST rate on premiums of various health and life insurance products and submit its report by October 30. Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary is the convener of the GoM. The members of the panel include members from Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Meghalaya, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Telangana.

The 54th GST Council meeting on September 9 decided to set up a GoM to examine and review the present tax structure of GST on life and medical insurance. A final call by the Council on the taxation of insurance premiums is likely to be taken in the next meeting in November based on the GoM report. Currently, 18 per cent of Goods and Services Tax



(GST) is levied on insurance premiums.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) of the panel also include suggesting tax rate of health/medical insurance including individual, group, family floater and other medical insurance for various categories like senior citizens, middle class, persons with mental illness. Also, suggest

tax rates on life insurance, including term insurance, life insurance with investment plan whether individual or group and re-insurance.

"The GoM is to submit its report by October 30, 2024," said the Office Memorandum issued by the GST Council Secretariat on the Constitution of GoM on Life and Health insurance.

Some opposition-ruled states, including West Bengal, had demanded complete exemption of GST on health and life insurance premiums, while some other states were in favour of lowering the tax to 5 per cent. Even Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari had in July written to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on the issue saying "levying GST on life insurance premium amounts to levying tax on the uncertainties of life."

In 2023-24, the centre and states collected Rs 8,262.94 crore through GST on health insurance premiums, while Rs 1,484.36 crore was collected on account of GST on health reinsurance premiums.

Sitharaman in her reply to a discussion on the Finance Bill in the Lok Sabha in August had said that 75 per cent of the GST collected goes to states and the Opposition members should ask their state finance ministers to bring the proposal to the GST Council.

FUTURE CASH NEEDS

RBI plans to revamp currency management infrastructure

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank plans to comprehensively revamp its currency management infrastructure over the next 4-5 years, mainly to ensure adequate storage and handling capacity to cater to the future cash needs of the growing economy.

The creation of greenfield currency management centres, the introduction of warehouse automation, the installation of security and surveillance systems, an inventory management system, and a centralised command centre are being mooted to modernise the existing infrastructure, according to an RBI document. The expected timeline for the whole project is 4-5 years, according to the expression of interest (EoI) issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for procurement of consultancy and project management ser-



vices for the modernisation of currency management infrastructure.

"Despite moderation in the growth rate of NIC (Notes In Circulation) in the last three years, analysis indicates that the growth will continue to be positive over the foreseeable future though the pace thereof is expected to be slower over the next decade," the document said.

Further, the central bank said the trend in volume growth is expected to continue, and the rate may even accelerate, such that the value needs of the public are met sufficiently yet conveniently.

Notes in Circulation (NIC), in volume and value terms, have increased considerably over the past two decades. NIC volume stood at 136.21 billion pieces (bpcs) on March 31, 2023, and 146.87 bpcs as of March 31, 2024.

India is 'very important market': Malaysia Airlines

PNS ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Malaysia Airlines is keen to expand its operations into India, which is a "very important market", according to a top airline official.

The airline, which currently flies to nine Indian cities, is eyeing new destinations as well as looking to increase frequencies to Trivandrum and Ahmedabad.

Part of the Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG), Malaysia Airlines operates daily flights to Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Amritsar, Chennai, Hyderabad and Kochi. It also has four weekly services from Ahmedabad and Trivandrum.

"We continue to remain excited about the Indian market. It has been driven by robust economic movement," MAG's Group Managing Director Datuk Captain Izhah Ismail told PTI in an interview.

"We aspire to expand more into India... that will happen only next year... India is a very important market," he said and added that it will look at expansion once it gets more

aircraft.

Currently, Malaysia Airlines operates 71 weekly flights to India. The flights to Amritsar were increased from four per week to daily in August.

The airline has a codeshare partnership with IndiGo and interline arrangements with Air India and Vistara.

In the recent interview at Kuala Lumpur, Ismail said, "We have the appetite and desire to increase frequencies to Trivandrum, Ahmedabad and a few new destinations we are eyeing".

The bilateral flying rights between India and Malaysia, based on the number of seats airlines from either side can operate, is mostly utilised for metro routes in India.

So, Malaysia Airlines can have more services to non-metro cities in the country as there are no curbs due to the bilateral flying rights.

Meanwhile, the carrier has reduced its network till December in the wake of operational difficulties due to various factors, including supply chain constraints and manpower challenges.

CEA: Banks need to remain competitive

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Chief Economic Advisor to the Centre, V Anantha Nageswaran has said banks should adapt to changing customer preferences and market dynamics in order to remain competitive.

He highlighted the crucial role of agriculture in driving economic growth at an event organised by public sector Indian Bank here on Saturday. In his remarks on the topic 'Indian Economy and Banking: Growth and Trends', Nageswaran stressed on the importance of technological advancements in driving growth and innovation in the industry.

The CEA, in a press release issued by the Bank, emphasised the need for banks to adapt to changing customer preferences and market dynamics to remain competitive.

He hailed the Indian Bank for its efforts to invest in knowledge sharing and excellence and lauded its initiative under the MSME.

Panel to ensure compliance by online gaming platforms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

An inter-departmental committee with representatives from ED, RBI, tax and consumer affairs departments may be set up to combat the proliferation of online gaming platforms and ensure regulatory compliance, a DGGI report said.

The GST intelligence wing of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has initiated action against 118 domestic online gaming entities, and Show Cause Notices have been issued to 34 taxpayers involving tax amount of Rs 1,10,531.91 crore.

The notices were issued to these gaming companies as they were not paying GST at 28 per cent rate.

Furthermore, 658 offshore entities have been identified as non-registered/non-compliant entities and are being investigated by the DGGI. Also, 167 URL/websites have been recommended for blocking.

The Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) annual report 2023-24 flagged



that online money gaming' is a "high-risk" industry for tax evasion, money laundering, cyber frauds, juvenile delinquency and various socio-economic evils.

Despite the legal clarity with effect from October 1, 2023, bringing the gaming entities under the tax net continues to be an uphill task.

Many such firms are set up in offshore tax havens (i.e. Malta, Curacao Islands, British Virgin Islands, Cypress etc.) known for their opacity, thus making it difficult to ascertain their ultimate ownership.

There are online gaming platforms which keep on changing their URL/website/apps to avoid tax

compliance. Use of dark web or VPN based platforms for such supply further accentuates the difficulties in tax law enforcement, the DGGI said.

"Therefore, a multi-pronged approach to deal with this sector is need of the hour. An Inter-departmental committee comprising CBIC, CBDT, ED, MeITY, MCA, MIB, RBI, Department of Consumer Affairs, and the like along with industry bodies may be set up to develop comprehensive strategies and regulations to combat the proliferation of such platforms, ensuring regulatory compliance, consumer protection and national security," the DGGI said in its report released on Saturday.

Investors to focus on US Fed interest rate decision

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The US Federal Reserve's interest rate decision is the biggest event that would drive sentiments in the domestic stock market this week, besides a host of macroeconomic data from the global front and trading activity of foreign investors, analysts said.

The Indian equity market had an exceptional last week, with both the Nifty and Sensex hitting their all-time high levels on Thursday. The BSE benchmark breached the 83,000 level for the first time on Thursday.

"One of the most anticipated events of the year is set to unfold this week with the US Federal Open Market

Committee (FOMC) meeting scheduled for September 18th. It is almost certain that this will mark the beginning of an interest rate cut cycle in the US. The general consensus is for a 25 basis points (bps) rate cut, though some market participants are speculating a more aggressive 50 bps cut.

"Such a move would be a significant positive trigger for global markets, particularly for emerging markets like India, as it would likely result in a weaker dollar and lower US yields, spurring foreign

inflows into Indian equities," said Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investment Ltd.

Additionally, Japan's inflation data is due on Friday, followed by the Bank of Japan's (BoJ) monetary policy announcement, he said. "In addition to

this, other crucial factors that will influence market sentiment include FII (Foreign Institutional Investors) flows, the geopolitical landscape, and crude oil prices," Meena added. "The outlook for the market

will be guided by the major domestic and global economic data such as India's WPI inflation, US industrial production, US Fed interest rate decision, US FOMC economic projections and US initial jobless claims," Palka Arora Chopra, Director, Master Capital Services Ltd, said.

Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,707.01 points or 2.10 per cent and the Nifty climbed 504.35 points or 2.02 per cent.

"Looking ahead, this week will be critical with the US Fed meeting scheduled, and its outcome expected on September 18. Domestically, participants will be closely monitoring WPI inflation data and foreign fund flows," said.



India seeks investments, tech transfer from SK, Japan

PNS ■ GOA

India is seeking investments and technology transfer from South Korea and Japan to establish shipbuilding and ship repair clusters to promote the domestic shipping supply chain in the country, according to a senior government official.

Currently, India holds less than 1 per cent of the global shipbuilding market, dominated by China, South Korea, and Japan.

"We are looking at South Korea and Japan for investments and technology transfer for establishing shipbuilding and ship repair clusters in India," TK Ramachandran, Secretary in Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), told a group of journalists here.

Ramachandran was in Goa to participate in the 20th Maritime State Development Council (MSDC), where plans for a mega shipbuilding park, spanning multiple states, were discussed. "We have communicated to them (South Korea and Japan) that you come with your

technology and investments, we will provide you land for setting up shipbuilding and ship repair clusters," he said.

Ramachandran also said that Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal has written to chief ministers of all states to provide land immediately if Japanese or Korean companies express interest in setting up shipbuilding and ship repair clusters in their states.

"At least three states have expressed interest in providing land for establishing shipbuilding and ship repair clusters," he said, without naming the states.

According to him, this ambitious initiative aims to consolidate shipbuilding capabilities across regions, fostering greater efficiency and innovation.

Ramachandran said India's proposed Rs 25,000 crore Maritime Development Fund (MDF) -- which looks at providing long-term, low-cost financial support and push towards indigenous ship-building -- will be basically equity funding.



90 pc of financial institutions focusing on AI, GenAI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ninety per cent of Indian financial institutions are focusing on artificial intelligence (AI) and GenAI (Generative Artificial Intelligence) as the primary technology enablers of innovation, according to a PwC India report.

As per the PwC India report titled, 'Mapping the FinTech innovation landscape in India' data analytics also continues to emerge prominently across nearly 74 per cent responses, underscoring its integral role in driving insights and decision-making within the financial services (FS) sector.

It said that 31 financial institutions consisting of banks, insurance firms and fintechs participated in the survey.

"Artificial Intelligence (AI) and GenAI (Generative Artificial Intelligence) emerged as the focus area for innovation for Indian financial institutions, with 90 per cent of the respondents citing them as the primary technology enablers of innovation," it said.

Further, 84 per cent of respondents stated that customer experience and engagement - acquisition, onboarding and servicing was the key area of focus for innovation initiatives.

Additionally, over 50 per cent of the participants highlighted product distribution as a key area of innovation.

It can also be noted that the frequent references to risk management, operations and regulatory compliance across



several responses highlight the sector's diligence in maintaining robust governance frameworks amidst ongoing technological advancements, the report said.

As the fintech industry continues to evolve, it's clear that growth must be balanced with the critical challenges of dig-

ital security and regulatory compliance, Mihir Gandhi, Partner and Payments Transformation Leader, PwC India, said.

"Fintech companies need to navigate an ever-changing regulatory landscape while building compliant partnerships to ensure sustainable

success. The focus is shifting towards profitability and long-term viability, emphasising the importance of changing business models, innovation and customer focus," Gandhi said.

PwC India said 65 per cent of respondents considered risk mitigation and adapting to changing regulatory landscapes as critical factors, underscoring the importance of navigating regulatory challenges while innovating.

Also, 45 per cent of the participants preferred to promote innovation primarily through internal initiatives, indicating a strong preference for using internal resources and expertise to drive innovation.

"Collaborative innovation is now seen as a key driver for

fintechs, enabling faster speed-to-market and delivering tangible benefits like new product offerings, increased productivity, and reduced operational costs," said Vivek Belgavi, Partner and Leader - Fintech, Alliances and Ecosystems, PwC India.

According to the report, the primary challenges most companies encountered while running their innovation initiatives were resource constraints, particularly in terms of talent and the technological complexity associated with new technologies.

The most common objectives that companies chose for collaborating and partnering were better speed-to-market and collaborative innovation, the report said.



## From indie beats to industry feats:

# Saloni Batra rocks *Khalbali Records*

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Under the direction of Devanshu Singh, *Khalbali Records* explores the conflict between creative integrity and commercial ambition. The series offers a daring perspective on the music industry and stars a mix of established actors and newcomers. Is it worth your time, though? With one of the top actresses, Saloni Batra, let's find out.

The *Animal* fame pronounces, "I could really connect to *Khalbali Records*' ideas of artistic integrity versus industry pressure because I'm an actor. All art forms share a common tension: how to balance industry demands with remaining loyal to one's original vision. This series effectively depicted that battle and the fine balance that artists have to keep in mind. I have a lot of personal attachment to this concept, so seeing it realised on screen was really fulfilling."

Ananya, played by actress Saloni, values her father's approval beyond anything else. She will do anything to have her father acknowledge her brilliance and hard work. She serves as the father and son's connecting element. She treats carefully in her personal life, fearing losing her love in the process of juggling everything. So, Saloni dealt with Ananya's pressures every time she was around MRS by focusing on her need for righteousness, affirmation and feeling under pressure. Collaborating with Ram Kapoor was an amazing experience for her!

She further goes on-record, saying, "As a music enthusiast, I was aware of both sides of the issue. I took inspiration from musicians who have managed to strike a balance between being loyal to their craft and becoming well-known. Artists such as AR Rahman, who successfully combine inventiveness and broad appeal, I examined how independent musicians like Prateek Kuhad stay true to themselves while still connecting with a larger audience. They made it easier for me to comprehend the difficulties my character in the show had in trying to strike a balance between creative integrity and commercial demands. I knew the kind of music my father, MRS, liked and why, as well as the indie movement my brother wanted to foster, so I knew how to approach a company like Galaxy Records. Ananya would be the only person to act as a balance between the two."

For the actress, *Khalbali*'s soundtrack was undoubtedly the show's beating heart and collaborating with amazing musicians like Amit Trivedi and Azadi Records gave the set a certain vibrancy. Not only did their soundtracks enhance the visuals, but they also influenced the story's emotional tempo and tone. Everything on set, even the way they approached each scene, is elevated when the narrative is driven by such tremendous music. But, "Getting to know my character's emotional range was a lot of fun and quite fulfilling. I was able to explore a wide variety of emotions, from annoyance and rage to vulnerability and hope, thanks to the personal and professional tensions that are at the heart of the story. It felt satisfying to embrace and represent these strong feelings in an authentic manner."

In the music business, her character faces a great deal of conflict between passion and practicality. She is motivated to produce something significant and is really enthusiastic about what she does, but she also has to deal with the demands and practicalities of the industry. For Saloni Batra, navigating this conflict meant striking a balance between her vision and the needs of

**ACTRESS SALONI BATRA, WHO IS YET AGAIN IN INTO NEWS FOR HER LATEST SERIES, *KHALBALI RECORDS*, SPEAKS TO *THE PIONEER* ABOUT THE SERIES, HER CHARACTER, EXPLORING DIVERSE EMOTIONS AND MORE**

commercial success. Her persona frequently finds herself in difficult situations where she must choose between sticking to her principles and making concessions in order to further her profession. Her path revolves around this internal conflict and she discovers how to create a balance by balancing her ambitions with her morals and ethics, staying true to herself while adjusting to the reality of the business.

Going forward, "*Khalbali Records* emphasises the challenges that independent musicians encounter and I think it's critical that shows like this emphasise these stories. Presenting these real experiences is more crucial than ever in the modern world, when the media has a tremendous amount of influence over public opinion. This series offers a more nuanced perspective that goes beyond popular trends and opens people's eyes to the reality of the music industry, which many may not be aware of. *Khalbali Records* sheds focus on the challenges faced by independent musicians and I think it's imperative that shows like this emphasise these stories. Presenting these real experiences is more crucial than ever in the modern world, when the media has a tremendous amount of influence over public opinion. The exhibition of independent artists' struggles and achievements fosters critical thinking and educates viewers so they don't blindly follow fads. This type of narrative has the power to genuinely alter public opinion and promote a greater comprehension of the creative industry."

Saloni has always loved music, so getting ready for this role was especially exciting. Although she had a basic knowledge of both indie and commercial music, she went further into the nuances of the business to give her character more realism. She made connections with other people in the industry and artists like Prabhdeep and EPR to learn about the highs and lows as well as the motivating passions that drive their work. She also concentrated on learning about the music industry's business aspects, which are equally important to understanding the whole picture even though they are less glamorous. She was able to capture the essence of the character and establish a stronger emotional connection with the viewers because of her meticulous preparation.

Then, "I really connected with the ideas of legacy and self-expression since they are extremely personal to me. I'm always figuring out how to represent who I am as an actor via my acting. I took inspiration for this part from my own experiences negotiating the expectations that accompany any career in the arts, where one must frequently strike a balance between discovering their own voice and paying tribute to those who have gone before them. My interpretation of the character was greatly influenced by her internal battle and her desire to make a lasting impression, which helped to make her journey seem real and approachable."

Actress Saloni Batra believes that her series on OTT platforms is exceptional because it offers a novel and distinctive viewpoint on narrative, particularly when it comes to music and how it affects identity and culture. The story explores the history, the passion and the personal stakes that underpin the music industry rather than merely following the conventional rise and fall arc. Together with a visually striking presentation that perfectly conveys the fervour and mayhem of the music industry, the show also features a compelling, character-driven plot. Her show stands out in the current OTT landscape because it combines a visually and emotionally rich experience with a gripping, human story.



EVENT COVERAGE



## Brewing towards a pro-caffeinating week!

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Hyderabad witnessed a love affair of coffee lovers this weekend at the yearly-held Indian Coffee Festival. While every year the festival is conducted in different parts of the country, this year it was Hyderabad. And let me tell you about the three-day festival, which began on September 13 and had come to an end on Sunday (September 15).

Just as the saying goes, 'coffee is a cup of hope in a world of chaos and Monday blues', the weekend was a perfect gathering for all the coffee lovers under one roof.

An energetic event highlighting coffee culture, there were tastings, latte art workshops, expert discussions, barista showcases and additional activities. The event provided activities suitable for families, including special programs for children and pets and live music.

Apptly named Indian Coffee Festival, the event witnessed influencers, entrepreneurs, and the public all under one roof raising a toast of their favourite coffees. Amongst them was also *The Pioneer* making the best use of a weekend and what better than having some coffee with like-minded people?

As one steps in, the aroma of the coffee beans just takes you to the world of coffee and how? The feelings are just indescribable! As soon as we entered the venue, the first stall that attracted our minds was by the Coffee Board of India, displaying different coffee beans and authentic procedures of making coffee. We discussed with the team about the different beans and as we heard about all of it, a member of the team arrived with the 'actual' pure coffee, which was the perfect start of the festival for us.

Talking of like-minded people, oh, we caught up with none other than Sunalini Menon, Asia's first lady of coffee and she tells us exclusively, "I'm glad to see such a participation and the camaraderie, the happiness on their faces, seeing so many coffee makers and bakery items along with them; I feel it was a very nice moment. It's going to be the start of many more such events and Hyderabad should be on the maps for coffee, considering the fact that Araku is so close. Araku has now reached great heights in terms of its quality and market, including the livelihood of the coffee farmers. Seeing cool brews being served, then seeing my own coffee board, the coffee board is by my parents bringing the traditional way of having the stove, heating the milk and making the devotion, taking me back to the surroundings I grew up in. All-in-all, Hyderabad is going to become a great hub for coffee and



I can actually visualise that in the next 5 years, it will be right on top."

Going ahead, she also took us through the evolution of the Indian coffee: "Back then in Madras, you would wake up to the smell of coffee because it was prepared every morning. I grew up in such an environment and cafes were unheard of. There were just like these tiny outlets where you'd find coffee. Today also, I don't think the culture of having coffee after dinner is there. The millennials and Gen Z's have changed the whole scenario and I see it evolving in 1995, precisely on September 1, when marketing for Indian coffee was liberalised. And then came the first coffee, which was Cafe Coffee Day. It was then that came the movement of filter coffee to espresso."

The festival featured some of the finest coffee brands in India, including Katha Coffee, Karafa Coffee, True Black Coffee, Big Star Café, Carrabi Coffee, Araku Coffee, MSP Hill Roasters, First Crack Roasters, and Odissi Coffee.

Meanwhile, Srinivas Rao, representing the Coffee Board of India under the Ministry of Commerce, was also present supporting the entire coffee fraternity in India.

From coffee machines to coffee cups, the event had it all. Accompanied by the live music, the event was a feast for all of those, who enjoy their cup of coffee with some soothing music.

The event also witnessed a fashion show presented by the students of the National Institute of Fashion Technology.

The festival was not just a celebration of coffee but a profound exploration into the deep legacy of coffee. A tribute and an affair for the community, it was all about it evolving and growing.

## Unlocking potential, transforming India's employment growth

There is notable growth in the Indian electronics manufacturing sector. Having a domestic production value of over \$101 billion in FY23, the industry is ready for additional expansion. Several factors are behind this growth, such as an increasing demand for electronic products in the domestic market, government policies that support local manufacturing, and a proficient labor force.

Seconding to this, Ashish Dhawan, founder-CEO of The Convergence Foundation (TCF), has emphasised India's success in electronics manufacturing as a clear sign of the country's potential to boost job creation. Dhawan highlighted Apple's rapid expansion in India, with its 29th factory being established in the country in just 2-3 years.

"Many doubted India's capability in manufacturing, questioning our productivity. But Apple's success shows we can make it happen. This should instill confidence in India's capacity for large-scale electronics production," Dhawan stated.

He encouraged stakeholders to see this achievement as progress in closing India's gap in labor-intensive exports, highlighting the country's demographic strengths and lower labour expenses in comparison to China. Nevertheless, he warned that there is still a requirement for major changes, especially in terms of decreasing regulatory obstacles, enhancing business efficiency, and putting resources into infrastructure.

Dhawan emphasised the significance of linking growth in manufacturing with the creation of jobs. During a discussion with Rahul Ahluwalia, Founder-Director at the Foundation for Economic Development (FED), it was noted that while sectors such as automobile production have increased in capital requirements, industries like electronics assembly and apparel have the potential to generate more employment opportunities, which is crucial for India at present.

"The government's role in enhancing competitiveness has been vital,"

Dhawan said, crediting both central and state governments for their efforts to improve labour and land policies. "Business leaders are calling for competitiveness and the government is responding."

Dhawan also encouraged India to aim to achieve the same level of success as East Asian countries such as South Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam. Using Uttar Pradesh as a reference, he pointed out the significant contrast in exports between the state and Vietnam, despite UP having a much higher population.

Dhawan continued to push for India to establish itself as the global center for skills. He also advocated for bilateral agreements between governments to streamline the process of obtaining temporary work permits in OECD nations, where an estimated 50 million job opportunities will arise in the next 20 years. Dhawan contended that India is in a good position to provide skilled workers in industries such as healthcare, household services, and others.





# what's brewing?



The 6-day D Sons Patola Art Exhibition at Labels Pop-up Space, Road No. 1, Opp: Taj Krishna, Banjara Hills, was opened by fashionista and entrepreneur Pravalika Goodapati. The patola art exhibition's primary social goals were to support weavers and the handloom industry by giving it a market.

PARTY



Actresses Tejaswi Madivada and Nayani Pavani, as well as numerous jewellery enthusiasts and lovers, along with models, were present at the grand opening of the Life Jewellery Exhibition on September 14th, 15th and 16th at HICC-NOVOTEL in HI-Tech city.



The first location of the Monsoon Luxury Salon in Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad, was slipped by actor Teja Sajja. Situated in the city's center, the recently opened branch blends contemporary architecture with amenities that meet global standards.

Photos by- SV Chary



Reserve Bank of India deputy governor, T. Rabi Shankar, presented the degree certificates to the students of Institute of Insurance and Risk Management, at the convocation ceremony, held at Hotel Le Meridien in Gachibowli.



JCI Hyderabad Deccan has contributed five computers and Junior JC Wing has given the JCI Hyderabad Deccan School one hundred chairs. The objective of this program is to improve the learning environment and provide students with more educational tools. The presence of JCI India's National President, JC Rekhesha Sharma and Zone XII President, JC Govind Kankani, added distinction to the occasion.

## FUN

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



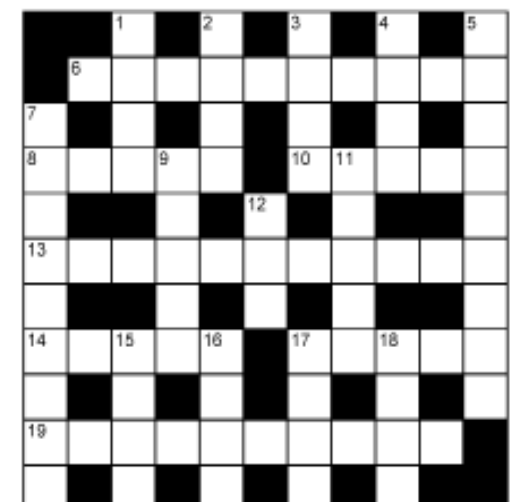
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### NANCY



### SUDOKU



**Yesterday's solution**  
1 5 7 3 9 6 8 2 4  
2 3 6 7 4 8 9 5 1  
4 9 8 5 2 1 3 6 7  
8 7 2 4 6 5 1 9 3  
3 1 5 2 8 9 7 4 6  
6 4 9 1 7 3 2 8 5  
5 8 4 9 1 7 6 3 2  
7 6 3 8 5 2 4 1 9  
9 2 1 6 3 4 5 7 8

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

### ACROSS

- 6 A maker of horseshoes
- 8 Wanders
- 10 Office tables
- 13 He wrote the play "Romeo and Juliet"
- 14 Gets closer to
- 17 Go by bike
- 19 Somewhere to go out to for a meal
- 9 Manufacturer
- 11 The other side in a war
- 12 Something left after a fire
- 15 As well
- 16 Male deer
- 17 Be concerned
- 18 Metal containers for drink, food

### DOWN

- 1 This bites a dog
- 2 Divisions in a play
- 3 Second-hand
- 4 Comes first in a race
- 5 Spoke very quietly
- 7 People in jail



### GINGER MEGGS





# I was inspired by Sunil: Comedian Satya

The movie *Mathu Vadalaru 2* is doing exceptionally well at the box office since it premiered on Friday. This movie is a follow-up to the previous film *Mathu Vadalaru*. Under the direction of Ritesh Rana, Satya and Sri Simha Koduri star as the main actors, with Faria Abdullah also playing a key role in this follow-up film. Cherry works as the producer. The movie is receiving positive feedback from everywhere and the team is delighted with the response.

"This film is very special to me because it gave me a good name and a great success," said comedian Satya. He added that many of the seniors, like Vennela Kishore and Ajay, helped him a lot. "I was inspired by Sunil's acting and he advised me as well," said Satya. He praises the producer, Cherry, for making this film with him and also believing in his ability.

"This film is getting a good response and for that, I should thank the audience for encouraging the film. I am happy to hear that everyone appreciates my performance. Simha has improved a lot in this



*Vadalaru 2* and in recent times this is the best comedy one. I watch the film even with the end titles and I especially appreciate the director Ritesh Rana for coming with a film like this," said Chiranjeevi. He added that the actors did a very good job. "My special mention to Satya and all the others, like Simha, Faria Abdullah and Kala Bhairava, for the success of this film," he said. Another Super Star Mahesh Babu is also full of praise about this film. He said that the film is a complete laugh riot. He added that his daughter couldn't stop laughing when Vennela Kishore was on the screen. "*Mathu Vadalaru 2*... a laugh riot!! Thoroughly enjoyed it.. Effortless performances by

@Simhakoduri23 and the entire cast! #VennelaKishore... my daughter couldn't stop laughing when you were on screen #Satya... We all couldn't stop laughing when you were on screen... Outstanding acting!! Had such a good time. Congratulations to the entire team! (sic)," said Mahesh Babu on his social media about the film.

sequel when compared to the first part. We are all friends even in real life and I am very happy that this film is doing well at the box office," said Satya.

On the other hand, Mega Star Chiranjeevi spoke highly about this film. Chiranjeevi took to his social media and said that this is the most hilarious film in recent times. "I have seen the film *Mathu*

# VAIBHAV REDDY'S RETURN TO TELUGU CINEMA WITH *BENCH LIFE*

AARTI SREENATH  
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In a delightful return to Telugu cinema, actor Vaibhav Reddy, better known for his roles in Tamil cinema, is back with a fresh and humorous take on corporate life in the series *Bench Life*. Best known for his performances in Tamil films like *Saroja*, *Goa* and *Mankatha*, he steps back into the Telugu industry after a decade-long gap, with a character that's instantly relatable to the millennial IT crowd. With his wit and comedic timing, he portrays Balu, a software engineer, who navigates the idle bench period, a phase many in the corporate world know too well.

In an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*, he shares his journey preparing for the role, the challenges of portraying humor in such a setting and his excitement about reuniting with Telugu audiences after all these years.

When asked how he prepared to embody the character of Balu, he credited the series' director, Manasa, for guiding him. "First, I should thank Manasa for that. She had a very interesting script and the character was entirely designed by her. She used to act out how Balu behaves, whether he's frustrated, funny, or in love. I don't have much experience in the IT sector; watching films is the closest I've gotten. So, I give full credit to Manasa for the way Balu turned out," he shared with a sense of gratitude.

His comic performances have always stood out, but in *Bench Life*, he explores a different kind of humour, the kind born out of the everyday frustrations of corporate life. He admits that comedy is tough to play, particularly when it's set in the subtle but high-stakes world of the corporate bench. Yet, this is exactly what makes his character so relatable.

"I haven't watched the series yet," he admits, "but when I was dubbing for it, I could see how the comical timing and the subtle nuances played out differently. In a series, you get the time to explore a character deeply without the constraints of a feature film's duration. So, Balu, this lazy guy who's always behind a girl, hyped up by his friends even when he's not doing anything, was fun and different to play."

His character, Balu, isn't just about cracking jokes. It's about bringing out the

Actor Vaibhav Reddy is currently gaining much traction for his latest flick, *Bench Life*. He speaks to *The Pioneer* about preparing for his role, reuniting with the Telugu audience and more

frustrations and idiosyncrasies of a man who's stagnating in his career yet finding humour in it. "Comedy is very tough," he reflects. "When you're playing an emotion like sadness, you can simply be dull and still convey it. But comedy, it's a different ballgame. You've got to be sharp and get the timing just right."

In *Bench Life*, I had to balance those funny moments with the real struggles of someone who's stuck in their job but doesn't take life too seriously." Reflecting on the bench period and how it relates to real life, he acknowledged how *Bench Life* mirrors self-discovery. "Everyone in life goes through some high points or lows. But Balu doesn't care. He's focused on himself. In real life, I'm a bit like that too. I don't stress too much about things; whether a film is a hit or a flop, it doesn't matter to me. I just take life easy."

The return to Telugu cinema felt like coming home for him. "It's been ten years since I did a Telugu film. I've been regularly working in Tamil films and I'm very comfortable there, having been raised in Chennai since LKG," he reminisces with a smile. "Returning to the Telugu industry after so long feels like coming back home after studying abroad—like that kid who comes back from the US to visit his parents. It's familiar, yet so different."

He compares his decade-long gap from Telugu cinema to those who struggle with visa issues while abroad, not able to return to their roots. He jokingly adds, "Some peo-

ple don't get their visa approved, so they stay back in the US. Coming back to Telugu films after all these years felt like that!"

*Bench Life* is produced by Niharika Konidela's Pink Elephant Pictures, known for creating content that resonates with a global audience. When asked about his experience working with the production house, he couldn't hide his delight. "When I got the call from Pink Elephant, I was thrilled. This generation wants to produce something new, fresh and deliver great content, whether it's for OTT or cinema. I've known Niharika since she was a baby, so it's surreal to have her as my producer now. I'm really happy she approached me for this role, and I have to thank both Manasa and Niharika for believing in me."

Sharing his experiences on set, he fondly recalls working with veteran actors like Rajendra Prasad and Tanikella Bharani. He didn't have sequences with Tanikella Bharani, he confessed. "Working with Rajendra Prasad was amazing. He's seen me in my father's films, so acting alongside him was special. He joked, 'Finally, I get to act with you!' Tanikella Bharani was equally wonderful, though I didn't have many scenes with him. The ensemble cast, including Charan Peri, Akanksha Singh, and Ritika Singh, were fantastic co-stars, making the experience all the more memorable."

With the rise of regional content on OTT platforms, *Bench Life* is poised to resonate with viewers across the world. He shared an anecdote about a recent experience in Dallas, where people were eagerly waiting for the show's release. "I was shocked when people in Dallas told me they were waiting for *Bench Life*. They said they follow all the latest news about Telugu shows. It's heartening to know that this story, which is so relatable to anyone working in IT or facing a bench period, has global appeal. It's a refreshing change from the usual thriller or horror genres that dominate streaming platforms."

In *Bench Life*, Vaibhav Reddy doesn't just bring his comedic chops to the table. He delivers a character that is both humorous and human, a reflection of the mundane yet meaningful moments we all encounter in our lives. With his return to Telugu cinema after ten years, he is ready to reconnect with audiences, offering them a series that is sure to evoke both laughter and introspection.

## Jr NTR compliments Janhvi on her work

Jr NTR and director Koratala Siva have joined hands once again after their successful venture *Janatha Garage*, for their upcoming film *Devara*. The film will be released on September 27 and the team has started its promotions in Mumbai.

Apart from Telugu, it is also releasing in Hindi, Tamil and Malayalam. Janhvi Kapoor is the female lead, while Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan is playing the antagonist in this film.

In one of the promotional videos, popular director Sandeep Reddy Vanga interviewed Jr NTR, Saif, Janhvi and Koratala Siva. Jr NTR talks about the film and also praises Janhvi Kapoor for her performance.

When Sandeep asked Janhvi about the language and how she coped with it, she was supposed to answer the question, but Jr NTR intervened and gave an answer for it. "She is a fantastic performer and a very talented person. Though she comes from Bollywood, the way she rendered her dialogues is superb and I was shocked," said Jr NTR about Janhvi Kapoor.

The actor said that the audience is immersed into the story within 15 minutes after the film starts. He also praises Saif Ali Khan for his acting. "His acting on *Omkara* is superb and in my opinion, Saif Ali Khan's brilliance has not yet been utilised by anyone," said Jr NTR.

The actor specifically mentioned an action sequence, which they did for nearly 35 days in the water. "This is a complete action drama and for an action sequence we have created a pool and special sets. We nearly spent 35 days in the water for an action episode and that's going to be the highlight of the film," said Jr NTR.



## LAGGAM LOCKS RELEASE DATE!

Actor Sai Ronak has starred in recent films, but he has yet to find success. Currently, the actor is in the process of creating a movie called *Laggam*. The producers revealed that the film will be released on October 18. Pragna Nagra has been cast as the female lead in this production. Established actors such as Rajendra Prasad, Rohini and LB Sriram are also portraying significant characters in the film.

Ramesh Cheppala wrote and directed the film, which was produced by Venugopal Reddy. Taking place in Telangana, the Telugu movie *Laggam* is anticipated to strike a chord with viewers in both Telugu-speaking regions. The audience has responded positively to the newly released songs and teaser from the film. Producer Venugopal Reddy stressed that the movie effectively showcases an engaging plot, melodious soundtrack, and touching emotional and family themes. Renowned actor Rajendra Prasad stated that *Laggam* is a film suitable for all age groups and will be enjoyed by everyone.

## Director Kranthi Madhav is back

Director Kranthi Madhav established himself as a thoughtful filmmaker through his first movie, *Onamalu*. The movie received glowing reviews and praised director Kranthi Madhav. His upcoming movie *Malli Malli Idi Pani Roju* has also captured the hearts of numerous individuals. Nithya Menen and Shanwanand are the main actors, with Nithya Menen winning the Filmfare Award for Best Actress in this movie. Released in 2015, Kranthi Madhav is known as a director who has a lot of emotions and sensibility. Subsequently, the director experienced a decline in popularity with movies such as *Ungarala Rambabu* (2017) and *World Famous Lover* (2020). The most recent movie, starring Vijay Deverakonda, was a huge failure. After a

hiatus of four years, the director revealed a new project that will be overseen by Ganta Karthik Reddy. Kranthi Madhav has developed an interesting topic for his new movie, a story about growing up that was influenced by actual occurrences. Named *DGL*, the movie's poster showcases the main character in a unique position, raising his shirt from behind. He is shown standing on a railroad track at Kazipet Junction, with trains moving on various tracks around him. The sign says: Beginning of the journey. Filming for the movie *DGL* commences in November 2024. The movie's main cast and crew members will be disclosed shortly.

## Dasara, Baby and Hi Nanna sweep SIIMA awards



Several South Indian celebrities were present at the South Indian International Movie Awards (SIIMA) 2024, which took place in Dubai. During the two-day event, awards were announced for Telugu and Kannada films of 2023 on the first day. Nani won the Best Actor award for his role in the movie *Dasara* and Keerthy Suresh was awarded Best Actress for her performance in the same film. The film *Bhagavanth Kesari*, directed by Anil Ravipudi and starring Nandamuri Balakrishna, received the Best Film award. Srikanth Odela, the director of the film *Dasara*, was awarded the Best Director prize.

Many Telugu producers, directors, and actors attended the awards ceremony held in Dubai. Nani was presented with the Best Actor award by Vijay Deverakonda, while Keerthy Suresh was honoured with the Best Actress award by producer TG Vishwaprasad.

Anand Deverakonda received the Best Actor Award (Critics) for his role in *Baby*, with Vaishnavi Chaitanya, the film's leading actress, winning the Best Debutant award. The Best Director Award (Critics) was won by Sai Rajesh, who directed *Baby*. Despite



receiving only a few awards, the movie *Hi Nanna* still managed to garner some recognition. Actress Mrunal Thakur was awarded Best Actress (critics), with young co-star Kiara Khanna winning Best Supporting Actress for the film. Shouryav, the director of *Hi Nanna*, was honoured with the Best Debutant Director Award at SIIMA 2024.

Deekshith Shetty, who had a significant part in *Dasara*, was honoured with the Best Supporting Actor (Male) accolade. Sangeeth Sobhan, who made his debut as the main actor in *MAD*, received the Best Debutant award, while Vishnu, who had a significant role in the film, was honoured with the Best Comedian Award. Abdul Wahab, the composer behind



*Hi Nanna*, was awarded the Best Music Director Award.

At the event, several actresses like Neha Shetty, Shanvi Srivatsava, Shriya, Faria Abdullah and more showcased their performances. The Kannada Film Awards were also unveiled on the opening day.

Nani was observed wearing black clothes while observing *Ayyappa*

*Deeksha*. Rana Daggubati and Nani appear to have a good rapport at the event. Vijay Deverakonda praised Nani and remembered how Nani supported him while they were working together on the movie *Evade Subramanyam*. "I respect Nani a lot and I love him. In the initial days of my career, Nani helped me a lot. From now onwards, I will call him Nani Anna," said Vijay Deverakonda at the event about Nani. Vijay also gave the Best Actor (Critics) award to his brother Anand Deverakonda. *Hi Nanna* won a total of five awards, while *Dasara* won four awards. Interestingly, Nani is playing the lead actor in both of these films.



# Khawaja relishes his on-field battles with Ashwin

PTI ■ MELBOURNE,

Australian opener Usman Khawaja has over the years relished his on-field battles with star Indian spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, who according to the southpaw is a man who always has a plan up his sleeve.

Ashwin (39 wickets) is the third-highest wicket-taker among Indian bowlers in Test matches in Australia, only behind Anil Kumble (49) and Kapil Dev (51) apart from topping the charts across all bilateral series (home and away) with 114 scalps which also includes seven five-for. "Ravi is a very good bowler. He is very strategic. He always has a plan," Khawaja told Star Sports.

"He tries to figure it out and stay ahead of the game, which I respect. I respect his cricketing brain. It's always cool to play against him, and I look forward to the challenge," he was all praise for Ashwin's tactical nous. This will be Ashwin's fifth Test tour of Australia, having been part of the sides that



played in 2011-12, 2014-15, 2018-19 and 2020-21 although on last two tours, he had injury issues.

Don't think India are favourites: Travis Head. Meanwhile, India's current nemesis Travis Head had

asserted that despite visiting team's dominance during last two Test series, he does not feel the visitors will be the

'favourites' this time around. "I don't feel like they're my favourite. I just feel like we play them enough, play them

(a) lot," he told Star Sports.

"And, I guess the last couple of years I've been in nice form. So yeah, being able to play well, it's always nice.

"It's not hard to get up for the contest. It's hugely competitive. Yeah, it's easier to get up for the game. So, I wouldn't say they're my favourite."

However, the 30-year-old warned that Rohit Sharma and Co. Will be a difficult lot to compete against and the Aussies need to be at their best, especially in a couple of games.

"They're extremely difficult but it's been nice to play well in a couple of games and looking forward to preparing well and being ready to go. And hopefully, I can contribute to what's a successful summer for us," he added.

The two teams will lock horns in the upcoming five-Test series in Australia starting November 22, as India defends the Border-Gavaskar Trophy it has won over past four bilateral engagements (home and away).



# Ramkumar-Balaji pair loses must win doubles

PTI ■ STOCKHOLM

Ramkumar Ramanathan and N Sriram Balaji could play well only in patches to lose the do-or-die doubles against Andre Goransson and Filip Bergevi as India succumbed to Sweden in the Davis Cup World Group I tie after conceding an unassailable 0-3 lead, here Sunday.

After losing both the singles on Saturday, India needed to win the third rubber to stay alive in the tie but Ramkumar and Balaji went down 3-6 4-6 in one hour and 19 minutes.

India's dismal record against Sweden in the Davis Cup continued as it was the team's sixth defeat in as many ties. The reverse singles have been rendered inconsequential.

India will now compete next year in Play-offs to keep place in World Group I. The Indian pair had its first chance in game three in the opening set on Goransson's serve. Balaji and Ramkumar pocketed four straight points to earn a breakpoint but the home team averted the danger.

Ramkumar was, however, broken in the next game and Bergevi held his own to zoom to a commanding 5-2 lead. Balaji served to stay in the set and managed to hold. The home team comfortably sealed the opening set with

Bergevi holding at love. In the second set, Ramkumar had a fiery start, holding at love.

Bergevi though surprisingly struggled with his first serve as he committed two double faults to be at 30-all. Sensing a chance, Ramkumar attacked Bergevi's second serve but could respond only with a feeble shot on the Swede's widish cross court return. Standing at the net, it was an easy put away for Goransson.

Balaji was under pressure in the next game. Serving at deuce, he fired an ace but Goransson hit a backhand volley winner on the next point to again make it deuce. The Indians soaked the pressure and eventually saved the game.

Balaji faced the heat again in the seventh game with both Swedish players finding service return winners with attacking shots.

Goransson earned a break chance with a volley winner from the net. Ramkumar hit a powerful forehand return following an exciting rally on that break point and later the Indians saved one more but on the third breakpoint Balaji netted a return. The lead stayed with the home team that served out the match in the 10th game. Ramkumar's causal forehand return landed outside the lines on the match point.

# Duleep Trophy: Bhui makes hundred in defeat against India A



PTI ■ ANANTAPUR

Ricky Bhui delayed the inevitable with a stubborn hundred, but spinners Shams Mulani and Tanush Kotian eventually brought India D to their knees as India A walked away with a 186-run win in the Duleep Trophy match here on Sunday. Bhui, starting from overnight 44, made 113 (195b, 14x4, 3x6) but India D, overnight 62, were bundled out for 301, chasing 488.

The victory enabled India A to stay in contention for the title with 6 points. But they will have to get a favourable result against table-toppers India C (9 points) in their next match here from September 19.

India D, out of title race after two successive defeats, will be up against second-placed India B, who have 7 points. On a pitch that gave copious assistance to the spinners, the 'D' batters needed to show tremendous application to hang around. But apart from Bhui none really showed the stomach for a fight.

Bhui's second-wicket stand with Yash Dubey (37) was worth 100 runs but Dubey got run out, and in his next over Mulani castled Devdutt Padikkal to push India D to 105 for three.

They managed to stitch two useful stands for two subsequent wickets - a 53 between Bhui and skipper Shreyas Iyer (41, 55b, 8x4) and a 62 between Bhui and Sanju Samson (40, 45b, 3x4, 3x6).

But their stands were more about aggression, and the approach was fraught with danger on a pitch where spinners called the shots.

Both Shreyas and Samson were cleaned up by Mulani, who was later adjudged player of the match. A sharply turned one accounted for Shreyas while Samson failed to connect a pull as the ball disturbed the timber.

While wickets were tumbling at constantly at the other end, Bhui was a picture of confidence and brought up his century in 170 balls.

Then off-spinner Tanush Kotian got into act, and started his demolition job by removing Saransh Jain (5), and six overs later he ousted Bhui, who holed out to Riyan Parag in the deep.

# Bangladesh arrive in Chennai, Shanto confident of good show

PTI ■ CHENNAI

A confident Bangladesh team arrived in India on Sunday for two Test matches and three T20Is with visiting skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto hoping that their historic 2-0 series win in Pakistan recently would hold them in good stead against the formidable hosts in the coming weeks.

The Bangladesh squad landed in Chennai, the venue for the opening Test beginning on September 19, on Sunday afternoon.

"It's definitely going to be a very challenging series for us," Shanto was quoted as saying at the pre-departure press briefing at the Dhaka airport.

"After a good series (vs Pakistan) there is definitely an extra confidence in the team, in the people of the country. Every series is an opportunity. We will play to win both matches. The things that matter to win, the process matters... Our aim will be to do the work properly. Good results are possible if we do our job properly," the Bangladesh captain added.

While India is on top of the World Test Championship (WTC) table, the Bangladesh



skipper believed that it will all boil down to how they perform during those five days and the result can come even in the last session. "If you see the ranking, they are much ahead of us," Shanto noted. "We have been playing well lately. We have had a good series. Our aim will be to play well for five days."

"The result comes in the last session on the last day. If we play good cricket for five days, there is a chance for either team to win

in the last session," the skipper said just before boarding the flight to Chennai.

Adequate security cover for the visitors in Chennai. Usual security protocol was in place for Bangladesh team like it happens for all international teams with two police vans accompanying the team bus to the hotel.

Upon arrival at the hotel, the players were given a warm welcome as staff showered them with rose petals.

The entire team will be put on one of the floors, while armed security personnel will be present on the floor, which is a regular protocol.

The Tigers are visiting India after the tiny neighbours witnessed civil unrest for over a month. Following the students' protests last month that led to the ouster of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, there have been reports of communal clashes, with attacks on minorities, especially Hindus.



# Haryana, Karnataka, Punjab win in men National Junior Hockey Championship

PTI ■ JALANDHAR

Haryana, Karnataka and Punjab secured wins on day six of the 14th Hockey India Junior Men's National Championship here on Sunday.

Andhra Pradesh and Delhi played out a 5-5 draw. In the first match, Haryana thrashed Rajasthan 6-1. Rohit Rana (2nd minute), Sunil Maan (11th), Sahil Ruhai (17th) and Ami Khasa (60th) scored one goal each, while Navraj Singh (7th, 37th) struck a brace for Haryana.

Anurag Suthar (50th) scored the consolation goal for Rajasthan. In the second match, Karnataka also notched up a 6-1 win over Kerala

with Aryan Uthappa Mt (6th, 35th) and Sunil P B (8th, 45th) scoring a couple of goals each.

Vivek Ravi Bagade (22nd) and Dhanush Kaveriappa Ma (32nd) too scored one goal each, while in response, Anujith P (47th) scored the only goal for Kerala.

In the last match of the day, Punjab trounced Mizoram 7-1. For Punjab, captain Ujwal Singh (10th) opened the account before Harshdeep Singh (12th), Japnit Singh (15th), Om Rajnesh Saini (36th), Lovenoor Singh (40th), Jarman Singh (48th) and Abhishek Gorkhi (59th) joined him with a goal each.

In response, Akash Yadav (48th) scored the only goal for Mizoram.

# Lahiri slips to tied 12th at LIV Golf Individual Championship

PTI ■ CHICAGO

India's Anirban Lahiri went 11-over 71 in the second round and slipped to tied 12th in the 2024 LIV Golf Individual Championship here.

Lahiri carded two birdies but he also had three bogeys on the second day, and now he has a total of 2-under for 36 holes.

Lahiri began the tournament with a fine 3-under 67 that placed him inside the top-5. He had four birdies against one bogey in the opening round.

Jon Rahm entered this week's regular-season finale with a slim points margin over Joaquin Niemann.

The Legion XIII captain increased that advantage with a brilliant bogey-free 6-under 64 that now has him in position to claim two trophies after Sunday's final round at Bolingbrook Golf Club.

Rahm is at 7 under and owns a one-shot lead over Fireballs GC Captain Sergio Garcia on the leaderboard and a three-shot lead over Niemann, the Torque GC captain.

Rahm can still become Individual Champion even if he doesn't win the tournament.

Bryson DeChambeau's Crushers GC, winners last year in Chicago, have already clinched one of the three available seeds along with Rahm's Legion XIII.



The Crushers entered the final round tied for the tournament lead with Cleeks GC at 10 under and would clinch the No. 1 overall seed with a victory.

Niemann's one-shot advantage entering the day was erased in their first eight holes. Hatton was on the verge of falling out of contention, opening with a 3-over 73 and then playing the first 11 holes on Saturday at even par.

At one point late in the round, Rahm was five strokes ahead of Niemann. But Niemann fought back down the stretch with birdies in three of the final four holes to shoot a 2-under 68 and stay within striking distance.

Hatton was on the verge of falling out of contention, opening with a 3-over 73 and then playing the first 11 holes on Saturday at even par.

But then he found his game, playing the last seven holes in 5 under - a stretch that included a hole-in-one at the island green sixth hole.

First-round leader Brooks Koepka followed his opening bogey-free 8-under 62 with a 73 that included five bogeys in his first 12 holes. But he made two late birdies and finished at 5-under and solo third. Team Cleeks are in the lead.