

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**  
 The pioneer  
 Do the Owaisi brothers have Hinduphobia or not? Does Owaisi or any AIMIM MLA chant Vandematharam? Hindus participate in Peerla Panduga (Muharram) saying that they are secularists, but will Muslims take part in Vinayaka Chavithi or Dasara? Will the Owaisi brothers pray to Hindu deities or sport a Tilak on their forehead? It is not right for Asaduddin Owaisi to say that I am having Islamophobia  
 - Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Union Minister

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**Pak feeling pain watching democracy in J&K: Rajnath**

**INDIA TO CLOCK 7 PC GROWTH DESPITE HEADWINDS: DELOITTE**

**Megastar Chiranjeevi enters into Guinness WORLD RECORDS**

**DON'T MISS...**

**A Gandhian colony strives ...**

Today we can find wine shops almost everywhere and every pan shop and small grocery shop sells cigarettes and gutka to their customers. But in Pragathi Nagar near Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (JNTU), you will not find these things. Yes, you heard it right. There are no wine shops, selling cigarettes and gutka is banned and no plastic bags in shops in Pragathi Nagar ...

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**Controversy thickens as ...**

The Tirupati Laddu controversy is currently igniting tensions in the Telugu states. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's comments alleging that animal fat is used instead of ghee in the preparation of the famous Tirupati Laddu have sparked widespread outrage across Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and the entire country. Hindus, who regard this offering as highly sacred ...

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**Pak feeling pain watching ...**

Defence minister Rajnath Singh lauded the people of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday for overwhelmingly taking part in the first phase of polling in the Assembly election on September 18 and said Pakistan is feeling 'pain in its belly' watching democracy flourishing in the Union Territory after the abrogation of Article 370. The senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader accused the National Conference (NC), Congress ...

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**India, EU to begin next round ...**

Senior officials of India and the 27-nation European Union (EU) will commence the next round of talks for a proposed free trade agreement from Monday here, an official said. The agreement is aimed at further boosting bilateral trade and investments between the two regions. The two sides are negotiating a free trade agreement, an investment protection agreement and an agreement on geographical indications ...

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**BC leaders likely to float new political party**

Waiting for an appropriate time: Krishnaiah



**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**  
 Declaring that there are demands to float a political party for BCs, Rajya Sabha Member and BC Welfare Association President, R. Krishnaiah, said that they will certainly float a new party. He said that proposals for a new political party are alive and that BCs are waiting

for an appropriate time. On Sunday, an all-party and BC caste organizations conference was held in Hyderabad. Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal graduates MLC Teenmar Mallanna, senior Congress leader V. Hanumantha Rao and other leaders from BC caste organizations attended the meeting.

**An all-party and BC caste organizations conference was held in Hyderabad. Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal graduates MLC Teenmar Mallanna, senior Congress leader V. Hanumantha Rao and other leaders from BC caste organizations attended the meeting**

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**Caste census is a must: CM**

Says Modi trying to come to power fourth time through ONOE

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**  
 Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is trying to come to power a fourth time and that Modi floated the idea of ONOE for that. The Congress should be alert regarding ONOE, he said. The CM said that Mahesh Kumar Goud took charge as the TPCC president at a historical time and that there is a need to defeat Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Targeting the BRS, the CM said that it is spreading falsehood as it lost power.

**The CM said that Rahul Gandhi strongly believes that the caste census should be conducted at any cost. As per the idea of Rahul Gandhi, the government appointed a BC Commission Chairman and members**

under the leadership of Irrigation Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy to categorize SC reservations. The Committee will submit a report after thoroughly studying the Supreme

Court verdict, CM said. Addressing the CLP meeting held at a private hotel in Madhapur on Sunday, the CM said

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**Arekapudi attends CLP meeting**

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**  
 BRS MLAs who joined the Congress attended the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting held at a private hotel in Madhapur on Sunday under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Chairman Arekapudi Gandhi, Danam Nagender, Prakash Goud, Kadiam Srihari and others attended the meeting. Posting a video of

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**Yellampalli Project was completed in BRS regime**

Harish slams Ponnam claim

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**  
 BRS MLA T. Harish Rao said that it is ironic that Transport Minister Ponnam Prabhakar is boasting that the Congress completed the Yellampalli Project. Congress leaders are forgetting the fact that the BRS government completed and put into use the Yellampalli Project, which had remained a pending project due to the discriminatory policies of Congress admins in United AP. The barrage was completed only in name, but water was not filled and was not given to farmers. Many aspects of the project were left hanging in the air, he said. Speaking to the media on Sunday, Harish said that up to 148 meters of FRL land acquisition was not done. "As resettlement colonies were not completed, the project-affected villages could not be evacuated. The high-level bridge was not constructed on



Karimnagar-Manchiryalu Rajiv Road. If water reached 144 meters, the old Low-level Bridge would have been submerged. Even though the Yellampalli Barrage was completed during Congress rule, it remained unusable due to the above reasons. As soon as Telangana state came, construction of resettlement colonies was completed, compensation was paid to victims, people affected were moved to resettlement colonies, a high-level bridge on Rajiv Road

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**Ponguleti's company won contract as it qualified in open bidding: Adi Srinivas**

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**  
 Pointing out that the Raghava Company of Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy was given contracts during BRS rule also, Government Whip Adi Srinivas said that Ponguleti's company won the contract as they were qualified. Speaking to the media after the CLP meeting held at the Trident Hotel, Adi Srinivas said that Ponguleti boldly said that he would quit his minister post if BRS Working President KT Rama Rao proved his allegations. KTR could not answer the allegations made by Ponguleti. Ponguleti was a contractor before he entered politics, he said. Adi said that people don't believe KTR as he holds a press conference every day. He is misleading the public, Adi said. He said that when tenders for Rs 3516 crore were invited, how can KTR say that there was corruption involving Rs 8888 crore.

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BRS working president KT Rama Rao addressing media at Telangana Bhavan on Sunday

**AMRUT SCHEME TENDERS**

**I will take political sanyas if there is nothing illegal, challenges KTR**

Says Ponguleti is trying to fix CM in Amrut Scheme tenders

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**  
 Amrut Scheme tenders are becoming more problematic with corruption allegations being levelled against the Congress government. Reacting to Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy's challenge, BRS Working President KT Rama Rao, who stirred up a hornets' nest alleging that corruption amounting to Rs 8,888 crore took place while inviting tenders for the Amrut Scheme, said that he is ready to give up politics if no illegal acts have been committed while inviting Amrut Scheme tenders. Speaking to the media on Sunday, KTR said that it seems that Ponguleti is trying to fix the CM in this issue. He said that there is no need for Ponguleti to resign, however, Revanth has to resign. "Ponguleti should say what else a wife's brother is called other than brother-in-law. Ponguleti held a press conference in a hurry after I mentioned the sections of the

Prevention of Corruption Act along with the office of profit. Ponguleti should know that this law is applicable whether the corruption amounts to Rs 1,137 crore or Re 1. If Ponguleti is sincere, let's go to the HC Chief Justice. Let's present details of the tenders along with previous files. After his fair judge-

ment, if what I said was a lie, I would not resign, but I would take political sanyas. Or let's go to the Central Vigilance Commission or any other agency of the Centre," KTR said. He said the Chief Minister and Ponguleti know that there is corruption in these tenders.

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**'Centre will respond if KTR complains'**

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**  
 Reacting to the allegations of BRS Working President KT Rama Rao that corruption took place in Amrut Scheme tenders, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar said that the Centre will order a probe if KTR complains to the Centre. Speaking to the media at Karimnagar on Sunday, Sanjay

said that there is a secret deal between the BRS and the Congress. The BRS will merge with the Congress any day. KTR has been making allegations instead of facing the BJP, Sanjay said. He said that the BJP is not against HYDRDAA, however, the Congress government should take action against BRS leaders as most encroachments took place during BRS rule.

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**AP appoints SIT to probe Tirumala ghee adulteration charges**

**PNS ■ AMARAVATI**  
 Hitting out at the previous YSRCP government, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday alleged that several procedures to procure ghee at Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) were altered during the earlier regime, prompting him to form a special investigation team (SIT) to

probe the irregularities. He also alleged that appointments to the TTD board became like "gambling" during the previous government and there were instances of appointing people who had no faith and giving preferences to non-Hindus on the board. Addressing a press conference at his Undavalli residence, the CM said crores of

Hindus' sentiments were hurt after the revelations with regard to laddus that animal fats were allegedly used to make them and added that they are enraged. An IG level or above officer manned SIT will be formed. It will probe all the reasons

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**Quad grouping not against anyone: Modi**

**PNS ■ WILMINGTON (US)**  
 Top leaders of Quad unveiled major steps to expand maritime security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and called for lasting peace in Ukraine with Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserting that the grouping is for a rules-based global order and respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations. In the annual Quad summit hosted by outgoing US President Joe Biden at his hometown state of Delaware, the leaders, without directly naming China, expressed serious concern over the situation in the East and South China Seas and condemned the "dangerous" use of coast guard and maritime militia vessels. Besides Modi and Biden, the fourth in-person summit was

**Leaders unveil new maritime security steps**



attended by Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and his Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese. Amid growing global concerns over Chinese assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific, the Quad leaders strongly opposed any "destabilising or unilateral" actions that seek to change the status quo by force or coercion.

**Awkward: Biden fumbles again while introducing Modi**

**PNS ■ WASHINGTON**  
 In yet another gaffe, US President Joe Biden experienced an embarrassing moment during a Quad event in Wilmington, Delaware, when he struggled to introduce Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This brief confusion, captured on camera, has sparked comments on social media. After finishing his speech at the Cancer Moonshot event on Saturday, Biden, 81, appeared to have forgotten the name of the next leader who was going to speak -- and asked his staffers.

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**Hail Kings and Queens of 64 Squares**

India achieves a massive feat after winning a rare double gold at the Chess Olympiad 2024

**PNS ■ BUDAPEST**  
 India on Sunday scripted history in the Chess Olympiad as its men's and women's teams clinched their maiden titles in a rare clean sweep of gold medals after beating their respective opponents in the final round here. The Indian men's team defeated Slovenia 3.5-0.5 while their women counterparts also crushed Azerbaijan with an identical margin in the 11th and final round in the 45th edition of the Chess Olympiad that concluded here. Only China and erstwhile Soviet Union had won both men's and women's gold medals in the same



edition of the Chess Olympiad. Indian men had earlier won two bronze medals -- in 2014 and 2022 -- in the tournament, while the women had bagged a bronze in the 2022 edition held in Chennai. The 18-year-old World Championship challenger D



Gukesh and 21-year-old Arjun Erigaisi yet again delivered in key games while R Praggnanandhaa, 19, regained form too in the final round to ensure a smooth victory for India in the open section.

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# Monday Mirchi

## YOUNG CONGRESS POLITICIANS' RISE PUTS PRESSURE ON BUREAUCRATS AMID FAMILY INFLUENCE

Congress has introduced a fresh wave of young politicians, many of whom are the children of seasoned political stalwarts. While these young leaders work to establish themselves, it's becoming increasingly clear that the real pressure is falling on the state's bureaucrats. The IAS & IPS officers, and other government officials find themselves caught between two sets of instructions — from the eager, sometimes reluctant, new generation and their experienced parents, who are determined to guide their success. Names like Mynampally Hanumanth Rao, Kuduru Jana Reddy, and Jhansi Reddy are frequently mentioned in this scenario, who are playing a pivotal role behind the scenes. While some of these young politicians are making efforts to learn and grow, others are more hesitant, leaving the bureaucrats juggling multiple expectations. Apart from family guidance, whispers suggest occasional instructions from other influential figures in the political arena, adding to the pressure on these officers. In the midst of all this, the babus have become the scapegoats, forced to navigate a complex web of political ambitions, family influence, and administrative duties — all while keeping their heads above water in an increasingly challenging environment.

## KCR THROWS A SHADE AT TRANSFERS

Adding fuel to the already buzzing speculation, KCR is believed to have voiced strong opinions about the frequent transfers happening within the administration. A little bird told us that, he pointed out that regular reshuffling of officers indicates a lack of grip on the administration, a sign that something is amiss in the corridors of power. KCR is learned to have said that some officers, kept on the loop-line, were elevated simply to settle political scores. Certain officers remained in loopline not because of politics, but due to their lack of capability, he said. His remark sends a clear message to those trying to climb the ladder without merit. In a rather direct and noteworthy mention, KCR is reported to have explicitly cited examples of the frequent changes in the transfer of key positions, particularly the Commissioners of Rachakonda and Hyderabad. Whatever it is, the political drama behind these transfers seems far from over, and people can't stop talking about what might happen next.

## HEALTH DEPARTMENT TRANSFERS FUEL DATA LEAKS BENEFITING BRS

Whispers are growing louder about the recent spate of transfers in the health department, which insiders claim are leading to critical data leaks that may be benefiting the BRS. With each transfer, there seems to be someone left disgruntled, and this frustration is reportedly playing out in dangerous ways. The most shocking instance came to light with the tragic deaths of mothers and babies at Gandhi Hospital, where a confidential data leak exposed the incident. A little bird told us that this leak was orchestrated by a group of data entry operators, reportedly working in collusion with doctors and nurses who were transferred from their posts. These officials, feeling wronged by their sudden transfers, are said to be retaliating by releasing sensitive information. The fallout from these leaks is starting to ripple through the system, with fingers pointed at BRS for possibly taking advantage of the situation. The growing sense of unease in the health department, coupled with the internal politics surrounding transfers, has made the atmosphere increasingly tense. Many now wonder if the data leaks will continue, further destabilizing the department and feeding into the larger political narrative.

## FOUR IPS OFFICERS STIR RUMORS OF TRANSFER

The corridors of power are buzzing with whispers about the recent developments in the state's police force. Three women IPS officers, from the batches of 2017, 2012, and 2019, along with one male officer, have caught everyone's attention thanks to a media report in prominent telugu publication. One of them has even earned the playful nickname "Villa Rani" — though no one's saying why just yet. Rumours are abuzz that these officers are either not towing the expected line or may be quietly seeking a transfer. With the opposition already critical of the frequent shuffling in the police force, some insiders are speculating this might be the prelude to another round of reshuffles. One source in the know hinted that this might be linked to a much larger political chess game,

with some officers simply waiting for the right moment to make their moves. Adding to the intrigue, Harish Rao's recent comment, "Yatha Raja, Tatha Police," has left many wondering if he's throwing shade on the current leadership or just commenting on the state of the force. As the political landscape heats up, one can't help but think this story is just beginning to unfold.

## IAS OFFICERS GRUMBLE OVER MIDDLE LEVEL OFFICERS POSTING

The mood in the corridors of the Andhra Pradesh Secretariat has been anything but cheerful after the recent order in adjustment of middle-level officers. While it may appear as just another reshuffle of middle-level officers on paper, insiders are buzzing about how the IAS are far from happy. The order, which shifted key posts from the Industries and Commerce Department to the Infrastructure and Investment Department, among others, has left officers disgruntled. Rumor has it that the transfers, aimed at accommodating certain individuals, have upset the delicate balance of the bureaucracy. In particular, the name of B.V. Vara Prasad, who has been reassigned as Deputy Secretary, has sparked speculation about favoritism. What's more, some officers are quietly grumbling about how these sudden adjustments have thrown a wrench in their long-term plans. As the dust settles, whispers suggest that this G.O. is more than just a routine — it's part of a larger game being played behind the scenes.

## A NEW ERA FOR TTD WITH SYAMALA RAO AT THE HELM

Word on the street is that Chandrababu Naidu, fresh off his election win, isn't wasting any time stirring things up in Tirupati. His first order of business? Cleaning house at the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), and it looks like he's picked just the man for the job—J. Syamala Rao, a senior IAS officer who's quietly built a reputation for getting things done without making much noise. People are already buzzing about how Syamala Rao's calm demeanor is exactly what TTD needs, especially with all the whispers of irregularities in the air. And don't be fooled by his quiet approach. From his early days in Assam to his stint as Vizag Collector, he's proven time and again that he knows how to leave a mark. Remember the Jeeva Dhara medical stores in Vizag? He practically slashed medicine prices, and the locals still can't stop talking about it. A hero in disguise, some say! And who could forget his time at the helm of the Hyderabad Metro Water Board? Talk around town is that his reforms there were nothing short of transformative. If that's anything to go by, TTD is in for a serious shake-up. Insiders are whispering that Syamala Rao's been handed the task of unearthing skeletons from the previous administration, and knowing his track record, he's probably already found a few! With a portfolio as glittering as his, from heading the Commercial Taxes Department to his days as Principal Secretary in Education, Naidu's choice for TTD looks like a masterpiece. All eyes are now on Syamala Rao to see how he'll handle this holy mission. The temple town's grapevine is alive with speculation, and it seems everyone's waiting to see what he'll uncover next.

## TESTING TIMES FOR IPS TRIO

Whispers in the bureaucratic corridors are getting louder as three senior IPS officers, once at the pinnacle of law enforcement, now find themselves entangled in legal drama. P.S.R. Anjaneyulu, Kanti Rana Tata, and Vishal Gunni, all prominent names in Andhra Pradesh's police circles, are now scrambling to protect themselves from the very system they upheld. The NDA government has slapped suspensions on the trio, citing harassment allegations involving Mumbai-based actor Kadambari Jethwani. And it's causing quite the stir! Little bird said that the officers aren't taking this lying down. In fact, they're prepping for a legal battle, gearing up to challenge their suspension before the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT). Their argument? That they've been dragged into a controversy without any solid investigation backing the claims. Now, here's where it gets interesting. Insiders are buzzing with rumors that Vishal Gunni, one of the key figures in the actress's arrest, might just flip and turn approver. Everyone's eyes are glued to see how this courtroom drama plays out—will the officers clear their names, or is there more to the story than meets the eye? With so much at stake, this saga is far from over. Expect more revelations as the trio fights to reclaim their reputations.

--Yours truly

## US hands over 297 antiquities smuggled out of India



### PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The US has handed over to India 297 antiquities, which were smuggled out of the country, during the ongoing visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, an official statement said on Sunday. Official sources said illicit trafficking of cultural property is a longstanding issue that has affected many cultures and countries throughout history, and India has been particularly hit. Modi said on X, "Deepening cultural connect and strengthening the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural properties. I am extremely grateful to President Biden and the US Government for ensuring the return of 297 invaluable antiquities to India."

He thanked President Joe Biden for his support in the return of these artefacts. He noted that these objects were

not just part of India's historical material culture, but formed the inner core of its civilisation and consciousness, the statement said.

With this, the total number of ancient items recovered by India since 2014 has gone to 640, officials said, adding the number returned from the USA alone will be 578. This is the maximum number of cultural artefacts returned by any country to India.

Some of the notable antiquities handed over to India include an 'apsara' in sandstone from central India belonging to 10-11th century CE, a Jain Tirthankar in bronze belonging to 15-16th century CE, terracotta vase from eastern India belonging to 3-4th century CE, and a stone sculpture from South India belonging to 1st century BCE-1st century CE.

## Laddu row unfortunate: Jagga

### PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Tirupati Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple laddu controversy is unfortunate, TPCC Working President T. Jagga Reddy said.

In a statement released on Sunday, Jagga Reddy said that Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu is a visionary. I don't understand why such a person issued a statement that left many devotees worried.

He said former CM Jagan had said that if the laddu was adulterated it should be investigated. Jagga said that devotees abroad are now worried about whether they should eat the laddu or not.

## Jupally flags off motorbike rally to Buddhavanam

### PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Tourism and Culture Jupally Krishna Rao flagged off the "Ride to Nirvana," a 200-motorbike rally to Buddhavanam, a Buddhist heritage theme park developed at Nagarjunasagar by the Telangana Tourism Development Corporation. The event started on Sunday from the Plaza Hotel, Greenlands.

Addressing the Hyderabad Bike Riders, Jupally highlighted that Telangana, known as the Heart of Deccan, has many tourist destinations. The government aims to promote both nature and culture-based

## Let's work without betraying public: Mahesh

### PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud said that he will consider the TPCC president post as a responsibility and that he believes that collective responsibility is necessary to take the party forward.

He said that he will always be available to Congress activists and that he will function as a coordinator between the party and the government.

The TPCC President said that he and the CM are very close. "Let's work without



betraying the trust the people have reposed in us," he said.

Attending the CLP meeting on Sunday, Mahesh Kumar Goud said that Congress activists worked hard and brought the party to power. The party should win in local body elections too. District in-charge ministers have more responsibility. The party must win 90 per cent of the seats in local bodies. The government funds many welfare programmes for the people. He said he would mobilize Congress activists and take government programmes to the people.

## SCCL workers got bogus bonus: KTR

### PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao said that the Congress government did not give SCCL workers a Dussehra bonus but a bogus bonus. The Congress government is robbing workers of their hard work. During this festival season, the government is hitting the belly of the working class. The profit bonus is bogus. Every SCCL worker has lost Rs 1.80 lakh, KTR said.

Speaking to the media on Sunday, KTR said that out of the net profit of Rs 4701 crore a fair share of 33 per cent should be Rs 1551 crores. Each worker should get Rs 3.70 lakh. However, only Rs 796 crore is being distributed to workers, he said.

"We have to give a share of the total profits. Otherwise, we have to admit that we are giving only 16.9%. But don't lie about the profit share of SCCL workers by saying 33%. During the 10 years of Congress rule, the workers got only Rs 365 crore as share of profits. But

when the BRS was in power, Rs 2780 crore was given to SCCL workers in the form of shares. SCCL has made remarkable progress in the last 10 years when the BRS government was in power. SCCL workers in United AP were never given more than 10 or 15 per cent of company profits. After our government came, we gave a share of 32% to workers. If the profit share was Rs 17,000 when we came to power, it became Rs 1,70,000 after we took over," KTR said.

## PIL in SC seeks SIT probe into Tirupati laddu row

### PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A public interest litigation (PIL) matter has been filed in the Supreme Court, seeking a probe by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) into the alleged use of animal fat in Tirupati laddus.

The petition filed by Surjit Singh Yadav, a farmer and the president of the Hindu Sena, has contended that the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), serving 'laddu prasadam' prepared using animal fat instead of ghee to devotees at the Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple, has ridiculed the Hindu religion and outraged the sentiments of Hindus.

## Priyanka to unveil Rajiv's statue at Uppal Stadium on Oct 12

### PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Senior Congress leader V. Hanumanth Rao said that it is 'Rajiv Gandhi's reforms' that are being implemented in the country.

Former PCC President VH and State AICC in-charge Secretary Kanchipuram MP Viswanathan said that the statue of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi will be unveiled on October 12 at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Uppal, Hyderabad.

Both leaders inspected the arrangements being made on the stadium premises and said that Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi will attend the unveiling function.

Hanumanth said that he had asked Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to invite



Priyanka Gandhi. He said the Congress played an important part in constructing the international cricket stadium in Uppal.

## Marxist leader Anura wins Sri Lanka's presidential election

### PNS ■ COLOMBO

Marxist leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake on Sunday was declared winner of the Sri Lankan presidential election by the country's Election Commission after an unprecedented second round of counting of votes.

Dissanayake, 56, the leader of the Marxist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna party's broader front National People's Power (NPP), defeated his closest rival Jajath Premadasa of Samagi Janya Balawegaya (SJB).

Incumbent president Ranil Wickremesinghe was eliminated in the first round after he failed to become within the top two in the vote list.

NPP said Dissanayake will take oath on Monday. He will be the 9th president of the

island nation. After being defeated in the election, Wickremesinghe bid an emotional farewell to his 26-month tenure, marking the end of his presidency.

Addressing president-elect Dissanayake in a statement, the 75-year-old outgoing president said, "President Anura Dissanayake, I am handing over to your care the lovable child of Sri Lanka."

He said that over the last two years he has safely carried the Sri Lanka child on the vine bridge, and "I wish that under your care as the new president, the child is carried safely to the end of his destination".

The election on Saturday was the first to be held since mass protests unseated Gotabaya Rajapaksa in 2022 after the country suffered an economic crisis.



## Zareen visits Shabbir, thanks him for DSP post

### PNS ■ HYDERABAD

World Boxing Champion and Olympic athlete Nikhat Zareen, accompanied by her parents, paid a courtesy visit to Telangana Government Advisor Mohammed Ali Shabbir at his residence in Jubilee Hills on Sunday.

Zareen expressed her gratitude to Shabbir Ali for his efforts in securing her appointment as Deputy Superintendent of Police (Special Police) in Telangana, a position she recently assumed.

During the interaction, Mohammed Ali Shabbir outlined Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's vision for the future of sports in the State.

He announced that a sports university would be established in the next academic year to produce Olympic-level athletes. He said international coaches would be brought in to train aspiring athletes and develop a world-class sports ecosystem.

Shabbir Ali praised CM Revanth Reddy for demanding the Centre to bid for 2036 Summer Olympics and host the event in Hyderabad.

TODAY ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha
Tithi: Shashthi, Saptami
Nakshatram: Rohini, Mrigashirsha
Rahukalam: 7:38 AM to 9:08 AM
Yamagandam: 10:38 AM to 12:08 PM
Varjyam: 03:40 AM to 05:15 AM
Gulika: 1:38 PM to 3:08 PM
Amritakalam: 07:02 PM to 08:35 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:44 AM to 12:32 PM
HYDERABAD WEATHER
Forecast: Thundershowers
Temp: 30°
Humidity: 78%
Sunrise: 6:05 AM
Sunset: 6:11 PM
Updated: September 22, 2024 5:00 PM

## Pregnant workers receive vital health awareness at Ismaili Civic Camp

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

A group of pregnant construction workers, many six months along and yet to see a doctor, gained crucial health awareness at a free medical camp organised by Ismaili Civic India on Sunday.

These women, mostly migrants from states like Odisha, Bihar, and Bengal, often lacked support from employers to seek regular check-ups at government health centres or Anganwadis.

Sameer, Secretary of the Ismaili Council for Secunderabad, explained their initiative: "We focused on bringing construction workers from various places to Kompally camp by providing transport and food because many builders overlook labourers' health, especially women." He added, "We collaborated with contractors to ensure their workers were transported, screened, fed and returned to work."

Although the women appreciated the

camp, many wished for on-site diagnostic tests. S Lakshmi, a 25-year-old worker, shared, "I didn't know about government health services. I will visit the Anganwadi or PHC for the tests the doctors recommended."

K Rekha says "We are group of women who travelled from Orissa with our husbands to work at construction sites. Most of us have complaints about body aches because we do all the work at home and then at the site. There are women who are pregnant and not gone to doctor until now. We have been given tablets for free. With awareness to take care of ourselves during pregnancy we will follow it."

Dr Nabat, Gynecologist, explained to The Pioneer, "My observations are that there are many construction working women who are pregnant. For example, a six month women has not seen a doctor until today. I feel government initiatives are still lacking because they are mostly migrated and they were saying that they will be going home towns, but I insisted that they should visit doctors."

## CM, Venkat congratulate Chiranjeevi

### PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy congratulated film actor Chiranjeevi for getting a place in the Guinness Book of World Records. The CM posted on X saying, "It is a matter of pride for Telugus that actor Chiranjeevi entered the Guinness Book of World Records. My congratulations to Chiranjeevi gaaru on this occasion." Cinematography Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said that through his performance, Chiranjeevi has acquired many fans not only in the two Telugu states but all over the world.

## Rahul urges people to visit Wayanad, revive tourism

### PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Sunday urged people to visit Wayanad and experience its beauty, help to revive tourism, rebuild livelihoods and restore its vibrancy.

He stressed that while the recent landslide tragedy affected only the Mundakkai area, it has led to a misconception that all of Wayanad has been impacted, causing a sharp drop in tourism.

"Wayanad's beauty is undisputed, but it is the compassion and kindness of its people that has always drawn me to it. Today, so many of those people who rely on tourism for their livelihood are looking to you all for help," the former

Congress chief said in a Facebook post.

"Let me assure you, Wayanad is still vibrant and welcoming, with its spirit unbroken. I urge you to visit and experience its beauty, helping to revive tourism, rebuild livelihoods, and restore its vibrancy," he said.

Earlier this month, Gandhi said it is imperative to make a concerted effort to revitalise tourism in Wayanad and encourage people to visit the area by dispelling the notion that it is a "dangerous" place in the aftermath of the recent landslides.

Gandhi had made the assertion during a virtual meeting with some Kerala Congress leaders and Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

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**CITY EVENTS**

**Mrs Mage**

Launch of New Menu at Mrs Mage

**Venue**

Hyatt Hyderabad, Gachibowli, Road No. 2, Financial District, Nanakramguda, September 24, 7.00 pm

**Vijaya Dairy collects 4.20 lakh liters of milk per day**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Vijaya Telangana Dairy collects about 4.20 lakh liters of milk per day from 6,148 milk collection centres in 32 districts, informed the Telangana Dairy Development Cooperative Federation (TGDDCF), Vijaya Dairy here on Sunday.

With the intention of providing milk to the people who are in short supply, Vijaya Telangana Dairy has raised the price of the milk to Rs 12.48 paise three times (01-02-2022, 01-09-2022 and 01-04-2023). During the intensive milk collection process, the Vijaya Telangana Dairy farmers spend a lot of money on milk collection.

Other Cooperative dairies of neighbouring states like Karnataka and Maharashtra are also affected by the milk collection process. In this way, other top dairies are buying cow milk from neighbouring states at a very low price such as Rs 26 to Rs 34 per liter, selling it at a low price and sharing the profits with their customers.

Other co-operative dairies (Nellore, Krishna, Kurnool) of Hyderabad city are selling in the name of Vijaya. Due to this, these sibling brands of Vijaya have witnessed fewer sales.

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy issued the Government Order to increase the milk collection and selling of the milk to kindergartens, schools, hospitals, jails and other facilities. Apart from that, a GO has been issued to supply ghee to all the temples in Telangana State.

Telangana Vijaya Dairy is ready to collect more milk and to prepare more dairy products, said the Chairman.

# City Pioneer



HYDERABAD | MONDAY | SEPTEMBER 23, 2024

03



The entrance arch of Pragathi Nagar near JNTU in Hyderabad

## A Gandhian colony strives for clean and healthy Hyd

**B SRINIVAS REDDY**  
srinivasred84@gmail.com  
■ HYDERABAD

Today we can find wine shops almost everywhere and every pan shop and small grocery shop sells cigarettes and gutka to their customers. But in Pragathi Nagar near Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (JNTU), you will not find these things.

Yes, you heard it right. There are no wine shops, selling cigarettes and gutka is

banned and no plastic bags in shops in Pragathi Nagar, which is located just 3 km away from the JNTU. When you cross a big lake and as you go through a huge arch, there are plenty of warning boards on the roadside.

Pragathi Nagar is the only area in the entire Hyderabad city in which not even a single wine shop is there in the entire 3 kilometer stretch. Before 2019, it was a gram panchayat, but after that it came under Nizampet municipality.

Speaking to The Pioneer, then Pragathi Nagar gram panchayat members said "Pragathi Nagar gram panchayat was formed in the year of 1997 and in 2012 we banned wine, cigarettes, plastic, gutkha and cool drinks to maintain cleanliness in area and to make it a model one." In 2019, it was brought under Nizampet municipality purview and they also enforced the same regulations as before, they said.

Praveen G, who runs a tea shop in Pragathi Nagar, said,

"We have some smoking zones in some places in the area, but selling cigarettes is banned and people are very much aware of the rules and they immediately bring to the notice of Nizampet municipality officials if anyone flouts rules and sells banned things like cigarette, gutkha and plastic."

Here, if you go to a vegetable shop, most of them will wrap vegetables in paper bags or else residents bring their own carry bags to take vegetables or groceries home. Sandeep Sharma, the station-

ary shop owner, said, "Someone came and tried to sell cigarettes long back, but immediately people informed the grama panchayat and Nizampet municipality officials and they came and seized everything. Residents are also well aware of cleanliness and hygiene. Municipality workers carry out segregation of wet and dry wastes every day without fail."

Pragathi Nagar got the ISO certification as a model village long back before it became part of the municipality.

**Two persons arrested for selling MDMA**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Excise State Task Team arrested two persons in Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) case and seized 27 grams of MDMA, a motorbike and two mobile phones from them on Sunday. On reliable information, Excise officials conducted a raid on a house at Jambagh flower market within the limits of Prohibition and Excise Station, Narayanguda and detected a case of possession and sale of MDMA. Arrested people have been identified as Sushil Kumar and Palukuri Deepak. MDMA consumers so far are identified based on online payments. Arrested persons along with contraband have been handed over to SHO of the Prohibition and Excise Station, Narayanguda for further action.

**TO PROMOTE GLOBAL DIGITAL PEACE**

## Kailash Satyarthi launches Cyber Satyagraha in Mexico

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi launched the Cyber Satyagraha movement at the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates in Mexico on Sunday. This initiative, led by tech leader Sundeep Kumar Makthala, aims to fight cyber violence, misinformation and online abuse by promoting ethical behavior and responsible use of technology.

Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's principles of non-violence, Cyber Satyagraha seeks to create a safer, more ethical digital space. Satyarthi stressed the impor-

ance of non-violent solutions in addressing today's digital challenges.

Makthala said that he plans to expand this movement globally, engaging people from all sectors - policy-makers, tech users and peace advocates. He described Cyber Satyagraha as a global movement for digital peace.

Cyber Satyagraha's mission includes conferences, digital literacy campaigns and tech challenges to promote digital peace. With Satyarthi's support, the movement aims to bring ethical practices and peace to the online world.



## No water supply in parts of city tomorrow

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) will be stopping the water supply in some parts of the city on September 24.

Interruptions will take place at Hakimpet, Golconda, Tolichowki, Langar House, Shaikpet, Jubilee Hills, Film Nagar, Madhapur, Thatti Khana, Kondapur and Gachibowli.

The Water Board said that there are leakages to the 1200 mm dia Prestressed Concrete Pipe (PSC) gravity main pipeline from Prashasan Nagar to Ayyappa Society under Krishna Phase-3 Ring Main-1, which supplies drinking water to the city. Officials are working on those leakages. Those works would be held for 24 hours from 6 am on Monday.

**SAVE DAMAGUNDAM**

## Activists intensify protest

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A large number of students and activists from across the Telugu states participated in the Save Damagundam Protest at Dharna Chowk on Sunday. They voiced concerns about the government's decision to sanction 2,900 acres of forest land to the Indian Navy for a Very Low Frequency (VLF) Radar Station, without considering the environmental damage.

The Joint Action Committee members said, "We are the owners of the nation and the Constitution." They highlighted that Damagundam forest is home to 12 lakh trees, 300 spotted deer, wolves, Nilgai, wild boar, Indian gazelles and various bird species. The committee urged the government to submit a detailed public report by scientists and environmentalists on the damage that will be caused, as 20 villages and 60,000 livelihoods are also expected to face the danger.

The committee criticised MP Konda Vishweshwar Reddy for his reckless comments made while visiting a nearby village about animals



A large number of students and activists participate in the Save Damagundam protest at Dharna Chowk on Sunday

causing problems on forests roads. They demanded a public apology from the MP, stating that animals belong to the forest, not corporate offices.

When asked, Harika, a PG student from Khammam, questioned the direction of sustainable development, claiming that major activities like naval operations are centered in coastal areas like Visakhapatnam and not on Deccan Plateau. She demanded a detailed explanation from the government, stressing that with global warming, unseasonal floods and other climate issues, it is irresponsible to sell off 2,900 acres of forest land,

leaving just one acre for people's sake. She warned that nature will strike back, possibly leading to serious crises like Covid.

Meanwhile, Suresh, a degree student from Mulugu, pointed out that with rising temperatures and unpredictable weather and cutting down trees is reckless. As a tree lover, he urged the younger generation to protect nature for future generations. He warned that continued environmental destruction could lead to catastrophic consequences and scarcity of resources, even suggesting we might need to live in space.

## World Rhinoceros Day celebrated

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

World Rhinoceros Day was celebrated at Nehru Zoological Park on Sunday with a talk at the rhino enclosure to educate visitors about rhinos. The zoo is one of the top in India for breeding the greater one-horned rhinoceros and housing five rhinoceros, 3 males and 2 females named Suraj, Saraswathi, Sai Vijay, Nanda and Prema.

Curator of Nehru Zoological Park Dr Sunil S Hiremath thanked the IOCL for supporting the zoo's conservation efforts.

A Krishna Murthy, a retired Indian Army officer, visited the zoo and donated Rs.50,000 for the adoption of an Indian Gaur for an year. He was accompanied by his daughter and grandson.



**8 ACRES OF LAND RECLAIMED**

## HYDRAA demolishes structures in three areas

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency (HYDRAA) demolished illegal structures in three places in the city and reclaimed 8 acres of land from the encroachers.

The HYDRAA said that sheds constructed for commercial operations within the Full Tank Level (FTL) and buffer zone of Kukatpally Lake or Nalla Cheruvu have been identified. Specifically, some individuals have built large sheds along the boundary of Kukatpally Lake for extensive commercial activities, such as catering businesses, which include kitchens for cooking orders. Workers associated with these activities reside on the premises. Those structures have been removed.

In the Kukatpally lake, the HYDRAA demolished 16 structures in Full Tank Level (FTL) and reclaimed 4 acres of land from the encroachers. HYDRAA Commissioner Ranganath said that all the sheds are being used for commercial purposes and all are unauthorised constructions.

"At Kukatpally Cheruvu, a shed in FTL where catering business is being run and where the caterers reside was also demolished. Residential buildings occupied by families in Kukatpally Cheruvu were left undemolished," he added.

In another area, encroachers constructed structures for the purpose of commercial operations in government land situated at Kistareddy and Patelguda of Ameenpur mandal. In Kistareddy, HYDRAA demolished three reinforced cement concrete (RCC) structures and reclaimed one acre. In Patelguda, 25 structures were demolished and three acres were reclaimed.



Ranganath said that at Ameenpur lake, the HYDRAA demolished three multi-storied buildings. These were constructed on government land. HYDRAA demolished around 27 villas owned by a builder and two others. Villas occupied by families were not demolished.

The demolition drive was carried out with the participation of officials from the Revenue, Irrigation and Town Planning departments, alongside the HYDRAA team.

In Kukatpally, a person said, "We did not receive any notice from any officials. The government should inform the people and then only they can demolish."

## Forgery case against 6 Kotak Bank officials, including MD and ex-chief

**CHITHALURI REVANTH**  
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■ HYDERABAD

The Jubilee Hills Oolice of the Hyderabad Police Commissionerate registered a forgery case against seven persons. Out of them, six accused are from the Kotak Mahindra Bank. According to the complainant, the bank officials have allegedly cheated her before 2020.

The case has been registered against former Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited chairman Prakash Apte, managing director Uday Kotak, then

Somajiguda branch manager J Pradeep Kumar, then Himayat Nagar regional manager N Prashant Kumar, then Somajiguda branch chief manager R Ramachandran, a bank officer Sudheer and an employee of ANVI Advisors Gutha Eshwar.

The case was registered under 406 (criminal breach of trust), 417 (Cheating), 420 (cheating), 468 (forgery), 477-A (False of Accounts), 506 (Criminal Intimidation) of IPC sections.

Initially, the complainant went to the police in September 2022, but the police did not reg-

ister a case against them. But finally, one month back, police registered the case after an order from the XVII Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate.

The complainant said that a few years back, the ING Vysya Bank approached her for a housing loan and sanctioned it to her. Later, that bank amalgamated with Kotak Mahindra Bank. At that time of sanctioning the loan, they took blank signed multiple sets of loan agreements and in blank papers without filling any information. The bank authorities said that they will give back the other sets but did not give.

The complainant said that the Kotak Mahindra Bank officials have committed one rate of interest and charged extra rate of interest wrongly without informing her. The authorities increased interest and tenure without her consent. They charged extra fees and penalty charges from the complainant contrary to the assurance. They were showing wrong calculations on statement of account and fraudulently charged several charges like fee, stamp, legal and even sold an insurance policy without the consent of the complainant and collected the amount from the loan.

## Keerthi Suresh opens 20<sup>th</sup> store of Mangalya Shopping Mall

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Mangalya Shopping Mall on Sunday opened its 20th store at RTC X roads. Tollywood young sensation and film star Keerthi Suresh opened the store lighting a lamp marking its inauguration.

Right from silk saris to Kanchi Silk Saris, Dharmavaram, Uppada silk saris the store has the widest range of textiles and modern designs. The store also offers modern kidswear, ethnic men's and women's wear and textiles for all family occasions including weddings.



The Mangalya Shopping Mall is an exclusive textile world, lauded Keerthi Suresh. Shopping mall directors PN Murthy, Kasam Namassivaya, Kasam Mallikarjun, Kasam Kedarinadh, Kasam Siva Prasad and Pulluru Arun

Kumar, in their address, said that the mall earned the patronage of the people of Telugu people for the past 12 years. So far, the company opened 20 stores and two more are going to be opened, one each at Narsingi and Manikonda in a week.

They hinted at spreading their business in neighbouring Karnataka too. They thanked the people of Telugu states for their continued patronage to the Mangalya textiles. The company managed to present most modern fashionable designs to the customers because it gets the textiles woven on its own looms.

## Ganja supplier, three peddlers arrested

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad city police and Hyderabad Narcotics Enforcement Wing (H-NEW) conducted joint operation along with Afzal Gunj police and arrested a ganja supplier along with three ganja peddlers here on Sunday. Police teams have seized 5 kgs of ganja, an auto-rickshaw, net cash Rs 3,400 and four mobile phones from them.

Ganja suppliers was identified as Satla Ganganna and ganja peddlers as Byagari Ravikanth (24), Byagari Niraja (45) and Byagari Ananthaiah (53). The arrested are booked under the Sections of 8(c), 20(b)(ii)(B), 27(A), 29 NDPS Act.



CM helped SCCL get enhanced share in profits: MLA

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

Peddapalli DCC president and Ramagundam MLA Raj Thakur on Sunday gave credit to Congress Party for helping the SCCL workers get more share in the SCCL profits for the year 2023-24.

He said that the Revanth Reddy government took a historic decision to provide benefit SCCL workers. The Congress government is committed to expand the SCCL commercial activities further and committed to the welfare of the SCCL workers.

The BRS leaders should stop levelling unnecessary allegations against the congress. He admonished the BRS to stop slinging mud on the Congress party which is committed to continuous development of Telangana. He said that the sacrifices made by the workers in the movement for the Telangana state. The Congress government has been striving to make the SCCL expand. However, the BRS regime had tried to neglect the SCCL and tried to close some of the coal mines. The BRS-affiliated TBGKS trade union leaders received kickbacks in Singareni in the dependent jobs issue, he alleged.

## TTD PRASADAM

# Controversy thickens as gutka sachet found in laddu

The incident saw the light of day in Telangana's Khammam district

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

The Tirupati Laddu controversy is currently igniting tensions in the Telugu states. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's comments alleging that animal fat is used instead of ghee in the preparation of the famous Tirupati Laddu have sparked widespread outrage across Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and the entire country.

Hindus, who regard this offering as highly sacred, are expressing concern over such alleged unholy practices at the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD), a revered pilgrimage site. Amid this turmoil, another shocking incident has come to light: a gutka sachet was found in the laddu. Gutka is a chewing tobacco.

This incident saw the light of day in Telangana's Khammam district. A woman, named Donthu Padmavati, residing in Karthikeya township under Gollagudem panchayat in Khammam Rural Mandal, visited the Tirumala



Laddu in which gutka sachet was found in Khammam on Sunday

Tirupati Devasthanam on September 19. After offering her prayers, she brought back the laddu as a prasadam for her relatives and neighbours. However, when she opened the prasadam on Sunday, (September 22), she was astonished to find a gutka sachet

inside the Laddu. While it is not uncommon to find ingredients like cashews, raisins, or cardamom in the sacred laddu, the appearance of a gutka shocked Padmavati. She informed her family about the incident, took a photograph, and shared it

on social media. Notably, a similar incident occurred in 2012 when a gutka was found in the laddu.

As discussions swirl around allegations of adulterated ghee being used in laddu preparation, the discovery of the gutka has become a hot topic. While it can be argued that ghee undergoes multiple tests before use, many are questioning how a gutka made its way into the laddu. It raises the critical question.

It suggests that someone might be using gutka at the preparation site. The consumption of gutka, alcohol, smoking, and meat is strictly prohibited on sacred Tirumala Hills. However, the finding of a gutka in the Laddu has led many to speculate about the integrity of those working in this globally renowned temple. Some have even raised doubts about the authenticity of the incident, suggesting it could be an orchestrated attempt to further the ongoing controversy over the alleged adulteration of ghee.



Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkat Reddy speaking to the media in Yadadri on Sunday

## Komatireddy accuses KTR of making baseless charges against CM

PNS ■ YADADRI BHUVANAGIRI

The Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) party leaders have been making unfounded allegations against Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, said Roads and Buildings Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy. He spoke to the media after performing special prayers at Sri Yadagiri Gutta Lakshminarasimha Swamy on Sunday.

He, along with Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao, Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerlaiya, and Bhuvanagiri MP Ch Kiran Kumar Reddy, visited the temple.

The Minister remarked, "the BRS party is in a state of disarray, and opposition leaders seem unable to identify their own roles." He said several MLAs and municipal chairpersons quit the party.

He alleged that BRS working president KT Rama Rao had run up debts of Rs 7 lakh crores during his tenure as Minister for Municipal Administration over a decade. He claimed that Rs 2 lakh crores had been misappropriated.

He also said that the Kaleshwaram project was a scam and stated that the Medigadda project is in disrepair.

Furthermore, he alleged that KT Rama Rao and Harish Rao are working together to prevent police officer Prabhakar Rao, who allegedly tapped the phones of opposition leaders and others when the BRS was in power, from returning to India from the US to testify in the phone tapping case. "If Prabhakar Rao comes back, they will go to jail.

The BRS party is effectively closing down, yet they continue to level accusations against our Chief Minister," he stated.

## Opposition to Navy Radar Station gathering momentum

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

The Damagundam forest area in Vikarabad is at the centre of heated discussion with people expressing concern about the potential destruction of over 12 lakh medicinal plants. The proposed establishment of a Navy radar station in the area has caused alarm among environmentalists, local residents, and the broader population of Hyderabad suburbs in Rangareddy district.

While proponents argue that the radar station is vital for national security, critics assert that Damagundam is an unsuitable location due to its environmental significance.

Damagundam forest is home to thousands of medicinal plants and is adjacent to the Anantagiri Reserve Forest, a popular tourist destination. Forests possess a unique air purification system, making it a crucial natural resource. However, the potential felling



of lakhs of medicinal plants, combined with the threat of radiation from the radar station, has sparked fears about long-term environmental problems. Environmentalists and local leaders argue that radiation from the radar could harm the health of humans, animals, and birds, and lead to the decline of Vikarabad's tourism industry.

Experts are particularly concerned about the impact of radiation. Studies have shown that even small amounts of radiation from cell phone towers can disrupt ecosystems, leading to the deaths of birds

and other wildlife. Many fear that the stronger signals emitted by the Navy radar will have even more devastating consequences. Despite reassurances from the central and state governments, many remain unconvinced.

The controversy has reached Hyderabad, just 60 km from Damagundam. There are growing fears that the radar station could negatively impact the city, which is home to a thriving IT industry and numerous multinational businesses. Environmentalists warn that radiation from the radar could pose a health risk to the city's residents.

In response, a movement has emerged to oppose the radar station. Protests have already begun, with a demonstration taking place at Indira Park's Dharna Chowk under the banner 'Save Damagundam.' The movement is gaining traction, particularly on social media.

## AITUC president claims credit for SCCL contract workers getting bonus

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

AITUC president Vasireddy Sitaramaiah has said that the State government and SCCL management agreed to give Rs 5,000 to each contract worker from the profits of the company recognising their role in the SCCL posting profits.

The AITUC mounted pressure on the SCCL management and government pleading the case of the contract workers, he added.

He was participating as the chief guest at the Contract Workers' meeting held at Bhaskar Rao Bhavan in Godavarikhani in Peddapalli district on

Sunday.

The company managed earned profits due to the untiring efforts of over 25,000 contract workers and outsourced employees who work on low wages in the company, he said.

He gave credit to the AITUC for they were getting Rs 5,000 as bonus. The TBGKS and other trade unions have been slinging mud on the AITUC to mislead the workers and to meet its selfish goals, he alleged.

The SCCL posted Rs 4000-crore profits during 2023-24. The management set aside a portion of the profits for the SCCL expansion and development and declared Rs 2,222 crore profits.

## Police rescue two farmers stuck in river

PNS ■ NALGONDA

In a dramatic turn of events at Bhimaram village under Kethepalli mandal in the district, police successfully rescued two individuals stranded in gushing waters were rescued from Musi River.

As floodwaters from Hyderabad surged, the Musi project opened its gates, causing livestock to stray into

the river. Amid chaos, Surugu Balaswamy and Bayya Gangayya found themselves stranded as the water level rapidly rose.

Acting swiftly, District Superintendent of Police Sharath Chandra Pawar, spearheaded the rescue operations. Thanks to the bravery and efficiency of the Nalgonda police, both individuals were pulled to safety.

## Sudhakar Goud warns KTR for irresponsible remarks

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The TPCC official spokesperson Bandi Sudhakar Goud has condemned the remarks of former minister and BRS working president KTR who alleged irregularities in finalising AMRUT tenders. He made baseless allegations against Chief Minister Revanth Reddy.

Sudhakar Goud on Sunday accused the BRS working president of indulging in histrionics. The BRS has the dubious distinction of benefiting the brothers-in-law and relatives.

KCR and KTR should be blamed for this. Further, he maintained that how KCR and KTR benefited their relatives was known to all, he added.

The people had rejected the BRS for ensuring benefits to the relatives at the cost of the people, he said, adding that the people did not give the BRS at least one MP seat in the Lok Sabha.

As the BRS future was bleak in Telangana, KTR was shooting his mouth off to mislead the people, he said.

The Congress regime has been solving problems of all sections of society through its Praja Palana and became dear to the people, he said.

Unable to see the popularity of Revanth Reddy among the people, KTR has been issuing cheap statements, he alleged.

As a gift to former MLA of Palair Kandala Upender Reddy, who joined the BRS, he was awarded the contract to execute Palamuru.

He urged the Chief Minister to order a comprehensive inquiry into irregularities perpetrated during the regime of KTR as municipal administration minister.



Bandi Sudhakar Goud



## South India Shopping Mall unveils 36th showroom in Kothagudem

PNS ■ KOTHAGUDEM

South India Shopping Mall opened its 36th showroom on a grand scale on Sunday. This new addition aims to meet the dynamic shopping needs and lifestyle choices of the local community. The Showroom was inaugurated by MLA Kunnamneni Sambasiva Rao. The event is graced by Seetha Mahalakshmi, Chairman of Kothagudem Municipal Corporation, K Chandra Sekhar Rao, former ZP Chairman, Banoth Govindu garu former Sarpanch, Vidhyanagar, Badavath Suguna, former Surpanch, NK Nagar and S Badavath Shanthi, former MPP, Chunchypalli were also present. The grand opening was further enhanced by the presence of renowned actresses Neha Shetty and Payal Rajput who added glamour to the occasion by lighting the inaugural lamp. Following the inauguration, Neha Shetty explored the vast collection in the mall and expressed her excitement,

stating, "I am thrilled to be a part of the South India Shopping Mall's Showroom inauguration in Kothagudem." Speaking at the exciting event, Payal Rajput expressed her long-standing connection with South India Shopping Mall, spanning many years during which she frequented their stores. Speaking to the media, Suresh Seerna, Director of South India Shopping Mall, expressed his sincere thanks to the all dignitary invitees who made this event a grand success. Later he highlighted the mall's commitment to delivering an exceptional shopping experience.

Abhinay, another director, emphasised the unique Pattu section of the store. During the press briefing, Rakesh, Director of South India Shopping Mall, announced that the new Kothagudem showroom is one of the largest and most modern fashion stores in the State, offering a wide range of men's wear, including ethnic and branded options.

## 'Govt giving priority to farmers'

PNS ■ YADADRI BHUVANAGIRI

Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao emphasised that the Telangana government is giving priority to farmers. The development of villages depends on the well-being of farmers. He made these remarks during the oath-taking ceremony of the Agricultural Market Committee held at ANR Garden in Alair on Sunday.

The event was attended by Roads and Buildings Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, Bhuvanagiri MP Ch Kiran Kumar Reddy, and Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Aileya, who administered the

oaths to the committee members.

The Minister reiterated the government's commitment to farmers, noting that Rs 7,650 crore has been deposited into farmers' accounts so far. He also mentioned that the waiver of loans for farmers up to Rs 2 lakh was fulfilled. He assured the farmers that he would address various issues in the Nalgonda district promptly and that he would participate in the foundation stone-laying ceremonies along with Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy.

Expressing gratitude to the farmers present, he announced plans to sanction agricultural warehouses for the market soon.

He highlighted that the government would provide drinking water, irrigation, and job opportunities, stating that the government is working accordingly.

Subsequently, Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy assured his commitment to resolving issues in the Alair constituency. He stated that he is aware of the problems in every village and that solutions will be implemented swiftly.

The event was also attended by Market Committee Chairman Chaitanya Mahender Reddy, Vice Chairman Pachimatla Madhar Goud, officials, and public representatives.



Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao speaking at a meeting at Alair in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district on Sunday



Bhadradri Kothagudem Collector Jitesh V Pati speaking at a meeting in Paloncha on Sunday

## Students advised to take part in games, sports

PNS ■ BHADRADRI KOTHAGUDEM

Bhadradri-Kothagudem Collector Jitesh V Pati on Sunday witnessed the sports competitions held at the mini-stadium at the Srinivasa Colony in Paloncha town and appreciated the students taking part in the event.

He advised the students to take part in sports and games events with enthusiasm and show their talent at the district and state level

events. He felt the need for their parents and teachers encouraging the students to take part in the games events.

Expressing concern over the students spending more time watching mobile phones and destroying their golden future, he wanted the students to pay attention to the academics and sports and games events.

DCMS chairman Kotwal Srinivasa Rao, Dr Yugandhar Reddy and others took part in the event.



ACROSS THE STATES

Pak feeling pain watching democracy in J&K: Rajnath

PNS ■ POONCH (J&K)

Defence minister Rajnath Singh lauded the people of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday for overwhelmingly taking part in the first phase of polling in the Assembly election on September 18 and said Pakistan is feeling 'pain in its belly' watching democracy flourishing in the Union Territory after the abrogation of Article 370.

The senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader accused the National Conference (NC), Congress and People's Democratic Party (PDP) of misleading people by talking about the restoration of Article 370 of the Constitution in their manifestoes and said these parties should stop working as 'proxies of Pakistan'.

"The first phase of the Assembly election registered more than 61 per cent polling, the highest in 30 years and surpassing the record-breaking 58 per cent polling in the Lok Sabha election. The message has



The senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader accused the National Conference (NC), Congress and People's Democratic Party (PDP) of misleading people by talking about the restoration of Article 370 of the Constitution in their manifestoes and said these parties should stop working as "proxies of Pakistan".

gone to the world that Article 370 was abrogated for the betterment of India.

"People have raised the flag of democracy so high that Pakistan is feeling pain in its belly. We do not want enmity with Pakistan as we want good relations with all our neighbours. Pakistan keeps doing unholy things against India to divert the attention of its people from its internal problems," Singh said, addressing a poll rally in support of BJP can-

dicate Choudhary Abdul Gani here.

Referring to a reported statement of Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif that his country and the NC-Congress alliance are on the same page over restoration of Article 370, Singh wondered who has given the authority to the neighbouring country to interfere in Jammu and Kashmir's internal matters.

"I want to ask my friends in the

NC, Congress and PDP, are you fighting elections as proxies of Pakistan?" he asked.

The defence minister said people in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) are distressed and want to join India.

"They are witnessing the change in Jammu and Kashmir and India's progress under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. They are considering joining India for their prosperity and they no longer want to live with them (Pakistan)," he said, adding that India has never differentiated among people on the basis of religion and considered the PoK residents as "our own".

Referring to a statement of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee -- "hum dost badal sakte hai, humsayaaye nahi (we can change friends but not neighbours)" -- Singh said if Pakistan treads the right path, India is willing to have good relations with all its neighbours. "We should not forget the words of Vajpayee," he added.

Avail services offered by Finance Ministry to boost business: FM to fisherfolks



PNS ■ CHENNAI

Urging the fishing community to avail the benefits offered through the Kisan credit card, Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday said it would help boost their trade.

At a BJP membership drive here, Sitharaman said members of the fishing community who's applications were rejected by banks and financial institutions, may approach her for redressal.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi felt the need for a separate department to address the issues related to fisheries and therefore, a dedicated department has been set up, she said in her address. "There are a lot of

schemes for the welfare of the fishermen and they can avail term loan facilities to grow their businesses." Pointing out that a dedicated Kisan Credit Card was launched by the Centre to serve farmers' community, PM Modi suggested that a similar mechanism be developed to serve those who have been traditionally engaged in ocean farming along India's coastline for several years, Sitharaman said.

"It is not only to serve the Tamil Nadu fishing community but also those who are living along India's coastline for thousands of years." She observed that women hailing from the community are also eligible to take term loans from banks and financial institutions by producing the Kisan credit card.

"Normally, to take loan from banks one has to provide security like furnishing his or her house document or jewellery. But to avail loan under the KCC, the government will give you guarantee on your behalf, so that you may get the services from banks and financial institutions," she said.

Cong appoints Uday Bhanu Chib as new IYC president



The Congress on Sunday appointed Uday Bhanu Chib as the president of the Indian Youth Congress (IYC), replacing Srinivas B V. Srinivas B V had held the post for over five years and his tenure was seen as an eventful one for IYC with his relief work during the Covid pandemic being a major talking point in the media. Chib was serving as the general secretary of IYC and is a former president of the Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Youth Congress. Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge has appointed Uday Bhanu Chib as the president of the Indian Youth Congress with immediate effect, a party statement said. The party appreciates the contributions of the outgoing president Srinivas B V, it added. On Friday, Chib had posted a picture with Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, and wrote, "A memorable meet with my leader @RahulGandhi ji! Your struggle and perseverance for social justice is an inspiration to all of us."



Man dies slipping into well, 2 dead trying to save him

A 40-year-old man died after slipping to a well, while two more lost their lives trying to save him, police said as they suspect some poisonous gas inside the well led to their deaths. The incident occurred in Baragaan of Bisanda area when Anil Patel (40) slipped into a well in his field and became unconscious, Banda Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Shivraj told PTI. Sandeep Verma (19) and Bala Verma (21) went inside the well to rescue Patel but they also fell unconscious following which villagers informed police and administrative officials, Shivraj said. He said that the trio was taken out of the well and sent to Medical College of Banda for treatment where doctors declared them dead. Prima facie it appears that there was poisonous gas in the muddy well which led to their deaths, the ASP said. The post mortem of the bodies is being done and it will reveal the actual cause of death, he added.

PARTIALLY-BUILT' RAM TEMPLE Shankaracharya of Jyotirmath refrains from paying obeisance

PNS ■ AYODHYA (UP)

Shankaracharya Swami Avimukteshwaranand Saraswati of Jyotirmath, Uttarakhand refrained from paying obeisance at the Ram temple here on Sunday, asserting that prayers cannot be offered in a partially-constructed shrine.

He said he would offer worship at the Ram temple only when the "shikhar" (topmost part) of the structure is fully constructed.

Asked about not visiting the Ram temple, Saraswati told reporters, "Prayers cannot be offered in a partially-constructed temple. It is incomplete. I will offer worship at the Ram temple only when the shikhar of the temple is fully constructed."

He conducted a special prayer service at the Chineshwar Nath temple and performed the circumambulation of the Ram Janmabhoomi complex along the Ramkot locality in Ayodhya.



Saraswati also started a nationwide "Gau Dhvaj Sthapana Bharat Yatra" from Ayodhya. A congregation was convened by the Shankaracharya here in the presence of seers from Ayodhya.

The convention called for the enshrinement of constitutional provisions and enactment of laws to ensure the inviolable protection of cows.

Addressing the gathering at the congregation, Saraswati said, "In our country, the cow is revered as Gau Mata. However, it is unfortunate that the country that worships the cow is also the second-largest exporter of cow meat in the world."



Delhi CM Atishi likely to take charge of office today

Delhi Chief Minister Atishi, who took the oath of office a day ago, is likely to take charge on Monday, officials said. She was sworn in as the eighth chief minister of Delhi on Saturday along with her cabinet. The Delhi Assembly's session will be held on September 26 and 27. Atishi has retained the 13 portfolios she held in the Kejriwal government, including education, revenue, finance, power and PWD. "She is likely to assume charge on Monday. The other ministers are also likely to take charge tomorrow," an official said. Saurabh Bharadwaj, who holds eight portfolios, the highest at Atishi, took charge on Saturday itself. New entrant Mukesh Ahlawat got the charge of the labour, SC and ST, employment and land and building departments. Gopal Rai has been given the charge of development, general administration department, environment and forest -- the portfolios he held in the Kejriwal government. Kalish Gahlot has also retained his previous portfolios -- transport, home, administrative reforms, women and child development.

'My govt not consulted on water release by DVC' Mamata again writes to PM on Bengal flood

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee wrote another letter to PM Narendra Modi on the flood situation in West Bengal, maintaining that Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) released water from its reservoirs without consulting her government, inundating several districts. Responding to Banerjee's earlier letter to the PM, Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Paatil had said the state's officials were informed at every stage about



the release of water from DVC reservoirs, which was essential to prevent a major disaster.

The CM said, "While the hon'ble minister claims that the release from DVC dams was carried out by consensus and collaboration with the Damodar Valley Reservoir Regulation Committee, including consultations with representatives of the government of West Bengal, I may respectfully disagree."

Caste census is..

Continued from page 1

that he is advising TPCC president B. Mahesh Kumar Goud to give DCC president posts to leaders who have roots among the people. Stating that the Congress came to power when he was the PCC President and won eight Lok Sabha seats, Chief Minister Revanth said that there is a need to take government programmes to the people by the party leadership and that the party and the government should coordinate.

I will take political sanyas if ..

Continued from page 1

Chief Minister Revanth, who took an oath that he would not allow his relatives to make illegal gains is accused of corruption now, KTR said.

He asked the CM whether anyone would believe that a Rs 1,000 crore contract is given to a brother-in-law's company which makes only a profit of Rs 2 crore a year and there is no corruption.

"If Ponguleti comes before inquiry bodies or before the HC Chief Justice, the Chief Minister should admit his mistake and cancel the tenders immediately. Otherwise, you

Continued from page 1

will lose your posts as it happened in the case of Sonia Gandhi, Ashok Chavan and Yeddyurappa. Later, I will speak about the Kodangal Lift Irrigation Project contracts awarded to Ponguleti's company," KTR said.

KTR said that Ponguleti may have been a contractor in the past but today it is illegal for him to be a minister and bag contracts. Let's go before the Central Vigilance Commission along with the Chief Minister and officials to find out whether there was any illegal act in awarding Amrit Scheme tenders.

Yellampalli Project..

Continued from page 1

was constructed quickly and 20 TMCs of water was filled in the Yellampalli reservoir up to the FRL of 148 meters. That is the achievement of the BRS government," he said. He said after the formation of the Telangana state, the BRS government spent Rs 2,052 crore for land acquisition, rehabilitation, and the construction of high-level bridges and roads.

The barrage was brought into full use. In the Kaleshwaram project, the work of providing water to all the areas dependent on the reservoir started only after making the Yellampalli Project a key 'balancing reservoir'. All this happened after the formation of Telangana state. Even if Ponnamp Prabhakar doesn't recognize this, Karimnagar farmers know it, he said.

Ponguleti's company..

Continued from page 1

He said that Srujan is the son-in-law of former BRS MLA Kandala Upender Reddy. Fearing that he would have to resign, KTR has started a new drama by asking the sitting judge to investigate the issue, he said.

Kejriwal sets new political strategy, attacks Modi Poses 5 questions to RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a new political strategy, AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday demanded answers from the RSS for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's actions, in an apparent bid to diminish his stature by implying that the parent Hindutva organisation was the master which should keep its child in control.

"Has the son become so big now that it is showing attitude to his mother?" Kejriwal said at a rally where he demanded five answers from Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat.

The questions he asked were political softballs but the implication of bringing Bhagwat into his new political narrative is new and unusual.

Kejriwal wanted to know if the RSS agreed with the BJP's politics of using central agencies to break up parties and top-



ple opposition governments, and inducting "corrupt" leaders into its fold.

In his first 'Janta ki Adalat' public meeting at Jantar Mantar following his resignation as Delhi chief minister, Kejriwal also asked Bhagwat if the BJP's rule on age of retirement would apply to Modi as it did for LK Advani.

He questioned Bhagwat if he agreed with the BJP's politics of calling politicians "corrupt"

and then inducting them into its fold. In another question, the AAP supremo asked Bhagwat how he felt when BJP president JP Nadda said his party did not need the RSS, which is the saffron party's ideological mentor.

He further questioned if the RSS chief was satisfied with the BJP's current politics. "The RSS and the BJP had made the rule that every leader would retire when they reached 75 years of age. Under this rule, senior leaders like LK Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, Kalraj Mishra and others were retired. Now, (Home Minister) Amit Shah says this rule does not apply to Modi ji," Kejriwal said.

"Do you agree with this fact that the rule that applied for Advani ji will not be applicable to Modi ji?" he asked Bhagwat. While Kejriwal was addressing the gathering, the BJP held a protest against him and AAP on issues of corruption at Connaught Place, barely a kilometre away from Jantar Mantar. The saffron party held another protest against Kejriwal at Rajghat on the same issue.

Jantar Mantar, on the other hand, was awash with AAP's signature blue and yellow colours as hundreds of supporters filled the site with banners that declared Kejriwal as "one of us", affirming their unwavering belief in his innocence.

BC leaders likely to float..

Continued from page 1

Speaking on the occasion, Krishnaiah said that earlier BC leaders floated a political party, but they did not succeed. However, this time we will float a new political party at an appropriate time.

He demanded that the Congress government should conduct a caste census and increase reservations as per population percentage. Some have distorted the fight of BCs, however, this time there will be no compromise in the demand for hiking reservations. He demanded that the BJP government should come down to stage for hiking reservations for BCs.

Krishnaiah said that there is a danger that some persons will go to court after issuing a GO regarding caste census in the state. There is a need to think regarding this and face the situation, he said pointing out that the Supreme Court gave a verdict against BCs regarding local body elections in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal.

Awkward: Biden fumbles again..

Continued from page 1

"So, I want to thank you all for being here. And now, who am I introducing next?" After a pause of a few seconds, he asked, this time in a louder voice, "Who's next?"

There was an awkward silence in the audience. A staff member finally pointed to the podium, leading to the introduction of Modi by the compere.

"Distinguished guests, the Prime Minister of the Republic of India," the announcer said, as Modi walked towards the podium. Biden then put his arm around Modi's shoulder and cracked a joke.

Centre will respond if KTR..

Continued from page 1

Sanjay said that AIMIM chief Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi is helping terrorists. The AIMIM and the Owaisi family have made the Old City a haven for terrorists. The AIMIM has made the Old City a centre of Rohingyas and terrorists. Every terrorist arrested in the country had links with Hyderabad, he said.

"Do the Owaisi brothers have Hinduphobia or not? Does Owaisi or any AIMIM MLA chant Vandematharam? Hindus participate in Peerla Panduga (Muharram) saying that they are secularists, but will Muslims take part in Vinayaka Chavithi or Dasara? Will the Owaisi brothers pray to Hindu deities or sport a Tilak on their forehead? It is not right for Asaduddin Owaisi to say that I am having Islamophobia," Sanjay said.

SIT to probe Tirumala ghee..

Continued from page 1

misuse of power and give a report to the government. The government will take stringent action to avoid recurrences (laddu adulteration), there is no compromise," said Naidu. The CM said nobody has the right to play with people's sentiments. Further, Naidu noted that a Santhi Homam Panchagavya Prokshana (ritualistic sanitisation) will be held on Monday at Tirumala to undo the alleged desecrations.

Quad grouping..

Continued from page 1

"We seek a region where no country dominates and no country is dominated -- one where all countries are free from coercion, and can exercise their agency to determine their futures," the leaders said in a joint statement. In his address, Modi said a free, open, inclusive, and prosperous Indo-Pacific is a shared priority of the Quad.

"Our meeting is taking place at a time when the world is surrounded by tensions and conflicts. In such a situation, it is crucial for the Quad to unite around our shared democratic values for the greater good of humanity," Modi said in his remarks at the summit.

"We are not against anyone. We all support a rules-based international order, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the peaceful resolution of all issues," he said.

China has been viewing Quad as a grouping aiming to counter its strategic heft.

Arekapudi attends..

Continued from page 1

Arekapudi Gandhi attending the meeting on his X account, senior BRS leader T. Harish Rao said. "Legislative Affairs Minister!...CLP meeting... Arekapudi Gandhi was present. Will there be bookings of cases for defection? #Congress Failed Telangana #Congress DoubleStandards"





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Quad is here to stay

PM Modi highlights Quad's role in promoting peace, stability and inclusive growth in Indo-Pacific

The latest Quad Summit in Wilmington, USA, highlights the growing importance of cooperation between the four member nations – India, the United States, Japan, and Australia, especially in a politically volatile Indo-Pacific region. It also underscores the importance of India in attaining peace in the region. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his opening remarks, reaffirmed the group's commitment to ensuring a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region, emphasising that this priority is shared by all Quad members. Addressing fellow leaders— US President Joe Biden, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, PM Modi noted that the summit was taking place at a time of heightened tensions and conflicts globally. His message was clear: the Quad's strength lies in its shared democratic values, its support for a rules-based international order, and its commitment to peaceful dispute resolution. PM Modi's address reflected India's delicate balancing act in maintaining strategic autonomy while engaging in critical international collaborations. The Indo-Pacific region has become a key area of focus, particularly due to the shifting power dynamics in Asia.



India, with its strategic location and economic influence, sees itself as a natural leader in advocating for an inclusive, prosperous Indo-Pacific. PM Modi emphasised that the Quad is not an exclusive group but one committed to advancing collective interests, particularly in areas of health security, climate change, emerging technologies, and capacity building. India's role in the Quad has grown significantly over the past

few years, positioning itself as a key player in advancing shared objectives in the Indo-Pacific. PM Modi's proposal to host the next Quad Summit in India in 2025 is a further testament to the country's increasing involvement and influence within the group. The Wilmington summit comes at a time when global challenges such as supply chain disruptions and geopolitical conflicts have increased the urgency for international collaboration. India's contribution to health security initiatives and capacity-building efforts within the Quad has bolstered its standing as a critical partner. As the Quad moves forward, India remains committed to working with its allies to ensure that the Indo-Pacific remains a region where the rule of law is respected, and prosperity can be shared by all nations. The Prime Minister's visit to the US was part of a broader diplomatic engagement, which also includes bilateral talks with President Biden and an address at the UN General Assembly's Summit of the Future. This diplomatic push underlines India's active role in shaping global conversations on peace, stability and inclusive growth. In the evolving international landscape, India's leadership within the Quad reflects its commitment to fostering cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, ensuring that it remains a region of stability and shared prosperity.

### PICTALK



A one-horn Rhino at the Assam State Zoo on the World Rhino Day, in Guwahati

# Key reforms needed for unified electoral system



SUBHASH CHANDRA AGRAWAL

While many proposals offer a streamlined approach, significant reforms are still needed to address gaps, such as mid-term election disruptions

Recently, the Union Cabinet approved the recommendations of the high-level committee led by former President Ram Nath Kovind. While many of these proposals are commendable, there are still gaps that need to be addressed. Notably, the plan should encompass not just Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections but also local body elections. The current recommendation to hold local body elections 100 days after the simultaneous Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections falls short of a truly unified electoral system. As a one-time reform, it is necessary to hold all elections, including to local bodies, concurrently.

Another issue that remains unresolved by the Kovind Committee is the problem of mid-term elections, which arise when a State government or the Lok Sabha falls due to a hung house or the collapse of a coalition. This challenge can be addressed by electing Prime Ministers and Chief Ministers simultaneously with Speakers and Deputy Speakers through a secret ballot, utilising Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) equipped with Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs).

Such elections should require nominations signed by at least 34 per cent of members. This system ensures stability, as a Prime Minister or Chief Minister could only be removed through a similar process, but with the mandatory nomination of an alternative leader in the same motion. Failure to vote in this process would result in the loss of voting rights in the House, though membership would remain intact. Implementing this system is crucial for the success of the "One Nation, One Election" initiative, as it would prevent the frequent dissolution of assemblies and the Lok Sabha. Current officeholders could also be re-elected using this method.

In terms of candidacy rules, a person should not be allowed to contest elections from more than one constituency or hold both Parliament and State Assembly memberships simultaneously.



Additionally, any sitting MP or MLA who seeks to contest for a different seat should first resign from their current position. This would prevent situations like the one that arose during Atal Bihari Vajpayee's government, which fell due to a single controversial vote cast by Odisha Chief Minister Girdhar Gomango, who remained an MP after assuming office as Chief Minister. Another important reform is the need to restore secret voting for Rajya Sabha elections, again using EVMs equipped with VVPATs. Additionally, the constitution should be amended to abolish legislative councils, which are often seen as redundant. Only those who have never contested any election should be nominated to the Rajya Sabha, ensuring that this house remains a body of experienced statespersons rather than active politicians. MPs and MLAs should also be barred from holding any party or social positions to avoid conflicts of interest.

Ministerial positions should be limited to 10 per cent of the strength of the lower house, and the post of Parliamentary Secretary should be abolished. Candidates who lose their security deposits in elections should be barred from contesting for the next six years. The "None of the Above" (NOTA) option, introduced to allow voters to reject all candidates, should be made more effective. Candidates who receive fewer



MINISTERIAL POSITIONS SHOULD BE LIMITED TO 10 PER CENT OF THE STRENGTH OF THE LOWER HOUSE, AND THE POST OF PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY SHOULD BE ABOLISHED. CANDIDATES WHO LOSE THEIR SECURITY DEPOSITS IN ELECTIONS SHOULD BE BARRED FROM CONTESTING FOR THE NEXT SIX YEARS

votes than NOTA should be barred from contesting future elections, even though the candidate with the next highest vote tally could be declared the winner for that particular term.

Furthermore, immunity for MPs and MLAs from legislative proceedings should be reconsidered. In the infamous JMM bribery case, the Supreme Court was unable to act against guilty individuals due to parliamentary immunity. Parliament's rules should be rewritten to introduce fixed penalties for members who violate norms, removing the discretionary powers of the Speaker. This would prevent lenient punishments like the one imposed on MP Rajesh Manjhi, who faced only a brief suspension for taking his lady friend, pretending she was his wife, on a foreign trip at government expense.

Abandoning parliamentarians, if present in the House during sessions, should not be allowed to leave until legal authorities execute pending warrants against them. Additionally, MPs and MLAs with less than 75 per cent attendance should be barred from contesting elections for the next six years. Cases like that of George Fernandes, who was elected to the Rajya Sabha despite losing his memory, highlight the need for a minimum medical fitness certificate for candidates. Parliamentarians should also

be required to disclose all details of their assets, including the names of their spouses, to avoid cases of undisclosed multiple marriages, as occurred with actor-turned-MP Dharmendra. All dues, including those for utilities, rent, and government accommodations, should be deducted from their salaries or pensions. Pensions should be withheld until former MPs and ministers vacate government accommodations. Additionally, political parties that fail to contest elections for five consecutive years should be de-recognised.

Finally, electoral reforms should be accelerated by empowering the Election Commission to implement reforms with a one-year notice to Parliament. If Parliament does not disapprove the proposed reforms within this timeframe, they should be deemed approved. To reduce the influence of black money, sections of the Income Tax Act that allow for contributions to political parties should be abolished. Moreover, the controversial MPLADS scheme, which allocates funds to MPs for local area development, should be scrapped. It is time to bring sweeping reforms to India's electoral system to ensure a more transparent, accountable, and stable political process.

(The writer is Guinness record holder and an RTI consultant, views expressed are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### RAHUL'S IRRESPONSIBLE REMARKS

Madam — Your newspaper (September 22) carries several news relating to statements of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, counter allegations by BJP and Congress party's explanations on Rahul Gandhi's asseverations on certain crucial issues in his foreign visits and election campaigns. His assertions on reservations, Sikh community's freedom, abrogation of Article 370 and its standing as alliance partner of National Conference in J&K are drawing flak in the political spectrum and in public. Weakening the country and painting gloomy pictures while abroad, will not go well for Congress and Rahul Gandhi. Selected foreign media has vested interest in maligning India. Desperation of Rahul Gandhi and his lack of conviction is writ large while his narratives against BJP and PM Modi are failing in absence of report cards of Congress and allies' ruled states. His statements are also silently eroding the INDI alliance base.

The country is facing tough times and the country needs a committed voice from all political parties against the deep state forces conspiring unrest and anarchy in our country. Our neighbourhood is troubled and no peace and normalcy is predictable in the near future. Apparently, these are the most challenging times since independence and PM Modi and the bulk of non-BJP political parties have identified, analysed and diagnosed the threats. We need to fight unitedly.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

### ADULTERATION IN LADOOS

Madam — After Karnataka's nandi milk, its now the turn of ex Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Jagan Mohan Reddy government, who has been solely blamed for the adulteration of south famous Sri Venkateswara Swami Tirupati prasadam laddus by the ruling Chief Minister N.Chandrababu Naidu. It came as a shock to devotees that sub-

## High voter turnout in J and K



This refers to the editorial, "India twins in J and K" (September 20). Polling for 24 Assembly seats in the first phase of Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections held on September 18. Polling was not only peacefully but it witnessed impressive turnout of voters also. People's enthusiasm for polling in the first phase assumes more significance as this is the first Assembly polls after abrogation of Article 370 in the state. People's record participation in the election has

given a befitting reply to the nefarious forces attempting to disrupt the electoral process. People of the state have shown the entire world, their deep trust and confidence in the democratic exercise. It is good that people have realised that no stone and bullet but power of voting is more effective tool to serve their purposes. Demise of Hurriyat Conference, a conglomerate of separatist parties also have contributed to bring peace in the state particularly Kashmir valley. It is evident that separatist groups have been politically marginalised. However, growing support to Sheikh Abdul Rashid's AIP after his shocking win in Lok Sabha polls has made the political pundits to watch final result of Assembly polls closely and keenly.

Manoj Parashar | Ghaziabad

### EXPLODING PAGERS

Madam — Israel has been blamed for a recent explosive attack in Lebanon that targeted Hezbollah's communication devices but injured over 3,000 civilians, raising questions about its indiscriminate nature. The operation's extremist-like methods blur the line between state action and terrorism, risking wider conflict. A ceasefire through negotiation is urgently needed. Israel is facing widespread criticism for its alleged role in a recent explosive attack in Lebanon, which targeted Hezbollah's communication systems but left over 3,000 civilians injured. The attack's broad, indiscriminate impact has sparked concern about blurred boundaries between state action and terrorism, resembling extremist tactics more than a conventional military operation. With tensions rising, the conflict risks spreading to a broader regional theatre. Diplomacy is urgently needed to de-escalate the situation.

Anshu Bharti | Begusarai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## Social media age limit: Will banning children be enough?

While setting an age limit may seem like a straightforward solution, enforcing it is a much more complex challenge

Australia's recent proposal to introduce a minimum age for children to use social media has sparked a global debate about how best to protect young people from its negative effects. With the government suggesting an age limit between 14 and 16, the intention is clear: shield children from the social harms linked to excessive screen time, mental health issues, and unrealistic social comparisons. But is an outright ban the answer? Can we expect this move to be effective, or are we merely sweeping the problem under the carpet?



In theory, setting an age limit seems like a straightforward solution to mitigate the risks associated with social media. However, the reality is far more complex. One of the most significant challenges in enforcing an age limit on social media is the sheer difficulty of verifying users' ages reliably. Most platforms already have minimum age requirements. Yet, we all know that younger children are active on these platforms, often bypassing age restrictions by simply entering a false birth date during registration.

It's a loophole too easy to exploit, and without a robust verification system, raising the age limit can't be a solution. Some platforms have attempted to introduce measures such as ID verification or even facial recognition, but these solutions come with their own set of concerns. For instance, YouTube Kids requires credit card information to verify the parent's identity. While well-intentioned, this method raises privacy concerns and is far from foolproof. Moreover, tech-savvy children often outsmart such measures using VPNs. Banning social media for children without a watertight system to monitor and regulate their access is like locking the front door while leaving the back door wide

open. When discussing social media and its impact on children, parental oversight inevitably comes into play. Parents are expected to monitor and control their children's access to these platforms, but can they realistically do so in this hyper-connected world? The answer, unfortunately, is no. Even the most diligent parents cannot be expected to oversee every minute of their children's online activity. A well-meaning ban on social media might give parents a false sense of security, but it doesn't change the reality that children will find ways to access these platforms. If we push them off regulated, mainstream platforms, they may seek refuge in the darker, unregulated corners of the internet—spaces where risks of cyberbullying, exposure to harmful content, and even predatory behaviour are even greater. Social media is, undeniably, a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it exposes children to unrealistic portrayals of life, leading to anxiety, depression, and a constant need to measure up to others. On the other hand, it

provides a space for young people to connect, express themselves, and access educational resources. Banning it outright may remove the toxic aspects but also deny them these valuable opportunities.

As parents and educators, our challenge is to strike a balance. Instead of rushing towards a ban, it might be more prudent to focus on equipping children with the skills they need to navigate the online world responsibly. Digital literacy, mental health education, and open conversations between parents and children can go a long way in protecting young minds from the pitfalls of social media. Rather than looking at social media as an enemy to be vanquished, we should view it as a tool that requires careful handling. Age restrictions, when implemented properly, can help shield younger users, but without holistic solutions—ranging from better parental support to more reliable age verification methods—their efficacy will be limited.

(The author is a columnist and writing coach based in Dubai. Views are personal)



ASHA IYER KUMAR







## FIRST COLUMN

### HEALTHY SPINE AND WELLBEING

A healthy spine forms the cornerstone of overall wellbeing, enabling us to restore vitality to our bodies



RAVI VALLURI

How many of us get up in the morning and virtually struggle to get out of bed as the body feels sore, the neck remains stiff, knees wobble, and shoulders and feet pain? The entire day is a torturous nightmare. Such individuals run to doctors, seeking a magical cure for the pestilence. Unless the problem is genetic or hereditary, humans get afflicted with such disorders because of a deficient lifestyle, stress accumulated over a period and poor dietary habits. The vertebra and our skeletal frame are an extremely important part of the human body, which we ignore at our peril.

Therefore, a healthy spine leads to a healthy life. Do we recall when a child begins to walk, the preliminary baby steps are raising his/her thumbs; this is called the 'Merudanda Mudra'. The vertebra consists of a series of small bones that form the backbone of the spine, having several projections for articulation and muscle attachment, and a hole through which the spinal cord passes. Office goers who for making a living are programmed to undertake a typical quotidian 9 to 5 routine, and several among them use computers for prolonged hours, or those professionals who are compelled to drive long distances to their places of work from their dwelling paces ought to necessarily know how to protect their backs, necks, and hand muscles.

These days people have become addicted to the usage of smartphones and are constantly fixated on texting messages on WhatsApp, watching various features ending up with stiff necks and sore fingers. Not only do these muscles need to be protected and fortified but the tissues should be sufficiently strengthened. Working men and women should be educated on how to deploy the correct activity posture while executing their professional tasks. Many homemakers at times develop severe middle



or lower back medical problems for a variety of reasons. Continuously undertaking repeated chores and even activities involving the handling of small or no weights, performed with an incorrect posture, damages tissues and muscles, which causes irreparable damage to the back and neck.

The afflicted suffer from infirmity for years together with pain and anguish. Awareness about the structure of the spine and adopting the right postures along with simple strengthening stretches significantly helps to avoid these misadventures in one's life. In the cases these problems assume the shape of chronic disorders the patient suffering can be guided through simple stretching exercises under the supervision of a physiotherapist or an orthopaedic. A special programme has been developed by the Art of Living to ameliorate the condition of those suffering from these debilitating health issues. Those suffering from spondylitis, frozen shoulder, middle and lower back problems, knee problems, and inter disc problems will immensely benefit upon undergoing the rehabilitation process and will certainly see visible dramatic changes in their lifestyle patterns and their daily routine. The programme encompasses the techniques mentioned below:

- Walk: For the alignment of vertebrae to open energy channels
  - Posture Awareness and its correction
  - Ergonomics
  - Simple but powerful Stretches and Yoga – For inner surgical alignment of the spine to release the nerves that were being continually pressed
  - Gait Training helps immensely
  - Guided Meditation techniques to release accumulated stress
  - In-depth knowledge of the spine
  - Ancient wisdom and knowledge about acupressure points for overall well being "Total relaxation is the secret to enjoying sitting meditation. I sit with my spine upright, but not rigid; and I relax all the muscles in my body," writes Thich Nhat Hanh.
- (The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway and is a faculty of the Art of Living. Views are personal)

# GST cess extension: Is it Justified Beyond 2026?



UTTAM GUPTA

With loans likely to be repaid by January 2026, the question arises—can the continued levy of the cess be logically justified in light of buoyant tax collections



In its meeting held early this month, the GST Council had decided to set up a Group of Ministers (GoM) to suggest 'how to go about the GST compensation cess, which is levied on luxury, sin and demerit goods such as automobiles, aerated drinks and tobacco, after the loans taken to meet the shortfall in revenue of states during Covid-affected years are repaid. The GoM will be headed by Union Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary and include members from states. The statement 'how to go ..... together with reports suggesting that the GoM will be reworking the nomenclature for GST compensation cess points towards the intent of the GST Council to continue its levy even after the deadline of March 2026 when it is to be withdrawn as per the subsisting arrangement. The matter requires deeper examination. The key question is: Why should GST Cess be continued? In the follow-up to The Constitution (One Hundred and First Amendment) Act, 2016, which introduced the GST, the Union Government also introduced The GST Compensation Act, 2017. It provided for compensation to the States for five years (2017-18 to 2021-22) for the loss of revenue to be calculated as the difference between their actual collection (including transfer of their share in indirect tax collected by the Centre) and the amount they would have got with annual growth at 14 per cent over the 2015-16 level under the erstwhile dispensation (Central Excise Duty (CED)/service tax/sales tax/Value Added Tax (VAT) plus other local taxes).

To discharge this obligation, the Centre also passed an amendment to the GST Compensation Act (2018) to levy a cess on the so-called demerit goods (those which fall in the highest tax slab of 28 per cent - other slabs being five per cent, 12 per cent and 18 per cent besides the exempt category) such as automobiles, tobacco, drinks and so on with a proviso to use the proceeds for compensating States. The cess was to remain in force for five years in sync with the commitment to compensate States for that period.

The rationale behind keeping these arrangements in place for five years was that at the

end of this transition, i.e., June 30, 2022, the GST dispensation would have acquired the much-needed "vitality" and "resilience" to yield sufficient resources for the States to meet their budgetary requirements within a prudential limit set under the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act (FRBM) thereby obviating the need for any extra support beyond this deadline. However, even before the June 30, 2022 deadline arrived, the States had been clamouring for continuing the compensation beyond it. So, first, they requested the 15th Finance Commission to extend it for five years not realizing that the mandate for this is with the GST Council. Thereafter, they started pestering the Central Government.

The States gave two reasons for their demand (i) they continued to face a shortfall in tax revenue and (ii) The - pandemic had severely impacted their revenue - both their tax collection as well as transfer from the Centre - pushing them behind the curve. We need to look at the factual position on the quantum of shortfall in tax revenue experienced by the States during those five years and the extent to which collections from the cess plugged it. From the time GST was introduced on July 1, 2017, till March 31, 2019, collections from the Cess exceeded the shortfall resulting in a surplus of about Rs 47,500 crore in the pool. However, the equation changed in the subsequent years. During 2019-20, the cess proceeds were Rs 95,000 crore against a shortfall in tax collection of Rs 165,000 crore resulting in a deficit of Rs 70,000 crore. Even after using the surplus from the previous two years, the unmet deficit carried forward to the next year was Rs 22,500 crore. During FY 2020-21, the shortfall in tax revenue zoomed to over Rs 300,000

crore; courtesy, of the devastating effect of Covid pandemic.

Against this, cess proceeds were only Rs 65,000 crore, leading to an unmet deficit of Rs 235,000 crore. During FY 2021-22 also, the collections in the Cesspool couldn't fully meet the shortfall in tax collection though the deficit was much less. To make up for the deficit, the Centre, in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) set up a special window for borrowings at a "low" rate of interest and transferred the funds to states as back-to-back loans. Under this window, it borrowed a total of Rs 270,000 crore including Rs 110,000 crore during 2020-21 and Rs 160,000 crore during 2021-22. To generate the required money to repay the loan and interest, the GST Council decided to extend the cess till March 2026.

The necessary amendment was made to the GST Compensation Act (2018) to give effect to this decision. According to the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the entire loan of Rs 270,000 crore would be fully serviced by January 2026, two months ahead of the March 31, 2026 deadline. As per estimates, the collections from GST compensation cess in February and March 2026 are expected to be about Rs 40,000 crore. How this surplus money would be apportioned between the Centre and States is a task the GoM will have to carry out. The States want the GST compensation cess to continue even beyond March 31, 2026. Naturally, its continuation can't be justified in terms of the need to service loan liabilities from the past; those would have already been extinguished before that. Do they have any logical argument? To say that they require more revenue to meet the development needs, as

reported, is plain rhetoric. Tax collection is far from being a constraint.

Only a couple of years ago, top officials in the Department of Revenue used to gloat over a collection of GST Rs 150,000 crore if achieved in any given month. Since, the beginning of FY 2022-23, monthly GST collections have been more than Rs 150,000 crore.

In fact, during FY 2023-24, the average monthly GST collection was even higher at Rs 168,000 crore. Therefore, Cess's continuation on the basis that there could be a shortfall in tax collection is untenable. The raison d'être behind giving the States a buffer (read: compensation) over a fairly long period of 5 years (2017 - 2022) was to ensure that they get adjusted to the new dispensation and are in a position to garner enough revenue thereby obviating the need for any further support. At the end of this transition, it is only apt that the buffer should go. The buoyancy in GST collection since 2022-23 reinforces the case for withdrawal of compensation cess. Meanwhile, taxing petroleum products under GST has been pending for long. Currently, these are taxed under the pre-GST regime entailing a much higher level of levy. For instance, in Delhi, the taxes (central excise duty or CED plus VAT) account for about 80 per cent of the ex-refinery price of petrol.

Taxing it under GST will result in lowering this to 28 per cent (even if it is put in the highest slab). This will end up reducing tax collection in the States by over one-third. To help them make up for this loss, the GST Council may consider extending the Compensation Cess with a sun-set rider of say five years.

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



THE BUOYANCY IN GST COLLECTION SINCE 2022-23 REINFORCES THE CASE FOR WITHDRAWAL OF COMPENSATION CESS. MEANWHILE, TAXING PETROLEUM PRODUCTS UNDER GST HAS BEEN PENDING FOR LONG

# Nostalgia meets new age storytelling in India's diverse cinematic landscape

Beyond merely providing convenient access, OTT platforms have revived iconic shows and introduced regional cinema to the global audience

In recent years, the rise of over-the-top (OTT) platforms has dramatically transformed the way we consume entertainment. These platforms have revived classic content and introduced regional gems into mainstream media, offering a broad spectrum of India's diverse cinematic landscape to a global audience. Moreover, OTT has changed the way we socialize, becoming a central part of conversations, from casual chats to virtual gatherings. Where once people exchanged pleasantries with questions like "Aur Batao" (What's up?), today, the perfect response is often about the latest series or film one is watching. Virtual watch parties have emerged as popular avenues for friends and families, separated by dis-



CHAITANYA K PRASAD

tance, to connect and share viewing experiences in real time. OTT platforms cater to diverse tastes, ensuring there's something for everyone. But what makes people subscribe to one OTT platform after another? The simple answer is content. OTT platforms have built vast libraries of classic shows and films, making iconic series easily accessible. Shows like "Malgudi Days", celebrated for its story-

telling and memorable music, and "Fauji", featuring Shah Rukh Khan's debut, are just a click away. This accessibility allows viewers to journey back in time, relive cherished moments, and introduce younger generations to timeless narratives that shaped Indian television during the Doordarshan era. Contemporary creators are also blending nostalgia with new storytelling. Content like "Laapata Ladies", "Heeramandi", "Guns and Gulaabs", "Jubilee", "Bambai Meri Jaan", and "Rocket Boys" weave retro elements into engaging plots. These narratives are often set in simpler times, free of modern technology, offering viewers a respite from the chaos of the modern world. They transport audi-

ences to the past, making the stories richer and more captivating. Take "Laapata Ladies", for instance. Set in the early 2000s, its storyline is centered around a lost bride, but what captivates viewers is its charming simplicity. Scenes featuring a tea stall on a forgotten railway station or a sketch of the bride being shared in the absence of digital photos transport viewers to a different era. Such moments invite the audience to reminisce about their own memories, perhaps recalling special moments from railway journeys or simpler times in their lives. The use of cultural symbols—retro fashion, old advertisements, vintage phones, cars, and even homes—evokes a sense of nostalgia. Everyday



objects like tape recorders, old computers, and the way people socialized in the past contribute to the surreal experience of OTT content. It's a reminder of how far society has come, while also showcasing the beauty of the past. This emotional connection enriches the overall viewing experience and keeps viewers coming back for more. OTT's appeal to nostalgia has also fueled the popularity of the "OTT and Chill" culture. A recent example is Manoj

Tiwari's rendition of the famous Bhojpuri Sohar "Hind Ke Sitare" for an OTT show, which became an internet sensation. The track went viral with people of all ages singing along, demonstrating how content that resonates with simpler times can bring generations together. In addition to revisiting the past, OTT platforms continuously release new content, often with extensive promotional efforts that make certain shows highly popular. Red carpet events for premieres, media coverage, and articles listing the "10 best OTT shows to watch" have all become part of the cultural zeitgeist. Even major events like the Indian Premier League (IPL) stream on OTT platforms, drawing massive audiences.

OTT also champions diverse talent. Independent filmmakers and regional storytellers, who might have been overlooked in traditional media, now have a platform to showcase their work to a global audience. This has led to the discovery of fresh voices and unique stories, breaking down geographical barriers. OTT's ability to feature content in multiple Indian languages has helped regional films and series gain national and international recognition. According to a FICCI-EY report from 2023, regional content on OTT platforms overtook Hindi language content for the first time, with the share of regional language titles rising from 47% in 2021 to 52% in 2023. Stars like Mohanlal, Junior NTR, Vijay

Setupathi, and Fahadh Faasil, once confined to regional industries, have now become household names across India, thanks to the reach of OTT. Films like "RRR" (Telugu), "Pushpa" (Telugu), "KGF" (Kannada), "Kantara" (Kannada), have found new audiences through OTT platforms. Actors like Vijay Sethupathi, who gained prominence in Tamil cinema, have become pan-Indian stars, appearing in films like "Jawan" and "Merry Christmas". This cross-cultural fusion, accelerated by the pandemic, reflects the growing demand for diverse content. (The writer is former additional DG, DFF and Festival Director, IFFI. Research and Inputs by Priya kamra, Views are personal)



IN BRIEF



**Anil Ambani's Reliance Group starts transformation journey**

Anil Ambani's Reliance Group has in recent years seen marquee firms being auctioned in insolvency proceedings and piling debt-fold businesses. But the group has, in the week gone by, made announcements that investors believe may mark its transformation. In three days -- from September 18 to September 20 -- the group announced it has turned into nearly zero and is implementing long-term fund raising plans that are said to solidify its financial position. Reliance Infrastructure's board approved fund raising of up to Rs 6,000 crore via preferential issue and QIP, while Reliance Power board is meeting on September 23 to consider and approve the fundraise via multiple routes. The speed at which Anil Ambani moved to clear the debt of his companies, and simultaneously announce and execute the fund raising plans for future expansion of his companies, has surprised the investors. Shares of both firms surged on stock markets.



**Climate-smart tea seed variety to withstand temp impacts**

A body of the tea industry has come out with a climate-smart seed variety which can withstand high temperatures and yield quality crops, an official said on Sunday. The new seed stock 'TSS 2', introduced by the Tea Research Association (TRA), will help the industry prepare itself to counter the negative effects of climate change, he said. The TRA is funded by the Ministry of Commerce and the tea industry. The new seed variety has been introduced at a time "when tea production is down by 80 million kgs till now in 2024 due to extreme heat and climatic factors," TRA secretary Joydeep Phukan said. Extreme heat is making a significant impact on tea plantations in Assam and north Bengal, the two largest tea-producing regions in the country. "To combat the effects of climate change, TRA released the first climate-smart tea seed stock TSS 2."



**US firm ties up with Saankhya Labs for D2M tech mobiles**

A US-based company has joined hands with Indian firm Saankhya Labs and an IIT, Kanpur-incubated startup to design and roll out value-for-money mobile phones with augmented direct-to-mobile (D2M) broadcast capability. US-based Sinclair Inc., Saankhya Labs and Free Stream Technologies Private Limited, a startup incubated in the IIT-Kanpur, are commencing consumer trials for multi-media delivery and datacasting-use cases. Consumer trials will be conducted on a variety of D2M devices comprising smartphones, USB dongle accessories, set top boxes and gateways and also, low-cost feature phones, a statement from the Bengaluru-based Saankhya Labs said. "We expect to launch these devices for trials in the first half of 2025. This competitive market segment can be expected to produce affordable phones for the Indian and global markets," Chris Ripley, president and CEO of Sinclair Inc., said. The value-for-money mobile phones will be powered by Saankhya's Pruthvi-3 ATSC 3.0 chipsets.

**GoM on GST to discuss slab, rate tweaks**

The ministerial panel on GST rate rationalisation will meet on September 25 and is expected to discuss tweaking of tax slabs and rates. The meeting of the GoM on rate rationalisation is scheduled for September 25 in Goa, an official said. The six-member Group of Minister (GoM) under Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Chaudhary, last met on August 22 and had submitted a status report to the GST Council on September 9. During the August meeting, the panel had tasked the fitment committee comprising tax officers from the Centre and states to analyse the implication of tax rate change on some items and gather more data. Currently, goods and services tax (GST) is a four-tier tax structure with slabs at 5, 12, 18, and 28 per cent. Under GST, essential items are either exempted or taxed at the lowest slab, while luxury and demerit items attract the highest slab. Luxury and sin goods attract cess on top of the highest 28 per cent slab. There have been talks of merging the 12 and 18 per cent tax slabs, but nothing has been proposed so far. Around 12 per cent, the average GST rate has fallen below the revenue neutral rate of 15.3 per cent.

**India, EU to begin next round of talks on free trade pact**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior officials of India and the 27-nation European Union (EU) will commence the next round of talks for a proposed free trade agreement from Monday here, an official said.

The agreement is aimed at further boosting bilateral trade and investments between the two regions. The two sides are negotiating a free trade agreement, an investment protection agreement and an agreement on geographical indications (GIs).

"The five-day talks will start from September 23. It will be the ninth round of negotiations. Also, the concerns of Indian stakeholders regarding the EU's sustainability measures, such as CBAM, deforestation and others, will be discussed with the EU," the official said.

During the ninth round, both sides will discuss core trade issues covering goods, services, investment and government procurement along with necessary rules such as rules of origin, SPS (sanitary and phytosanitary), and technical barriers to trade.

The Carbon Border



Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) or carbon tax (a kind of import duty) will come into effect from January 1, 2026. It will initially be imposed on seven carbon-intensive sectors, including steel, cement, fertiliser, aluminium and hydrocarbon products.

India has raised concerns over these two regulations as it would have an impact on the country's exports to the bloc.

According to think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI), the European Union's Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) would hit India's

agricultural exports worth USD 1.3 billion to the EU starting December 2024.

The GTRI said that Indian firms are concerned about the potential negative impacts of regulations like the carbon tax, deforestation regulation, and supply chain regulation.

"These regulations would adversely impact India's exports to EU. After implementation of the trade agreement, the EU products will continue to enter India at zero duties, but Indian products may pay 20-35 per cent tariff equivalent as CBAM charges. A suitable text may be inserted in the FTA chapters

dealing with this possibility," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

In June 2022, India and the European Union resumed the negotiations after a gap of over eight years. It was stalled in 2013 due to differences over several issues.

"Initially, from 2007 to 2013, multiple rounds of negotiations took place but were hindered by disagreements over market access, intellectual property rights, labour standards, and sustainable development. By 2013, the talks hit a standstill, particularly due to differences on tariffs for automobiles, wine, spirits, data security for Indian IT firms, and public procurement," it said.

It added that one of the major reasons for the delay is the differing aspirations between the two parties.

The EU seeks tariff elimination on over 95 per cent of its exports, including sensitive agricultural products and automobiles, while India is comfortable opening up only around 90 per cent of its market and is hesitant to lower tariffs on bulk agricultural products, the GTRI said.

**India to clock 7 pc growth despite headwinds: Deloitte**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India continues to be a bright spot in an otherwise gloomy global outlook and the country could clock a 7 per cent growth in the current fiscal despite the headwinds, Deloitte South Asia CEO Romal Shetty has said.

Shetty, who is the youngest chief executive of a Big Four

accounting and consultancy firm in India, said inflation is reasonably under control, there has been a pick-up in rural demand and vehicle sales are improving.

"We believe that we would be in the 7-7.1 per cent range in terms of the growth (this fiscal year). You have got the headwinds, the tailwinds... But the fact is, still India is in a better position, in spite of whatever is happening globally but we can't say we're decoupled from the world," he said, adding that the geopolitical crisis in the Middle East and Ukraine and the slow-

down in the western world will impact GDP growth.

According to Deloitte projections, growth is likely to be 6.7 per cent in the next fiscal year (2025-26). The Indian economy grew 8.2 per cent in the previous fiscal year -- 2023-24.

In an interview with PTI, Shetty said he expects the Modi 3.0 government to continue

with the economic reforms, including privatisation, at the same pace and there is a tremendous push to get things done within the government departments.

India -- the world's fifth largest economy -- is set to expand to USD 5 trillion and become the third largest within this decade.

Oil price decline is in some sense good for India because the country is a net importer of a lot of things, and the US Fed rate cut will be positive for India.

**Plan to open offices abroad to assist foreign investors: Min**

PNS ■ SINGAPORE

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Sunday said there are plans to open offices in different countries in the coming months to hand-hold foreign investors looking at opportunities to invest in India.

The first such office of Invest India -- the national agency to promote investments into the country -- was inaugurated by the minister in Singapore.

It will act as a dedicated point of contact for companies from the region looking to invest here.

This move reinforces India's commitment to deepening investment partnerships and making it easier for global investors to engage with India.

"The Singapore office will serve as a dedicated point of

contact for companies from the region looking to invest in India, fostering collaboration across sectors," the commerce and industry ministry said in a statement.

Within the Invest India Singapore office is the National Industrial Corridor Development Corp Ltd.

Speaking at the event, Goyal said Singapore is a key strategic partner for India, and this office marks a new chapter in India's efforts to

strengthen economic cooperation with Singapore and the broader ASEAN (Association for Southeast Asian Nations) region.

"We plan to open more overseas Invest India offices in the coming months with an aim to provide global investors seamless access to India's dynamic and growing economy."



**'Govt working on plan to promote yacht tourism'**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is working on a plan to promote the ecosystem of yacht tourism and personal boating in India, Ports, Shipping and Waterways minister Sarbananda Sonowal has said.

India with 7,500 kilometres long coastline does not have a single international-standard marina. A marina is a dock, especially a fancy one used for sailboats and yachts.

"Along with cruise tourism, we are going to add a new dimension by developing the ecosystem for yacht tourism in India," Sonowal said. The minister said India is such a big country but "we don't have a place (international-standard marina) where yachts can be parked".

**India signs IPEF's clean, fair economy agreements**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Sunday signed the 14-member IPEF (Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity) bloc's agreements on a clean and fair economy with an aim to enhance cooperation in these areas.

The agreements would help facilitate development, access, and deployment of clean energy and climate-friendly technologies; catalyse investment and strengthen measures for anti-corruption, tax transparency etc. and improve business environment, the commerce ministry said in a statement.

In June in Singapore, 13 IPEF bloc members signed these agreements, while India said it would ink the deals after getting domestic approval.

"India signed and exchanged the first-of-its-kind agreements focused on Clean Economy, Fair Economy, and the IPEF Overarching arrangement under IPEF for prosperity, on September 21 at Delaware, USA, in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who is on 3-day visit to the US for



INDIA SIGNS IPEF AGREEMENT WITH INDO-PACIFIC ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK MEMBERS

the Quad Summit," it said.

The agreement on clean economy intends to accelerate efforts of IPEF partners towards energy security, GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions mitigation, developing innovative ways of reducing dependence on fossil fuel energy, promoting technical cooperation, capacity building, besides collaborating to facilitate development, access, and deployment of clean energy and climate-friendly technologies.

It will also facilitate investments, project financing including concessional financing, joint collaborative projects, workforce development and technical assistance for industries.

"These activities will be undertaken through joint collaborative actions such as Cooperative Work Programmes, the IPEF Catalytic Capital Fund, the IPEF Accelerator," it said.

Further, the agreement on fair economy intends to create a more transparent and predictable business environment, which can spur greater trade and investment in the markets of member countries; enhance efforts to prevent and combat corruption by strengthening anti-corruption frameworks, support efforts to improve tax transparency and exchange of information for tax purposes between competent authorities.

**Global trends, trading major drivers for markets**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Investors will keep a track on global trends and trading activity of foreign investors with no major domestic trigger in sight this week, analysts said, and added that markets may face volatility amid the monthly derivatives expiry.

Stock markets had a record-breaking rally last week, largely driven by the US Federal Reserve's rate cut.

Historically, rate cuts in the US have had a positive impact on emerging markets, with India being a favoured bet among global investors, Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd, said.

The highlight of the week

was the aggressive buying by Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs), who poured in over Rs 14,000 crore on Friday alone, he added.

"There are no major triggers expected this week, but upcoming macroeconomic data from the US will be crucial to monitor. FII flows will remain a key factor for the Indian equity market, alongside domestic institutional inflows, which will also play an important role.

"While markets currently seem unfazed by geopolitical risks, these factors could pose a significant threat to the ongoing bullish momentum. As we approach the September F&O expiry, heightened volatility is likely," Meena said.



The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,359.51 points or 1.63 per cent to settle at an all-time high of 84,544.31 on Friday. During the day, it soared 1,509.66 points or 1.81 per cent to hit the momentous intra-day peak of 84,694.46.

The NSE Nifty surged 375.15 points or 1.48 per cent

to close at a record 25,790.95 level. During the day, the gauge zoomed 433.45 points or 1.70 per cent to reach an all-time intra-day peak of 25,849.25.

Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,653.37 points or 1.99 per cent and Nifty surged 434.45 points or 1.71 per cent.

Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said, "Markets are gradually climbing up and we expect this positive momentum to continue this week backed by strong FII inflow, healthy domestic macros, and receding concern about the US economy slowing down."

**Majority of users say they will stop using UPI if transaction fee is levied: Survey**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Around 75 per cent UPI users will stop using it if any transaction charge is levied on the service, a survey by LocalCircles said on Sunday.

The survey found that 38 per cent of users make over 50 per cent of their payment transactions via UPI instead of debit, credit or any other form of digital transaction.

"Only 22 per cent UPI users surveyed are willing to bear a transaction fee on payments, 75 per cent of respondents stated that they will stop using UPI if a transaction fee is introduced," the survey said. The survey comprising



three broad areas claims to have received 42,000 responses from 308 districts but the number of replies on each

question varied. The questions regarding transaction fee on UPI received 15,598 responses.

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) posted a record 57 per cent rise in the volume of transactions and 44 per cent rise in value in the 2023-24 fiscal year, compared to the previous fiscal year.

For the first time UPI transactions crossed 100 billion and closed at 131 billion in a financial year, compared to 84 billion in 2022-23. In value terms, it touched Rs 199.89 trillion, compared to Rs 139.1 trillion, the report said. The survey found 37 per

**Govt to kick off FY26 Budget making exercise from next month**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The finance ministry will commence the exercise to prepare the annual budget for 2025-26 from the second week of next month in the backdrop of the Indian economy recording 7 per cent growth rate for the fourth consecutive year.

The budget for the next financial year would focus on reforms to be pushed to further accelerate growth momentum and measures to generate jobs and boost demand in the economy.

"Pre-budget meetings chaired by Secretary (Expenditure) shall commence in the second week of October 2024. Financial Advisers shall ensure that necessary details...are properly entered in UBIS (Union Budget Information System) before/latest by October 7, 2024." Budget circular 2025-26 issued by the Department of Economic Affairs said.

Hard copies of the data in the specified formats should be submitted for cross-verification, it said.

It will be the second budget of the Modi 3.0 government and 8th straight Budget for Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, a rare distinction in Indian polity.

"All the ministries/departments should submit details of autonomous bodies/ implementing agencies, for which a dedicated corpus fund has been created.

The reasons for their continuance and requirement of grant-in-aid support, and why the same should not be wound up, should be explained," it said.

The Budget Estimates for 2025-26 will be provisionally finalised after completion of pre-budget meetings, it said.

Pre-budget meeting shall commence from second week of October, 2024 and shall continue till around mid-November, 2024, it said.

During the pre-Budget meetings requirement of funds for all categories of expenditures along with receipts of ministries/departments and expenditure estimates on net basis are discussed.





## TRAVEL LIKE TREEHUGGER

# Eco-consciousness just got a makeover!

SHIKHA DUGGAL  
 shikhaduggalwork@gmail.com

A plantation and landscaping project intended to provide more than simply aesthetic appeal—who wouldn't be curious to learn more about it? That's not where it ends! Seeking to improve biodiversity and revitalise the surrounding ecology, one conglomerate in particular is helping local wildlife, enhancing soil health and using less water by planting native plants. These efforts eventually led to a cooler microclimate, less carbon footprint and cleaner air! We discovered in an exclusive chat with him that his intention is for his landscapes to function as natural havens that help the surrounding areas and offer long-term ecological benefits. These initiatives support his dedication to sustainability and his goal of having a long-lasting, beneficial influence on the environment.

The innovative Ananta Hotels and Resorts founder, Mukund Goyal, is playing a key role in developing the upscale hospitality industry in our nation. With a background in luxury resort development and family business, he has a strong environmental and sustainable mindset. We seized the chance for an exclusive chat, teasing the keynotes of the same environmental attitude and understanding how he is using it to evolve it. "To improve connection with surroundings, my focus is on incorporating natural components like large green spaces, water features and natural light. This promotes a slower pace of life where people can unplug, rejuvenate and gain clarity, in addition to improving mental health by bringing about a sense of balance and tranquility. I think that environments that emphasise nature have a significant positive effect on mental health since they encourage rest and renewal, two things that are essential to general wellbeing." That's how he keeps the dialogue going with us.

It is clear that the creator is passionate about designing areas that are harmoniously integrated into their natural surroundings—a haven where one can rediscover nature and feel joy and serenity. His use of locally sourced materials, solar electricity and intensive landscaping—like the huge plantation drives that have transformed his properties into tropical paradises—all demonstrate his devotion to environmental friendliness. He has a plan, which he explains in great detail: "To ensure that my ecological imprint is as little as possible, my attention is literally focused on locally sourced materials, energy-efficient technologies, sustainable construction and water conservation. By utilising green building techniques, recycling initiatives and renewable energy sources, I make sure that one has a good environmental impact as well. According to my concept, true luxury ought to take care of the environment as well as the senses."

In retrospect, he remarks, "The body, mind and soul are all nourished by sunlight, fresh air and trees. *Sukoon* (peace) and *Anand* (joy) are gifts from nature; in return, we must take care of the earth by planting more trees and spreading good energy. The straightforward equation for unending happiness in life is this one. A fundamental component of my philosophy is landscaping. In order to bring nature as close to the tourists as possible, I meticulously cultivate green spaces with



native trees and plant species, placing special emphasis on the heavy usage of trees. In addition to providing a lush, peaceful setting, these trees aid in temperature regulation, air purification and the development of a calm, grounded sense of well-being. This immersion in nature serves as a potent therapeutic aid, encouraging calmness, lowering tension and improving mental clarity." He adds, emphasising further, "I want to design spaces where guests may feel nature's calming influence in every element of their stay. I think that being in touch with nature is a crucial component of the restorative and healing experiences, whether it's hearing birds in the morning or taking a stroll through lush gardens."

As readers are aware, these designs contribute to creating healthier, more sustainable living environments by bridging the gap between people and environment. Incorporating nature into his developments allows him to create places that are not only visually arresting but also promote areas that improve environmental harmony and well-being. He sees a shift in travel behaviour toward more responsible methods that respect regional ecosystems and help local populations as eco-tourism gains traction. In a similar vein, he contends, "Look, my goal is to create a stronger connection between travellers and the destination by encouraging them to participate meaningfully with the local culture and environment through the promotion of sustainable travel. Getting involved in the community is essential to my development. Integrating local talents and culture can have a positive social and economic impact, in my opinion. I collaborate extensively with local artists and craftspeople to make sure my homes capture the true essence of the area and to offer job and training possibilities. I make sure that my ventures benefit both tourists and the local population by supporting community-driven activities like local education and conservation efforts."

According to him, luxury is the capacity to provide calm settings that put a premium on mental clarity, private space and a close relationship with the natural world. It involves designing areas where people may find peace, get outside and partake in worthwhile activities that enhance their wellbeing. "I propose that hospitality provide immersive experiences that transcend beyond the surface in order to foster a deeper connection with nature and culture. This covers wellness-focused activities, including yoga retreats, neighbourhood treks and guided tours of neighbouring cultural sites. Engaging with nature on a wildlife safari enhances one's understanding of the surrounding ecology. Learn about traditional crafts and cultural practices through participatory workshops with local craftsmen and farm-to-table cooking sessions. Travel in the future will be significantly shaped by sustainable tourism practices as consumers grow more environmentally concerned. This covers everything, from building environmentally sustainable infrastructure to lowering carbon footprints and encouraging ethical travel. Another important factor will be personalisation, to anticipate experiences that are catered to their unique requirements and tastes. As individuals emphasise their physical and emotional well-being and look for travel destinations that promote mindfulness, rejuvenation and relaxation, wellness tourism will only increase. These developments will completely change the way we travel, emphasising life-changing experiences over ostentatious extravagance."

**Who says eco-tourism can't help save the environment? Mukund Goyal, the mastermind of some of the nation's most blissful settings, is revitalising luxury travel with an eco-friendly twist! This guy has it all figured out, from planting entire forests to building green havens where you can detox from city life and lessen your carbon footprint, or from hugging trees to guilt-free lounging. It resembles glamping but with a greater worldwide influence and less glitz**



### EVENT COVERAGE

## Bi Pan fest 2024 floods Hyderabad with fabulousness

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The Bi Pan Fest 2024, held at Bagh Beans Coffee and Art, was a whirlwind of colour, glitter and unapologetic fabulousness that swept through Hyderabad on Saturday like a pride parade on espresso shots! This cozy café transformed into a vibrant haven for the city's LGBTQIA+ community, showcasing powerful performances, deep discussions, and a whole lot of sparkle.

Walking into the fest felt like stepping into a rainbow—a literal explosion of colours everywhere. Fashion? Oh, darling, it was next level! From sequins to sarees, wigs to wild patterns, attendees were dressed to express pure liberation. Honestly, I, the token "straight-but-supportive" attendee, felt like I had accidentally RSVP'd to a VIP fashion week, with my outfit barely passing the dress code of "Wear Whatever Feels Free!" The energy? Infectious. The vibes? As inclusive as a free hug.

The event kicked off with the host, who could easily be the love child of RuPaul and Lady Gaga, sporting a golden wig, a saree, and red glittering shoes that screamed "Fabulous." Their opening dance performance? Beyoncé would've taken notes.

Deby, one of the speakers, followed up with a heartfelt talk about her journey through addiction and coming out—she had everyone glued to their seats. The way she spoke about overcoming her struggles had people nodding in solidarity, some with tears in their eyes, others with fist pumps of pride. The room buzzed with shared emotion, as if every word carried the weight of both her struggles and triumphs.

Then came a panel discussion that tackled everything from queer parenting to the eternal struggle of finding a decent transgender-friendly bathroom; seri-

ously, when will society catch up? The panelists were a force—each story shared was raw, real and absolutely riveting! As the transwomen took the stage for dance performances, the air crackled with talent and passion, leaving the audience breathless and ready for more.

The open mic? Oh boy, talk about soul-baring moments. Writers shared their deepest thoughts, while singers made everyone sway. It felt like each performance was its own little revolution—reminding us all of the beauty in knowing exactly who you are and owning every bit of it.

Shashank Naidu, along with his co-founders Sarita and Bhargav, collaborated with Patruni Sastry to pull off this incredible event. And even though it rained halfway through, not a single person left. Rain? Pfft, mere mortals. This crowd

danced right through it like it was an extra challenge in their quest for freedom.

Ishita, a transwoman who's been living in Hyderabad for a year, summed it up perfectly: "This event was long overdue. We've been missing queer gatherings like this and it was amazing to see so many familiar faces." She talked about how Hyderabad, though conservative, is slowly but surely catching up to more progressive cities. "Change is coming," she said with confidence.

It was like stepping into a world where inhibitions simply don't exist. While many of us are busy second-guessing our wardrobe choices and worrying

about how to fit into society's neat little boxes, here were people living without a care, embracing every colour of life, literally and figuratively. Their confidence was as contagious as their fashion sense, which ranged from dazzling to downright daring. And don't even get me started on their conversations! These weren't just style icons; they were well-read, witty and brimming with wisdom. It felt like witnessing a crash course in how to live authentically, wrapped up in a celebration of love, acceptance and unapologetic self-expression. Honestly, it was like they all had the ultimate cheat code to life, embracing who they are without limits, while the rest of us are still fumbling with the user manual!

Bhagi Shravani, an ally of the Humans of Nirvana and one of Hyderabad's DRAG Queens, shared her pride in the event's exponential growth over the years. "We started the drag scene in 2018 and seeing 169 people show up when only 69 registered—now, that's progress! Rain couldn't stop this festival and the energy. Oh, it was electric."



**THE BI PAN FEST 2024 WAS AN UNSTOPPABLE FORCE OF LOVE, LAUGHTER AND LIBERATION, WHICH WAS ALSO A FULL-FLEDGED CELEBRATION OF QUEER IDENTITY AND A SHOUT-OUT TO ACCEPTANCE!**

## KNOW-HOW ASTHMA DEVICES MADE EASY!



breathes in through a mask. For children who find quick inhalation difficult, specifically, infants and babies, nebuliser treatments provide a practical solution, particularly during acute exacerbations.

- It is an electric or battery-operated machine with four parts: a motor, mouthpiece or facemask, cup and tubing.
- Medicine goes into the cup, which is connected to the motor with tubing. The mouthpiece or mask attaches to the cup.

Characterised by swelling, inflammation and narrowing of the small airways, asthma is one of the most common chronic diseases among children. In recent years, asthma prevalence has increased significantly in India, likely due to rising pollution and fluctuating climate conditions. For example, childhood asthma cases have tripled over the last two decades. And while the condition may not widely differ from asthma in adults, it does pose unique challenges for children, by disrupting school, sports, play and sleep. It is also a leading cause of emergency department visits and hospitalisation.

World Lung Day, commemorated annually on September 25, serves as a global platform to address urgent respiratory diseases like asthma. For parents of children with asthma, it's an opportunity to deepen their understanding of asthma management, combat any myths pertaining to the condition and its correct treatment i.e. inhalation therapy. It is a platform through which inaccurate or second-hand information is debunked and replaced with evidence-based knowledge, helping families make informed decisions about their children's health and well-being.

### Fundamentals of disease management

Inhalation therapy is essential for treating chronic respiratory conditions like asthma due to its precise delivery and dosage. Inhalation devices deliver medicine directly to the lungs, needing lower doses and causing fewer side effects than oral medications. They also provide quick relief, which is crucial during an asthma attack. However, its effectiveness depends on patient adherence to the prescribed regime as well as device technique. The latter plays a crucial role in adherence, treatment efficacy and patient outcomes.

With children, controlling asthma typically takes about three years post-diagnosis, underscoring the need for strong management strategies from the start. Therefore, understanding asthma devices and techniques can empower parents to effectively manage their child's asthma, ensuring a healthier and more active life.

### Knowing your devices

Inhaled short- and long-term control medicines are administered through inhalers or nebulisers. It is important to consult with your child's doctor to identify the right device for them. Nebulisers turn medicine into a fine which a child

- When turned on, the machine creates a mist for the child to breathe in. Kids just need to stay still and breathe; it usually takes 5-10 minutes.
- If a child becomes restless and moves while the medicine is being administered, they may not get the full prescribed dosage. Therefore, keeping the child calm and still during treatment is important.
- Inhalers typically deliver medicine either as a spray or a fine powder.
- Metered Dose Inhalers (MDIs) push out a pre-measured spray of medicine when squeezed, from something that looks like an aerosol can. Hand-breath coordination is required, as the child must activate the device and inhale simultaneously. Some MDIs have counters to track remaining doses.
- Breath-Actuated MDIs release a dose triggered by a low inspiratory flow rate (i.e. gentle, minimal breathing). As these are breath-activated, they do overcome hand-breath coordination issues.
- Dry Powder Inhalers (DPIs) deliver medicine as a powder, requiring the child to inhale quickly and strongly.

Children aged 7 years and older generally have sufficient inspiratory flow to use all of the above inhalers. However, to avoid medicine ending up in the mouth instead of in the lungs it is recommended to attach a spacer. Spacers attach to the inhaler and a mouthpiece or mask, making it easier for young children to use, helping ensure medicine reaches the lungs.

Work with a healthcare professional to choose the right device for your child and learn how to use it properly so that you can ensure that your little one's technique is accurate. Correct usage ensures your child receives the right dose to control their asthma. Consult with your physician if your child struggles with the inhaler or isn't getting enough medicine. Finally, regular maintenance is crucial: replace inhalers that are expired or out of doses.

World Lung Day emphasises the importance of lung health, but it also underscores the power of knowledge in managing conditions like asthma. By understanding the basics of asthma devices and ensuring proper technique, parents can play a pivotal role in safeguarding their child's lung health, leading to better long-term outcomes and a higher quality of life.

(The author, Dr. P. Madan Mohan Rao, is a Chief Pediatrician from Hyderabad.)



# what's brewing?



● Aabha and Chandini



The dates of the upcoming Dandiya and Garba event have been revealed by actresses Chandini Bhagwanani and Varsha, as well as Aabha, the organiser of Rangtaali Dandiya Nights. Classic Convention Three in Shamshabad will host the Dandiya Nights event from October 4 to October 12.



● Aparna



● Urimila



● Gunjan and Archana



● Urimila



Nationwide, Country Club provides franchise options to owners of real estate. This thrilling expansion takes place in conjunction with "Dandiya Nights 2024," one of the most anticipated events of the year. The Dandiya Nights poster was unveiled on the occasion by Chairman and MD, Y. Rajeev Reddy, along with Simran Ahuja, Garba International Dancing Queen and former Miss India, Sandeep Kumar Chanda and Rel-event events.



PARTY

Photos by- SV Chary



Vahnija Global Life Sciences, in collaboration with PRGENIX, threw a lavish opening celebration to present its cutting-edge initiatives that seek to revolutionise the healthcare industry by harnessing the power of digitalisation. Prominent figures from the industry attended the event. V. Pathak, CEO of PRGENIX, and Dr. Yadukul S., Deputy Superintendent of AIIMS and ABDM Nodal Officer.



An awareness race in Hyderabad was successfully organised by the Teenage and Young Adult Cancer (TYAcan) Foundation, dedicated to meeting the special needs of cancer sufferers between the ages of 15 and 30. The 5 km, 10 km and 15 km runs were placed at the event. They began at Secretariat and went through Necklace Road, Sanjeevaiah Park, Khairatabad, before returning to Secretariat.



ScrapQ takes a major leap in environmental protection. They have made a significant impact on environmental conservation by securing a key agreement with railway authorities to manage and recycle plastic waste generated by railway passengers.



Bower School of Entrepreneurship, a new-age campus for Undergraduate students, focusing on entrepreneurial education, announced the launch of its 3 year program and their campus to facilitate future entrepreneurs at an event in Hyderabad. The student-centric and outcome-oriented program is the first of its kind program in India, equipped with Distinct Learner Tracks.



With the topic "Building a Holistic Community: Strategies and Solutions," the Let Us Dream conference was organised by St. Francis College for Women in Begumpet and co-hosted by Loyola Academy Degree and PG College, as well as BVRIT College, Hyderabad. The conference featured workshops and roundtable talks in the fields of social work, education and health.



Actor and UNDP Youth Champion Sanjana Sanghi delivered a keynote address at the iconic UN General Assembly Hall as the voice of young people during the opening ceremony of the Summit of the Future Action Days in New York. Sanghi became the youngest Indian actor to receive such an honour!

## FUN

### ARCHIE

### CALVIN AND HOBBS

### GARFIELD

### NANCY

### GINGER MEGGS

### REALITY CHECK

### SPEED BUMP

### CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20

### SUDOKU

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

### ACROSS

- A large animal
- Poultry product
- Shriek
- Very unhappy
- World sports games held every four years
- Buy and sell
- Observed
- Unwell

### DOWN

- These are held when people choose their government
- The number in an octet





## PAWAN KALYAN'S ASSURANCE TO THE TELUGU FILM INDUSTRY!

Pawan Kalyan, Deputy Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, stated that his NDA administration, under the guidance of N Chandrababu Naidu, will provide necessary support and stand by the Telugu film industry. The actor responded to Jr NTR's gratitude towards the AP and Deputy CM for approving a new G.O. to increase the ticket prices for the movie *Devara*. The upcoming movie featuring Jr NTR will premiere in Telugu and various other languages on September 27. Jr NTR, in his social media, thanked the AP Government. "My heartfelt gratitude to the Honourable CM, Sri @NCBN garu, and Honourable Deputy CM, Sri @PawanKalyan garu of the Andhra Pradesh government for passing the new G.O. for the #Devara release and for your continued support of Telugu cinema. I'm also thankful to the Cinematography Minister, Sri @kanduladurgesh garu (sic)," said Jr NTR on his social media.

**THE ANDHRA PRADESH GOVERNMENT HAS NOW GIVEN PERMISSION TO THE SIXTH SHOW OF DEVARA AND ALSO PASSED A G.O. FOR THE TICKET PRICE HIKE**

In reply to Jr NTR, Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan said his best wishes to Jr NTR's film *Devara* and gave assurance to the TFI to do the needful. "My best wishes on your film release @tarak9999 garu. Our NDA Govt in AP, under the leadership of SRI @ncbn garu will do the needful and standby for the Telugu film Industry (sic)," said Pawan Kalyan in reply to Jr NTR. The film's second trailer was unveiled on Sunday and indicates that it will be an action-packed movie. The narrative takes place against the backdrop of the sea, showcasing Koratala Siva's talent for blending commercial elements with social messages in this action film.



## MEGASTAR CHIRANJEEVI ENTERS INTO GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS

Megastar Chiranjeevi, who was honoured with the Guinness World Records, shares his feelings on getting the honour and his love for dance

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Megastar Chiranjeevi adds another feather to his cap in his 46-year-long career. This time, Chiranjeevi's name was included in the Guinness World Records for being acknowledged as the 'Most Prolific Film Star/Actor in the Indian Film Industry' by the organisation. He received the award in Hyderabad at a ceremony held on Sunday. Richard Stenning, representing Guinness World Records, travelled from the UK to award him with the unique record. Aamir Khan, a close friend of Chiranjeevi and a Bollywood superstar, attended the event! Speaking on this occasion, Chiranjeevi also shared that he has always been interested in dance since his childhood. "When I was in seventh and eighth grade, I used to dance to amuse my buddies. Back then, Telugu songs aired on Vividh Bharati and Radio Ceylon, which I danced to. Even at the NCC camps, I used to dance to entertain my friends," said Chiranjeevi as he spoke about his dance interest. He went on to share that getting a

Guinness World Record was not something that he had ever expected. The actor feels that dancing is an extra benefit for him. "When I was shooting for the *Pranam Khareedu* film, I entertained my co-artists and others. They told producer Kranthi Kumar about my dance skills and then he adjusted a song for me in that film. I first danced on the screen for the song *Enniyallo Enniyallo Endaka* and from then onwards, music has also been very important in my films," said Chiranjeevi.

The actor said that he got awards for his acting performance and also for his social work. "But the first time my dance skills got me this rare feat of Guinness World Records, which is a very memorable moment for me," said Chiranjeevi. He added that the presence of Aamir Khan also made this event another memorable one for him.

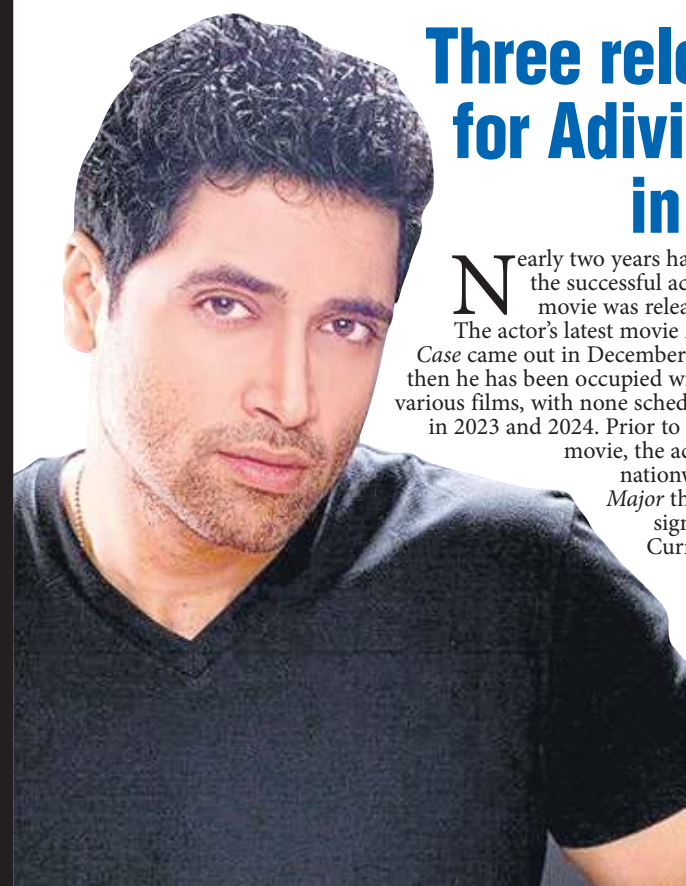
The Guinness World Records representative Richard said that Chiranjeevi has been the star of Telugu cinema for a whopping 156 films in a span of 45 years, achieving an unbeatable feat of 24,000 dance moves in 537 songs until today.

The actor also recalls that some of the directors and producers forcefully inserted songs in his films. "Producer Allu Aravind wanted a song in *Attaki*

*Yamudu Ammayiki Mogudu*, but there is no space for it. He then discussed it with directors Kodandarami Reddy and Allu Aravind and both inserted a song in it. Though the song is not related, the audience enjoyed the song and they used to replay it at that time," recalls Chiranjeevi. He also recalls how producer Ashwini Dutt inserted six songs in his film. "I said five songs are enough, but Ashwini Dutt wanted the sixth song and inserted it. That's how songs are taking the front place in most of my films. Audiences are coming second time, third time to see those songs," said Chiranjeevi.

There are a few coincidences that happened while the Megastar was taking this award. September 22 also happens to be the day when Chiranjeevi made his debut in the year 1978. His first film, *Pranam Khareedu*, released on this day. Another coincidence is that Chiranjeevi was born in 1955 and the Guinness Book of World Records also started in the same year.

Aamir Khan, the special guest at this event, said that he is a huge fan of Chiranjeevi. "We also love watching Chiranjeevi's dance in films since we can tell he is having fun while dancing to the music," said Aamir Khan about Chiranjeevi.



## Three releases for Adivi Sesh in 2025

Nearly two years have passed since the successful actor Adivi Sesh's movie was released in theaters.

The actor's latest movie *Hit: The Second Case* came out in December 2022 and since then he has been occupied with shooting for various films, with none scheduled for release in 2023 and 2024. Prior to the blockbuster movie, the actor starred in a nationwide film called *Major* that brought him significant success.

Currently, the actor is filming two movies at the same time; one is *Dacot* which falls under the action genre and features Shruti Haasan as the female protagonist. The

next film is *G2*, which is a follow-up to his previous movie *Goodachari*. Currently, filming is taking place for these two movies and he mentioned that he has plans for another film in 2025 as well. He recently announced on his social media page that there will be three releases in 2025!

He is the only actor who is taking his time and not rushing into doing movies. Only if he is fond of both the script and the team will he agree to take on the films. It has also been reported that Adivi Sesh is deeply immersed in the film-making process, providing input on the storyline, direction and production. A source says his films are frequently postponed for that very reason!

## Balakrishna drops by Venky, Anil Ravipudi's set

Senior actor Venkatesh Daggubati is collaborating once more with director Anil Ravipudi for his next movie. The team, who has returned from Pollachi, is now shooting swiftly at RFC in Hyderabad. The primary actors in the movie are taking part in the crucial moments.

Meanwhile, the team was joined by a guest on the film set. Nandamuri Balakrishna paid a visit to the film sets of Venkatesh and Anil Ravipudi, astonishing all present. Venky and Balakrishna have been good friends for many years and they greeted each other when Balakrishna arrived on the set of Venky's film.

Anil Ravipudi previously collaborated with Balakrishna and achieved success with the film *Bhagavanth Kesari*. Presently, Balakrishna arrived on the sets and inquired Anil Ravipudi about the progress of shooting for his new movie. In this movie, Aishwarya Rajesh takes on the role of Venkatesh's spouse, while Meenakshi Chaudhary portrays his former girlfriend. Dil Raju functions as the producer. The movie is scheduled to be released on Sankranti in 2025.

## A love story with an American backdrop in the making!

Sithara Entertainments is producing movies with major stars as well as commencing some small-scale films on the side. The movie *MAD Square* is set to be released in theaters shortly. Another film starring Ashok Galla as the main actor has been announced, with Udbhav making his directorial debut. Namrata Ghattamaneni, Mahesh Babu's wife, participated as the main guest, while Padma Galla, Ashok Galla's mother, also attended as a guest of honour. Manjula Swaroop, sister of Mahesh Babu, was also present during the debut of the new movie.

Actress Sri Gouri Priya, known for her role

in the film *MAD*, is starring as the female lead, while Rahul Vijay and Shivathmika, both known for their roles in the movie *Kota Bommalu PS*, are also part of the cast.

As stated by the makers, the movie is a blend of romance, comedy and drama. Udbhav is working on both the script and direction for the film that will take place in the United States. Starting from late September, the team will begin shooting regularly. The makers have described the movie as a unique, humorous and heartfelt drama that will resonate with a wide audience. The film is being produced by Suryadevara Naga Vamsi and Sai Soujanya.



## VARUN TEJ'S MATKA SEQUEL IN PROGRESS

Sequels are prevalent in Telugu cinema nowadays. The sequel *Mathu Vadalara 2* was recently released and it achieved the same level of success as the first part. The movie *Devara* featuring Jr NTR will be divided into two parts when released, while *Pushpa 2* starring Allu Arjun is set to be released in December. According to a source, Varun Tej starrer *Matka* is also gearing up for a sequel along with several other upcoming sequels.

The director of this film is Karuna Kumar, known for *Palasa* and Varun Tej has high expectations for it. Meenakshi Chaudhary and Nora Fatehi, along with Salloni from the famous movie *Maryada Ramanna*, are the main female actors in the movie. The movie is currently being filmed in and around Hyderabad.

While the shooting is going on, the makers decided to do a sequel to the film, reveals the source. "The director wanted to tell a long story and he needed two parts to narrate it. That's the reason; they wanted to do it in two parts and the first part is planning to release this year," said the source. Dr. Vijender Reddy Teegala and Rajani Thalluri are the producers of this film. The film's story is set against a period backdrop, from 1958 to 1982.





# INDIA TRUMPS BANGLADESH WITH ASHWIN'S SIX WICKETS

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Veteran off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin's mastery over his craft, underlined by a six-wicket haul, proved too immense for Bangladesh as India cantered to a massive 280-run victory in the first Test with five sessions to spare, here on Sunday. Maintaining a clean slate against the Asian neighbours, India now lead the two-match series 1-0. Starting from their overnight 158 for four, Bangladesh were bundled out for 234 in their second innings as Ashwin scythed through their line-up (6/88). Ravindra Jadeja supported him with a three-wicket haul (3/58). Skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto waged a lone battle for

the visitors with a sparkling 82 (127b, 8x4, 3x6), but there was hardly any meaningful support for him from his colleagues. The day, however, began on a bright note for the Bangladeshis with Shanto and Shakib Al-Hasan (25) extending their fifth-wicket stand to 48 runs, resisting the Indian bowlers in the first hour. Mohammed Siraj was the standout bowler for India during this phase as he worked up good pace and hit fine lines, but luck was not in his favour as edges eluded him or fell short of fielders. It left the pacer a frustrated man, evidenced in his constant tirade against Shanto, who remained unruffled. Shakib, who played a lovely front foot pull off Siraj for a



boundary, also received a reprieve as Rishabh Pant missed a stumping chance off Jadeja when the batter was on 17. At the first drinks break of the day, Bangladesh were 194 for four and they might have hoped to further stretch the

home side. However, the introduction of Ashwin immediately after the resumption of play changed the complexion of the proceedings. There was nothing much on the surface for the spinners but Ashwin, who possesses a scientist's acumen, does not need such generosity from the deck or conditions. The Chennai man put into use his ability to find acute angles from around the wicket to left-handers to optimum effect against Shakib. Ashwin pushed the ball a bit deep and it hit the handle of Shakib's bat as he attempted a forward defence, and the resultant edge went into the eager hands of Yashasvi Jaiswal at backward short leg. Soon, the star off-spinner completed his 37th five-

wicket haul, equalling Australian legend Shane Warne, nipping to stay of Mehidy Hasan Miraz (8), who lobbed a catch to Jadeja at long-on. In the process, Ashwin also went past New Zealand legend Richard Hadlee's five-wicket haul tally - 36. It was also the fourth time the veteran all-rounder took five-wicket or more in a Test match alongside a hundred. Jadeja, the long-time second fiddle to Ashwin, too had his own moments as he scalped the wickets of Shanto and Litton Das, who edged the left-arm spinner to Rohit Sharma at first slip. However, Shanto's batting will give a speck of hope for Bangladesh ahead of the next match for the visitors. While the wickets were on a constant tumble at the other

end, Shanto batted calmly and with purpose. The left-hander swept, reverse swept and cut spinners and pacers to collect his runs from all corners of Chepauk. But the task was way beyond such a one-man show on this day. Given his cavalier methods at the crease, the dismissal was inevitable and it came in the 59th over. Shanto tried to hoist Jadeja out of the park, but the shot lacked power and timing, and Jasprit Bumrah comfortably settled under the ball near mid-wicket. The dismissal also ended Bangladesh's hopes to last at least beyond the first session, and now they will have to think of ways to regroup ahead of the second Test at Kanpur, beginning September 27.

## Bumrah, Pant's fitness and form crucial for India's chances in Australia says Chappell

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah and flamboyant wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant must remain injury-free and in top form if India are to achieve a historic hat-trick of series wins Down Under, said former Australia captain Ian Chappell. One of the most respected voices in world cricket, Chappell feels that five Test matches, including three against New Zealand, is just the ideal build up that Indian team needed before the most high-profile bilateral series in this cycle of the World Test Championship. "India's priority will be to get as many players as possible into form without suffering major injuries. However, the most pressing matters are to achieve those aims with Jasprit Bumrah and Rishabh Pant," Chappell wrote in his column for ESPN Cricinfo. "Pant's ability to bounce back onto the Test scene is quite remarkable given his horrific car accident. He is a crucial wicketkeeper-batter in the Indian line-up and he'd give the team a major boost if he's at the peak of his powers for the Australian tour." Pant was the hero of India's last series win in 2020-21 when he scored 97 at Sydney



in a match-saving effort, while his 89 not out at the Gabba in the decider is now part of Indian cricketing folklore. One of the most astute readers of the game, Chappell explained why Pant's keeping will also be key to India's fortunes on bouncy tracks. "If Pant can perform at his best, he's the ideal keeper for Australian conditions. If he's able to continue with his agile performance standing back, that is what is required in Australia. You need a keeper who capably covers a lot of territory to both sides of the wicket. "Any keeper who fulfils those requirements not only

improves the team's fielding but also allows the slip fielders to spread wider to cover extra territory," he elaborated. Chappell believes that a stern warning from erstwhile head coach Ravi Shastri during his time at the helm might have helped Pant in raising the level of his glove work. "Pant's keeping standing up to the stumps drastically improved before his serious injury, following an ultimatum from coach Ravi Shastri. The fact that Pant progressed from being a dubious keeper against spinners to a very good gloveman standing up to the stumps, admirably displayed

his willingness to work hard." The other crucial aspect in Australia will be Bumrah's fitness and form. Since his comeback post lower back stress fracture surgery in August 2023, the star pacer has managed his workload beautifully across formats focussing on priority format at any given point in time. However, he has also been pretty regular in Test matches playing bulk of the red-ball games against South Africa away and England at home. "The good form and fitness of both Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj - the two most successful pace bowlers on the last Australian tour - is essential. Of those two,

Bumrah is the attack leader. "A critical part of India's build-up to the Australian tour will be ensuring Bumrah is in form but remains fit to play the bulk of the five Tests." He also cited how during his captaincy years, his lethal weapon Dennis Lillee would always want to play as many games when he was in form rather than being wrapped in "cotton wool". Chappell also hoped that Mohammed Shami can get fit by the time series starts. "It would be ideal if the mercurial Mohammed Shami is fit for Australia but the presence of a good left-arm pacer would also improve India's variety in attack. "The spin bowling is in good hands with Jadeja and Ashwin. Nevertheless I wouldn't discount the importance of Kuldeep Yadav on some Australian surfaces." For Chappell, Yashasvi Jaiswal has had a good start to his Test career but Australian tracks will demand different temperament from the Mumbai left-hander. "Of the young batters Yashasvi Jaiswal looks very talented but he needs to show good form in Australia. Both Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli should act as guiding lights for the younger batters on tour," Chappell wrote.



## Indonesia Para-Badminton: Umesh clinches gold; Sukant, Sivarajan, Mandeep claim silver

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Umesh Vikram secured gold in the SL3 event, while the trio of Sukant Kadam, Sivarajan Solaimalai, and Mandeep Kaur claimed silver medals in their respective categories at the Indonesia Para-Badminton International on Sunday. Sukant bagged the silver in the men's singles SL4 event, while Sivarajan won the silver in men's singles SH6 category. Mandeep clinched the silver in women's singles SL3 category. India delivered a stellar performance in Sarakata, Indonesia, winning as many as 34 medals in the International Level 2 tournament. In men's singles SL3, Umesh triumphed over compatriot and top seed Nehal Gupta, winning 12-21 21-8 21-19 in the final. Sukant, who had missed out on a bronze medal in Paris after losing to Indonesia's Fredy Setiawan in the play-off, fell short again in the SL4 final, losing 14-21 14-21 to the Indonesian. "I gave my best in the final, but Fredy played an exceptional game," Sukant said. "It was a great learning experience, and I'll keep pushing to aim for gold in future competitions." Sivarajan, who had lost to Great Britain's Krysten Coombs in Paris, faced a tough challenge from top-seeded Indonesian Subhan Subhan in the SH6 final, ultimately losing 19-21 15-21.

Mandeep, who had suffered a defeat to Nigeria's Mariam Eniola Bolaji in Paris, also finished with silver after losing 10-21 5-21 to Indonesia's top seed Qonitah Ikhtiar Syakuroh in the SL3 final. Despite the silver medal finishes, the Indian contingent's overall performance was strong, with Umesh claiming the lone gold in singles. Jagadees Dilli added to India's success by securing bronze in the same category, making it a sweep for India with seven players reaching the quarterfinals. In women's singles SL3, Mandeep's silver was complemented by Neeraj's bronze. In the men's singles SH6 category, Sudarsan Saravanakumar Muthusamy also earned bronze, while Sivarajan secured silver. Among other Indians in fray, Naveen Sivakumar won bronze in men's singles SL4 category, while Ruthick Ragupathi claimed silver in the men's singles SU5. Koshika Devda secured bronze in the women's singles SU5. In the mixed doubles SL3-SL4 category, Nehal and Naveen Sivakumar earned silver, while Umesh and Surya, along with Harshit and Kartik, claimed bronze. The men's doubles SU5 saw Hardik Makkar and Ruthick Ragupathi claim gold. In the women's wheelchair WH1 category, Pallavi Kuluvehalli secured gold, with Prema Vishwas and Anusha Chidananda taking bronze. Alpha James

clinched gold in the women's singles WH2 category, and Shabana took home bronze. The mixed doubles WH1-WH2 category saw Poorna Rao and Munna Khalid win bronze. In the men's WH1 category, Prem Kumar Ale secured bronze, while Neeraj and Arati Patil, along with Vaishali Nilesh and Germany's Irina Whalers, claimed bronze in the women's doubles SL3-SU5 category. Additionally, Alpha James and Pallavi Kuluvehalli, along with Anusha Chidananda and Shabana won bronze in the women's doubles WH1-WH2 category. Mohun Bagan Super Giant seeks first win of season in match against NorthEast United Kolkata, Sep 22 (PTI) Mohun Bagan Super Giant will aim to grab their first win of the season when they clash against NorthEast United in their second home game of the Indian Super League 2024-25 season here on Monday. The Mariners had shared the spoils with Mumbai City FC in their opening match. NorthEast United, meanwhile, earned a win in their first game, courtesy a late goal by Alaedine Ajaraie against debutants Mohammedan Sporting. They will now take on the Mariners whom they defeated a few weeks back in the Durand Cup 2024 final and will be upbeat to land their third successive win in Kolkata.

## Super sub Vinicius leads to Real Madrid comeback win over Espanyol

AP ■ BARCELONA

Joan Garcia showed why he is an up-and-coming goalkeeper - until Vinicius Junior got the Real Madrid scoring machine going. Vinicius went off the bench to assist Rodrygo and score one of his own and Kylian Mbappé added a late penalty as Madrid topped a tenacious Espanyol 4-1 in the Spanish league on Saturday. Garcia made several saves for the visitors before the Olympic gold medalist started an attack with a long pass from his box that ended with an own goal by counterpart Thibaut Courtois in the 54th minute. But Garcia's only slip of the match let Dani Carvajal equalize four minutes later when Jude Bellingham's low pass squirmed under the goalie. The Madrid right back had to only push it over the line for 1-1. Vinicius rested in the first half as Carlo Ancelotti rotated his attacking bunch. But the coach sent the Brazil forward on immediately after Espanyol went ahead. Vinicius then took control, curling in a perfect cross with the outer tip of his left boot for Rodrygo to score in the 75th. Vinicius beat Garcia in the 78th for his goal after Espanyol lost the ball and Mbappé played his attack partner clear on the break. Mbappé converted a 90th-minute spot kick after Endrick went on late and



earned a penalty from Carlos Romero. "We made mistakes that maybe you can get away with in other games, but not here," Espanyol coach Manolo Gonzalez said. Madrid pulled to one point behind leader Barcelona before it plays at Villarreal on Sunday. Bellingham had a scare when

he fell awkwardly on his right shoulder in the first half, but after briefly being seen by a doctor on the sideline he went back on. Ancelotti said it did not look like the England midfielder was fine. Unsurprisingly, Ancelotti said he was satisfied with the "well-rounded" performance. Garcia in goalAfter helping Spain win Olympic gold this

summer, Garcia was rumored to have been close to a move to Arsenal before finally staying put at the club he helped return to Spain's top flight last season. And he showed his quality at the Santiago Bernabeu. Garcia made at least eight saves before he turned playmaker with a booming kick from his box that

launched Jofre Carreras down the left flank. Jofre won the end line before his low pass hit Courtois' leg and turned into the net. But once Madrid started clicking, even an inspired Garcia couldn't keep them out. Double deflectionTwo similar goals within three minutes of one another lifted Valencia to a 2-0 win over Girona at home. A pair of shots by Luis Rioja and Dani Gómez in the 56th and 58th both took deflections off Girona defender Juanpe Ramirez before skirting past goalkeeper Paulo Gazzaniga. Gazzaniga was to blame for Girona's loss at Paris Saint-Germain midweek in the Catalan club's Champions League debut. The goalie let a cross slip through his hands in stoppage time in a 1-0 loss in France. Can't get goingReal Sociedad's surprising struggles continued after a scoreless draw at promoted Valladolid. The team from San Sebastian, which has consistently finished near the top of the table in recent years, has only one victory in seven rounds. Sociedad visits Nice when the Europa League group stage opens next week. Also, Ante Budimir earned and converted a penalty and Aimar Oroz took the winner as Osasuna beat Las Palmas 2-1 at home. The team from the Canary Islands remained in last place and without a win.

## Arshdeep takes six in India D's consolation win

PTI ■ ANANTAPUR

Arshdeep Singh saved his best for the last game and returned career-best figures of 6 for 40 as India D thrashed India B by 257 runs to end their Duleep Trophy campaign with a consolation victory here on Sunday. Earlier, India D, who started the final day's play at 244 for 5, ended their second innings at 305, leaving India B with a target of 373 in little over 70 overs. Arshdeep and Aditya Thakare (4/59) then bowled unchanged for 22.2 overs to bundle out Abhimanyu Easwaran's team for a lowly 115. Arshdeep also recorded his best match figures of 9 for 90, with the distinction of getting out India's T20 skipper Suryakumar Yadav (16) twice in the same game. India B skipper Easwaran once again failed to deliver when it mattered in the larger context as Arshdeep had him caught by Akash Sengupta for 19. Thanks to Nitish Reddy, who swung his bat around for a quickfire 40 off 43 balls, India B managed to cross 100. Eight India B batters failed to log double digit score. India B thus ended the campaign with seven points from three games, having won

their opening match and then getting a point after conceding the first-innings lead. India D, who had lost the first two games outright, will finish last despite logging full six points. Arshdeep, who got pipped by Yash Dayal into the Test squad as the first-choice left-arm pacer, certainly made an impression as he got to move the ball away from the right-handers and bowled the ideal length to trouble the top-order. At the start of the day, Ricky Bhui (119) duly completed his second ton of the tournament and remained not out, having faced only 125 balls. He hit 15 fours and three maximums in the process. In the morning, India D batted for 14.3 overs to add another 61 runs to their total as Bhui scored his second successive hundred. With scores of 56 and 119, the former India U-19 skipper was named Player of the Match. Brief Scores: India D 349 and 305 in 58.3 overs (Ricky Bhui 119, Shreyas Iyer 50, Mukesh Kumar 4/98, Navdeep Saini 3/58). India B 282 and (target 373) 115 in 22.2 overs (Arshdeep Singh 6/40). India D won by 257 runs.