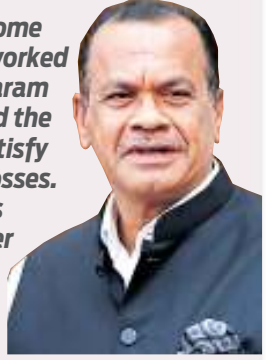


QUOTE OF THE DAY

The pioneer

Do not get inspired by those involved in the Kaleshwaram Project but rather follow the path of legendary engineers like Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya. Some engineers who worked on the Kaleshwaram Project maligned the profession to satisfy their political bosses. Young engineers should remember that they were hired to serve the public



= Komati Reddy Venkat Reddy, Minister P2

'Terrorism won't be allowed to stage comeback in J&K'



5

AVNEET KAUR'S JET-SETTING TRAVELS FROM LONDON TO GREECE



9

Can Devara Break '100 crore barrier ON DAY 1?'



P11

DON'T MISS...

Bhatti hails Hoover Dam for safety ...

Telangana's Deputy Chief Minister and Energy Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu lauded the Hoover Dam as a model of water utilisation and safety practices. Currently on an official visit to the United States, Bhatti Vikramarka, along with Energy Department Secretary Ronald Ross, Singareni CMD N Balaram and Special Secretary Krishna Bhaskar, visited the Hoover Dam on Wednesday. The US Federal government officials gave an in-depth briefing on the engineering marvel, highlighting how the dam, built during the severe drought ...

-PAGE: 3

MEIL to develop 4,000 MW ...

Megha Engineering & Infrastructures Limited (MEIL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department of Water Resources, Government of Maharashtra, to develop two prominent Pumped Storage Projects with a total capacity of 4,000 MW, the Kamod Pumped Storage Project in Mandurbar district and the Ghosla Pumped Storage Project in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar district in the state of Maharashtra. It is noteworthy that MEIL is executing its first pumped storage hydro projects under the ...

-PAGE: 4

India needs to do more to boost...

India has done well in areas like infrastructure in the last 10 years, but it also needs to do more in other sectors to boost local manufacturing and job creation, former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan said on Thursday. In an interview with PTI, Rajan further said the government's focus on production, whether it is goods or services is a good thing, but it is also important to do it the right way. Responding to a question on the Modi government's flagship initiative 'Make in India', he said, 'I would say the intention...'

-PAGE: 8

India likely to maintain...

India would want their big guns Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma to fire when the mighty hosts aim for a clean sweep against a beleaguered Bangladesh in the second and final Test starting here on Friday. The all-round show of Ravichandran Ashwin, Shubman Gill's sublime hundred, Ravindra Jadeja's quality batting and Rishabh Pant's roaring comeback allowed India to script a comfortable victory in Chennai despite being put under pressure by the Bangladesh pacers on day one. The way India...

-SPORTS

CM sets six-month deadline for priority Irrigation Projects

Asks officials to focus on key projects

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has asked officials to prioritize the completion of irrigation projects. He emphasized the need to focus on projects that can provide irrigation to the maximum possible area within the next six months.

The Chief Minister said that projects nearing completion, which can serve a substantial command area, should be prioritized over others.

He advised the Irrigation Department to speed up work on projects that are set to be completed within the next two years and urged them to prepare an action plan to meet deadlines and achieve targets within stipulated timeframes.

The Chief Minister said that spending on long-pending projects, which have dragged on for five or six years would not yield benefits. Instead, completing projects that are already 75% or more complete could bring irrigation to a larger area by the next Kharif season.

The Chief Minister also asked the Finance Department to ensure the availability of funds for priority projects in both the Godavari and Krishna basins.

He added that bills for these projects should be paid through a green channel to ensure quicker progress, especially those that would irrigate more land in a shorter time.

Revanth urged officials to resolve issues promptly to overcome obstacles and address problems impeding project completion. He also highlighted challenges such as payment disputes with the power sector and asked the Irrigation Department to organize a joint meeting with TRANSCO, GENCO and DISCOMs to resolve billing issues. Coordination with the Revenue Department was also stressed to speed up land acquisition.

Continued on Page 5



'We don't need 2 BHK houses'

Musi riverfront residents oppose HYDRAA ops ... High tension marks survey

'RB-X' marked on houses identified for demolition in Musi River's buffer zone, FTL area

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Tension gripped several neighbourhoods along the Musi River as revenue and municipal officials conducted surveys to identify houses for demolition and marked them 'RB-X.'

Early on Thursday morning a drive began in the areas of KCR Nagar, Chaderghat, Shankar Nagar and Musi Nagar among others.

Officers arrived at the houses and asked the residents for their Aadhaar cards, and electricity and water bills. Then they explained with maps that the houses are in the Full Tank Level (FTL) and buffer zones of the Musi River and marked their houses RB-X.

Many residents, who have lived in these areas for generations, said that they are not interested in the proposed relocation plans which include providing 2BHK homes. Some residents said they would asked us if I am the owner or a tenant and demanded my electricity bill, Aadhaar card and property papers. "I was reluctant to explain but submitted all my papers. I am illegal houses in the Musi River area and in Bahadurpura 386 structures were identified. Another woman Sheena said, "I am facing medical problems and still work from 9 am to 7 pm. My house is marked for demolition. I do not want a 2BHK house which is far away from the city."

Many residents who saw the officers and had not left for work gathered and said that they have houses and don't need the admin's 2BHK houses. "Our houses are our only assets and the government will not provide anything they promise after the demolitions. Now we can fight for our rights. The facilities in 2BHK houses are not good. How can our children study," another resident said.

Officers arrived at the houses and asked the residents for their Aadhaar cards, and electricity and water bills. Then they explained with maps that the houses are in the Full Tank Level (FTL) and buffer zones of the Musi River and marked their houses RB-X.

remain in their homes even if it meant facing demolition.

One of the residents, K, Ravi, said while speaking to 'The Pioneer,' "The officers came and working in a retail shop and this house is my only asset. How can I lose it? I have three children to maintain," he added.

The officials identified 2,166



Cabinet expansion on the anvil?

Congress trying to finalise names for cabinet berths

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress high command in consultation with Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has been doing exercises to finalise names for the remaining six cabinet berths as competition is tough for them.

According to sources, the party will give two posts to Reddys, one each to BC, SC, ST and minorities or women. If not given to minorities/women, most probably that will go to BCs, it is learnt.

However, the Congress is planning to give cabinet-rank corporation chairman posts to MLAs, who did not get cabinet berths.

The party may give the posts of TGSRTC chairman, Yadagiri Gutta Temple Development Authority (YTDA) chairman, Musi River Front Development Corporation (MRFDC) Chairman, Transco and Genco chairmen and Medical Infrastructure Development Corporation chairman to MLAs who did not get a berth in the cabinet, it is learnt.

The party would also give the Chief Whip post to one of the MLAs who did not get a cabinet berth.

According to sources, the MLAs in the fray are P. Sudarshan Reddy, Komati Reddy Raj Gopal Reddy, Malreddy Ranga Reddy, T. Rammohan Reddy and some others from the Reddy community.

Vakiti Srihari, Beerla Ilaiah and Aadi Srinivas are from the BC community, Gaddam Vivek and Adluri Laxman and some others are from SCs. Balu Naik and Ramchandra Naik are from STs.

MLC Amer Ali Khan is the only choice for the Congress if it wants to give a Minister post to minorities.

Continued on Page 5



'Digital health cards for TG residents in 30 days'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

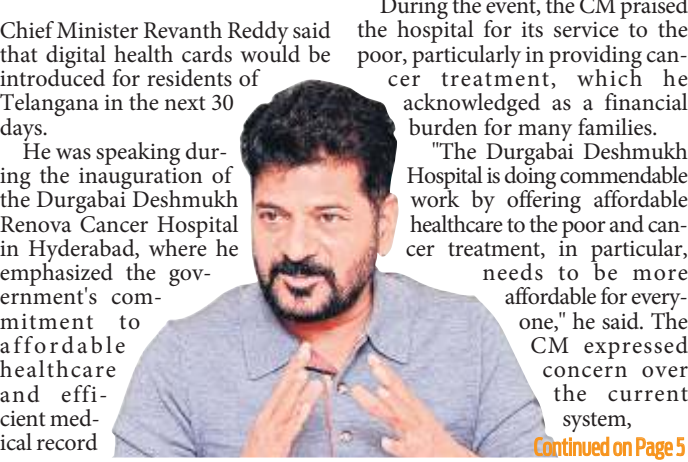
Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that digital health cards would be introduced for residents of Telangana in the next 30 days.

He was speaking during the inauguration of the Durgabai Deshmukh Renova Cancer Hospital in Hyderabad, where he emphasized the government's commitment to affordable healthcare and efficient medical record management.

During the event, the CM praised the hospital for its service to the poor, particularly in providing cancer treatment, which he acknowledged as a financial burden for many families.

"The Durgabai Deshmukh Hospital is doing commendable work by offering affordable healthcare to the poor and cancer treatment, in particular, needs to be more affordable for everyone," he said. The CM expressed concern over the current system,

Continued on Page 5



Rs 508.95 crore sanctioned for energizing farm pumps

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a move to boost agricultural infrastructure, the Telangana Southern Power Distribution Company Limited (TGSPPCL) has sanctioned Rs 508.95 crore for providing electricity supply to agricultural pumps across multiple districts.

This scheme, spread across

Continued on Page 5

Land scam worth billions behind Pharma City cancellation: KTR



2

TG didn't submit reports on devolution of powers to RLBs, ULBs

NAVEENA GHANATE
naveena.ghanate@gmail.com
■ HYDERABAD

Telangana's performance in local governance has come under scrutiny following revelations that the state has not submitted reports on the devolution of powers to Rural Local Bodies (RLBs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).

Despite receiving national awards regarding the achievements of panchayats and municipalities, this lack of reporting has raised concerns from the 16th Finance Commission, questioning the gap between the accolades received and the failure to comply with fundamental governance obligations.

Highly placed sources said the 16th Finance Commission has raised concerns over Telangana's failure to submit reports on the devolution of functions by key departments like the Municipal

Continued on Page 5

Govt hikes minimum wage rates for workers up to Rs 1,035 per day

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union government on Thursday announced a hike in minimum wage rates for workers up to Rs 1,035 a day by revising variable dearness allowance.

This adjustment is aimed at helping workers cope with the rising cost of living, a labour ministry statement said. After revision, minimum wage rates in area 'A' for workers in construction, sweeping, cleaning, loading & unloading for unskilled work will be Rs 783 a day (Rs 20,358 per month). For semi-skilled workers, the minimum wage rate will be Rs 868 a day (Rs 22,568 per month) and for skilled, clerical and watch & wards

Continued on Page 5



States must conduct caste census on their own: Eatala

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

It would be better if states conducted caste censuses on their own, the BJP's Malkajgiri MP, Eatala Rajender, said here on Thursday.

He said that some castes are in different categories in different states. A caste which is considered upper caste in one state is considered backward caste in other states and so state governments have to conduct caste censuses comprehensively and reveal details of the populations of various castes, he said.

"The courts would also not object if states conduct caste censuses on their own. Tamil Nadu is the best example of this, Eatala said.

Eatala said that it is not possible to hide religion, caste and nationality these days. Some say why raise the caste issue after 75 years of independence. However, caste still exists in the country, he said. Eatala demanded that the state government should increase the quota for BC reservations before local body elections. He said that all political parties should provide appropriate positions to BCs first and that the number of OBC Ministers is more for the first time in Prime Minister Modi's cabinet.

He said that an OBC has not become the Chief Minister of Telangana so far and recalled Modi's statement that the BJP will appoint an OBC individual as the Chief Minister of Telangana if voted to power.



Did not manufacture drugs flagged in CDSCO report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Drug companies, including Sun Pharma and Torrent Pharma, on Thursday termed the medicines flagged in the central drug regulatory authority's report as 'counterfeits' and not manufactured by them while asserting that their products conform to quality standards.

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has listed samples of more than 50 drugs, including paracetamol, Pan D, calcium and vitamin D3 supplements, and anti-diabetes pills, as "not of standard quality" in its latest report.

When contacted, a Sun Pharma spokesperson said the company has investigated the matter and found that Pulmosil (Sildenafil Injection), batch no KFA0300; Pantocid (Pantoprazole Tablets IP), batch no SID2041A and Ursocol 300 (Ursodeoxycholic Acid Tablets IP), batch no GTE1350A are spurious. "The said batches tested by the regulatory authority are not manufactured by Sun Pharma," it stated.

The company is taking several steps to ensure patient safety, it added. "Some of our leading medicine brands now come with QR codes printed on the label, allowing patients to easily verify their authenticity by scanning them. Additionally, we have incorporated a 3D security strip for further protection," the drug maker noted.

Torrent Pharmaceuticals stated that to verify the genuineness of the sample collected by the CDSCO, it carried out an evaluation of the same batch of Shelcal 500. "The outcome of the analysis concluded that the sample seized by CDSCO is not manufactured by Torrent and is in fact non-genuine and spurious," it stated.

As anti-counterfeit measures, the company has implemented QR codes on Shelcal, displaying batch manufacturing details to verify its

Continued on Page 5



Srujan serves legal notice on KTR, demands public apology

Former BRS MLA Kandala Upendar Reddy's son-in-law Sudini Srujan Reddy has served legal notices on BRS Working President KT Rama Rao on Thursday alleging that KTR had levelled baseless allegations regarding Amrut tenders and demanded a public apology.

KTR had said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy had allotted Amrut Scheme tenders worth Rs 1,500 crore to his brother-in-law Sudini Srujan Reddy although Shodha had no eligibility for that.

However, Srujan in his legal notice sought a public apology from KTR and demanded that he remove the allegations from his social media account and websites.

He also said that KTR made baseless allegations that the CM awarded Amrut tenders to Shodha just because Srujan is a close relative of the CM.

Srujan said in his legal notice that the Shodha Construction Company had been in business from 2010 and that Shodha has been running joint ventures with AIR and IHP companies from 2020.

Kaleshwaram: a model study in failure: CM

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy described the collapse of the Kaleshwaram Project as a "model study in failure."

The CM was speaking during a function held at the Jala Soudha on Thursday during which he handed over appointment orders to newly recruited Assistant Executive Engineers (AEEs) of the Irrigation Department.

He pointed out that despite spending Rs 1 lakh crore on the lift irrigation scheme, the project failed to irrigate even one lakh acres and called for accountability from both officials and politicians.

He demanded transparency to find out who was responsible for the failure, whether it was officials or the politicians who controlled them.

Speaking at the five-day orientation programme held at the National Academy of Construction (NAC) in Madhapur, on Thursday, Venkat told the 156 engineers of the Roads and Buildings (R&B) Department selected by the TSPSC that he was concerned about the shortage of engineers in the last decade.

The state, as well as the R&B department, suffered due to lack of engineers which left many works unsupervised.

"In some cases, there was only one engineer for 10 mandals. To address this, 1540 Assistant Executive Engineers were recruited through the TSPSC, of which 156 have been allotted to the R&B Department," Venkat said.



Don't learn from Kaleshwaram engineers, says Venkat

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Govt not following natural justice while demolishing houses: Kishan

Declaring that the Congress government is trying to get name and fame through demolitions, the Union Minister of Coal and Mines, G. Kishan Reddy, said that the Congress government is demolishing buildings without following natural justice.

In a letter addressed to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy on Thursday, Kishan said that the Congress government chose demolitions to be in the news and that there is a need to prepare a clear policy for

demolitions. "We do not support encroachments and illegal construction, however, a government must act legally, fairly and in accordance with natural justice. This is especially so in the case of the poor and middle class. In most cases, the government is not following the principles of natural justice. There is a need to think sensitively about what is being demolished today. The government has provided roads, streetlights, drinking water facilities, drainage facilities, electricity connections and

Congress ready for by-polls: Kadiyam

Station Ghanpur MLA Kadiyam Srihari, who was elected from the BRS and later joined the Congress, said that the Congress is ready to face by-elections.

Countering BRS Working President KT Rama Rao's statement that the state will face by-elections, Kadiyam said that the BRS will not be able to save its deposits if by-elections are held.

Speaking to the media on Thursday, Kadiyam said that the BRS is the party that encouraged defections from the beginning by destroying democratic systems.

He said the BRS is synonymous with corruption and irregularities and that the BRS has a history of swallowing the legislature members of other parties.

Reacting to Kadiyam Srihari comments, KTR reiterated that by-elections will come soon and that the 10 MLAs who defected from the BRS should get ready for that. The 10 defectors would be defeated, he added.

KTR also inaugurated a primary school in Boyinapalli mandal's Kodurupaka village in memory of his grandparents, the late Joginipalli Keshavarao and Lakshmbai.

Skill development colleges in all districts soon: Ponguleti

The Congress government has launched extensive steps to ensure the future of Telangana youth, Revenue, Housing, Information and PR Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy said.

He said the Congress government established the Skill University to provide skill training to unemployed youth and that the Congress government will establish Skill Development Colleges in all district headquarters soon.

Ponguleti was speaking while attending the Swatcha Hi Seva event organised under the PMKVY 4.0 (Temporary

BRS to fight for BC quota on the TN model

A delegation of BRS BC leaders met with senior officials of the Tamil Nadu BC Welfare department in Chennai on Thursday, advocating for reservations similar to those implemented in Tamil Nadu.

The delegation, comprising former ministers, ex-MLAs, MPs and chairpersons, stressed that achieving reservations for BCs in education and employment is essential for their advancement.

During the four-hour-long meeting held at the BC Bhavan in Chennai, the delegation discussed in detail the reservation policies and development schemes being implemented for BCs in Tamil Nadu.

Senior officials, led by Tamil Nadu BC Welfare Secretary Vijayakumar, gave a comprehensive presentation on the

Ponnam to launch 'Pravasi Prajavani' counter for Gulf NRIs today

Transport and BC Welfare Minister Ponnam Prabhakar would launch a special 'Pravasi Prajavani' counter for Gulf workers and NRIs at the Praja Bhavan on Friday at 10 am at the Mahatma Jyotirao Phule Praja Bhavan.

Planning Board Vice-President G. Chinna Reddy, MLAs from constituencies with large numbers of NRIs, the TPCC's NRI wing, families of Gulf workers, Gulf union leaders and others will attend the programme.

Ponnam appealed to the

GHMC allots 2BHK flats to 16 people as part of rehabilitation

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has announced that it has distributed 2BHK flats to 16 people on Thursday.

The residents used to live in Jaibhavani Nagar near Musi river. They were chosen as beneficiaries, which was the recent decision made in Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's review meeting with the officials.

KTR slams govt for ignoring Siricilla weavers, inaugurates school in memory of grandparents

During a visit to Siricilla, KTR criticised the government for its lack of support for weavers in the region, drawing attention to their struggles and the rise in suicides.

He stressed how the BRS government under KCR's leadership had given orders worth Rs 3,312 crore for Bathukamma sarees and other garments, which helped the weavers financially.

He accused the Congress government of cancelling these orders, pushing weavers back into distress, with 22 suicides so far. "The government's apathy towards weavers is unbearable. They promised jobs for 365 days but have left weavers without work for 10 months now," he said.

KTR said that despite warning the government about weaver suicides, there has been no action. He pointed out the stark difference between the government's treatment of the poor and the rich. "While the homes of the poor are being demolished, big



KTR slams government for neglecting weavers in Siricilla, inaugurates school in memory of grandparents

builders continue constructing massive buildings on the banks of the Musi River without facing any consequences," he added.

KTR also inaugurated a primary school in Boyinapalli mandal's Kodurupaka village in memory of his grandparents, the late Joginipalli Keshavarao and Lakshmbai.

Speaking on the occasion, KTR shared the emotional connection he has with the village. "I am not here as a politician, but as the grandson of my beloved grandparents. I have fond memories and a deep connection with this village."

Land scam worth billions behind Pharma City cancellation: KTR

In a scathing attack on the Congress government, KT Rama Rao, the working president of the BRS, said that a land scam worth thousands of crores is the reason for the proposed cancellation of the Hyderabad Pharma City project.

Speaking at a press conference in Siricilla, KTR accused the government of deceiving both the public and the High Court. He questioned the government's stance, claiming that it is misleading both the public and the judiciary by stating different things about the Pharma City project.

"There's a scam worth thousands of crores behind the Pharma City cancellation. We will soon reveal details," KTR stated, adding that the move is "a conspiracy to help the Chief Minister's brothers with billions of Rupees."

Artisans stage protest at TGSPDCL office demanding regularisation

The TGSPDCL office in Mint Compound witnessed a massive protest by over 2,000 artisans, who staged a dharna demanding the regularisation of their services.

The Artisans JAC (Joint Action Committee) led the protest, insisting that only after regularising the artisans should the recruitment for posts like JLMs, subordinates and



Artisans protesting at TGSPDCL office demanding regularisation

'Promote Telangana seeds'

Agriculture Minister Tummalala Nageshwar Rao gave a call to the Seedsmen Association to make Telangana seeds gain ground not only in India but also abroad.

"This Seedsmen Association which started with 20 to 30 people in 1995, today has 507 members representing all the seed companies of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, and on behalf of our government, we extend our heartiest wishes to all of you who have made Telangana the top in the country in agriculture, especially in seed production. Producing the seeds of various crops is being done on around eight lakh acres across the state and this sector is now not only meeting the needs of the state but also the country's needs," he said.

Modi 'systematically' ended employment system

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday over the unemployment issue and accused him of "systematically" ending the employment system of the country.

Addressing a poll rally in Assandh, the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha exuded confidence that the Congress would sweep the October 5 Haryana assembly election.

Alleges Rahul Gandhi at Haryana rally

BJP of dividing the people and pitting them against each other. The Congress is going to sweep the Haryana elections. A storm is coming and we will form the government for all," Gandhi said.



former Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, the party's state unit chief Udaibhan and other leaders were present at the rally. Attacking the BJP government, Gandhi said it has "destroyed" Haryana.

Cong's maximum time goes into infighting: Modi

The Congress spends most of its time infighting and every child in Haryana is aware of it, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday while asserting the people have decided to give one more chance to the BJP to serve the state.

Interacting with Haryana BJP workers through the NaMo app, he discussed field-work at the booth level for the upcoming state polls and encouraged them to devise a strategy for the party to win the election.

While alleging the Congress has failed as an opposition in the past 10 years, PM Modi claimed the grand old party's maximum time goes into infighting and taking on each other. Every child in Haryana is aware of the grand old party's internal strife, the prime minister said.

Attacking the Congress, he said, "The entire basis of those fighting against us in the polls is lies. They repeatedly tell lies, their talks have no head and tail and they vitiate the atmosphere."



Narendra Modi at a rally

Today Almanac with weather forecast and other information for September 26, 2024.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Trouble for Siddaramaiah

Karnataka CM faces fresh political and legal challenge as alleged land scam during his previous tenure gains traction

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is facing the heat as a special court has directed the Mysuru Lokayukta police to investigate his connection with an alleged MUDA scam. This follows the Karnataka High Court's dismissal of Siddaramaiah's petition challenging the Governor's approval for the investigation. Siddaramaiah finds himself embroiled in a controversy as a probe into an alleged land scam during his previous tenure (2013-2018) gains momentum. The allegations revolve around irregularities in the denotification of prime land in Bengaluru, where government-owned land was allegedly released for private development, bypassing legal procedures. This development has not only triggered a political storm but also raised questions about the stability of his government, which is already navigating internal challenges. The case, brought to light through opposition parties and activists, accuses Siddaramaiah of misusing his position to facilitate the denotification of land in favour of private individuals. It is claimed that these actions led to substantial financial losses to the state exchequer. The denotification process is typically reserved for cases where the government no longer requires the land for public purposes. However, the opposition alleges that the decision-making was influenced by vested interests.



The probe, aims to examine Siddaramaiah's role and whether he acted within the framework of the law. While the investigation is in its preliminary stages, the political ramifications are already visible. With the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) demanding a thorough investigation and even his resignation, the pressure on Siddaramaiah is mounting. In response to the accusations, Siddaramaiah has strongly denied any wrongdoing, calling the probe a politically motivated attempt to tarnish his image and destabilise his government. Siddaramaiah's defence rests on his claim that the land denotification was carried out in compliance with legal procedures and was vetted by relevant authorities. He also pointed out that similar cases have been registered against several politicians across party lines, suggesting that this is a standard political practice to harass the CM's of the Opposition parties and not unique to his administration. If the investigation gathers pace and incriminating evidence surfaces, it could weaken his authority, both within his party and in the eyes of the public. The BJP, as the principal opposition in Karnataka, is likely to leverage the land scam to question Siddaramaiah's integrity and leadership. Their demand for accountability could lead to prolonged political uncertainty, especially if the case moves into the courts or if there are calls for judicial oversight. Further, any perception of corruption, especially in a state like Karnataka where electoral battles are fiercely fought, could erode Siddaramaiah's public image. His government, which came to power on promises of transparency and development, may find itself in a difficult position defending its track record if this case gains momentum and more evidence surfaces.

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Exploring the depths of the human mind

As AI draws comparisons to human cognition, the mystery of the mind grows more complex, raising crucial questions about its unused potential



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM



The human mind is a unique organic entity whose lengths of reach and visions of the range are still to be fully mapped. Many believe that an average mind works at less than 30 per cent of its potential. Putting this in the context of artificial intelligence, the matter becomes even more complex. There is a theory doing the rounds in the field of artificial intelligence that suggests that entities of artificial intelligence have the potential of organic functioning, just like the human mind. The evidence for this is fairly mixed. Some conclusions may emerge over time. The crucial question concerning artificial intelligence however does include its possibilities and potential for organic evolution and growth. As observed, sooner or later, answers will emerge. Even otherwise, the human mind is a suo motu logic of its existence. Attempts to map it, are indeed one of the exciting aspects of human endeavour. Notwithstanding some breakthroughs in mapping the brain, there are areas of brain function that need a closer look both physically and operationally. Interestingly, notwithstanding all this, there is a common reference to the 'second childhood' of human beings, where people, upon reaching a certain

age, start behaving with child-like traits. It is difficult to explain this process, but it is fairly obvious to notice. Similarly, the jury is out on the age by which, the basic orientation of the brain fully takes place. One also needs to know when it matures enough to develop a relationship between the 'conscious' brain and the 'subconscious' brain. Notwithstanding the diverse interpretations of the above narrative, it is obvious that at some stage the basic foundations of the mind seemingly get concretised. One such example is the influence of early childhood experiences on a growing human being. There are stages of childhood emerging into early adulthood. All this becomes integral to the individual's ways of thinking and behaving. Popularly, this is known to affect the orientations of a growing individual on matters of finance, gender or for that matter even values. The list can be extended but more to the point one does not know, exhaustively, of all the influences which go into the making of an operationally adult human mind. Very often, there may be latent influences on a human mind



MANY AREAS OF THOUGHT, REFLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND RESEARCH MAY CONTAIN INDICATIONS OF UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMICS OF THE MIND. IT MAY BE A CHALLENGE, BUT A CHALLENGE THAT CANNOT BE EVADED

that may not manifest themselves until a much later point in adulthood. All in all, many ambiguities remain, and so do many contradictions that stay alive so far as the working of the mind is concerned. Above all, it is generally believed that hormonal changes affect the working of the mind. Both men and women reportedly pass through menopause in their later life. Many are of the view that menopausal effects are more identifiable amongst the women than the men. An issue, however, remains to be fully answered: what are the factors that influence the working of the mind? Yet another element that influences behaviour is the fall out of a mental shock. It can have many approximations of derailing the thought process of the individual, and indeed, impacting many values. Put simply, many areas of thought, reflection, analysis, and research may contain indications of understanding the dynamics of the mind. It may be a challenge, but a challenge that cannot be evaded. Further, there are also some transgenerational aspects to it. Say, how two parents deal with each other, or singly and collectively deal with a child

is an important factor for the child's growth. This can carry on across generations. Physiologically, the passing of some genes is known to happen across generations. This is not only in terms of physical characteristics but also certain diseases that may have affected one of the grandparents in a given generation and resurfaced again two generations later in the physical system of a descendant. The mapping of this process, as of today, needs much additional work to be done. This also contains a whole research agenda of human physiology, physical anthropology, medicines and more. Such a subject matter would deserve an integrated approach of not just, anthropology, psychology, genetic sciences and more, but a whole setup of support disciplines with appropriate interdisciplinary framework. This will give insights into the physiology of the human being and the composition of the brain and mind. It is a challenging task, but it is a task that cannot be avoided. (The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

PICTALK



An artist gives finishing touches to a clay idol of Goddess at artisans' village Kumartuli, in Kolkata

World tourism day: Uniting people, fostering peace

Whether visiting cultural landmarks, enjoying local cuisine, or simply interacting with people, tourism fosters global unity and peace

Every year on September 27, the world celebrates World Tourism Day, a reminder of the crucial role that tourism plays in fostering cultural exchange, boosting economies, and promoting peace. As borders open and people explore new destinations, tourism serves as a bridge, uniting diverse cultures and breaking down barriers between nations. In 2024, as we celebrate World Tourism Day, the theme focuses on the far-reaching benefits of travel beyond leisure, recognising how tourism helps us understand the world, its people, and its many cultures in deeper and more meaningful ways. Tourism is not merely about sightseeing; it's about experiencing the essence of a place, its history, and its culture. As Bulat Nurmukhanov, Deputy Chairman of the Moscow City Tourism Committee, emphasises, "Tourism is primarily a way to immerse oneself in new cultures and experience history." Through tourism, individuals are given the chance to see the world through different lenses, fostering greater acceptance and understanding of other people



and their ways of life. This broader understanding is why cities like Moscow have prioritised cultural tourism as a key driver for their economic and social growth. The Moscow tourism strategy emphasises the importance of museums, exhibitions, and cultural events, which help travelers connect with the history and artistic traditions of the region. This approach reflects a global shift in tourism, where travelers seek deeper, more authentic experiences that expand their worldviews. Tourism has always played a unique role in creating connections between people from different backgrounds. It allows us to learn from one another, building bridges of

understanding and respect. On World Tourism Day, this aspect of travel is especially highlighted, as we reflect on how it fosters harmony in an increasingly interconnected world. As Kush Kapoor CEO of Roseate Hotels & Resorts, points out, "Tourism is about the connections we forge and the cultural experiences we offer." Kapoor stresses the importance of offering travelers more than just a stay, but a chance to explore different cultures and traditions. In a world where differences can sometimes divide, tourism brings people together, promoting peace and mutual respect. For hotels and resorts, the focus is now on providing culturally aware experiences, from diverse culinary offerings to personalised services that reflect the traditions and customs of visitors. This kind of attention to cultural diversity enriches the overall travel experience, making it more inclusive and meaningful. Beyond cultural connections, tourism is a major economic driver for many countries. It generates millions of jobs, supports local businesses, and

contributes to the global economy. Sustainable tourism focuses on minimising the environmental footprint of travel while maximising the positive social and economic impact on host communities. From eco-friendly hotels to tours that support local artisans, tourism can be a powerful tool for inclusive development and environmental protection. Perhaps the most significant impact of tourism is its role in promoting global peace and understanding. By encouraging interactions between people of different cultures, tourism helps to break down prejudices and build mutual respect. As we celebrate World Tourism Day, it's important to remember that each journey is not just a trip to a new place but an opportunity to engage with the world in a way that promotes peace and harmony. When people experience the customs, values, and traditions of other cultures, they begin to appreciate the similarities and shared humanity that unite us all. (The author is a travel writer, views expressed are personal)



ANJALI PATHAK

GOVERNOR SPARKS CONTROVERSY

Madam — Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi, in an unprecedented move on the evening of June 29 last year, unilaterally removed Tamil Nadu Minister V Senthilbalaji from the Council of Ministers. But he hastily backtracked from his decision late at night because he too knew that his act was not only illegal but also unconstitutional. Some people say that Ravi has always been in the habit of being in controversies. But I believe that R N Ravi is a Governor later, first he is the order follower of the ruling Home Ministry. The ideology of the Home Ministry is clearly visible in every decision and every speech of him. For example, just two days ago, while giving a lecture, he said that 'secularism is a European concept, that is why it was not a part of the Indian Constitution earlier; later, an 'insecure Prime Minister' got it added to the Constitution during the Emergency'. For example, in one of his sentences, he first hinted at the concept of a Hindutva nation and secondly, he also criticised former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Some critics are demanding the immediate removal of R N Ravi from the post of Governor, whereas I believe that this is an ideological war which has been started by the central Government through the Governor, hence it would be better to answer this verbal war with thoughts only. Ravi should be asked, and then he will also say that the entire Constitution of India is external and is a copy of Europe, especially Britain, hence the entire Constitution should be abolished? Is our Constitution, on the basis of which we are proudly waving the flag of being the largest democracy today, also a European concept? Has the Governor forgotten that he has taken oath of this Constitution? Secularism is an integral part of our Constitution. It is our biggest duty to keep religion separate from politics. Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ukraine appreciates India's efforts



The meeting of Ukrainian President Zelenskyy with the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of his US visit for the Quad is taken with the overwhelming gesture from the Ukrainian counterparts. Ukraine has been visited by almost all the Quad leaders in person, and India particularly is playing a spe-

cial role in establishing peace within Ukraine with its humanitarian assistance, negotiating stability deals and peace settlement mediation between Ukraine and Russia. The Indian efforts for peace initiation is so far are still moving ahead in the back channel diplomatic level. For which Ukraine is thankful for the clear support of India towards Ukrainian integrity and sovereignty. India's efforts in this regards is particularly welcoming that, we take care of every nation near or far from us; stuck in the political or economic or geopolitical turmoil, India's assistance will be helpful to ensure peace and tranquillity in the war hit country. Also such moves will also help India to meet its commitment of becoming Vishwa Shanti Guru or World's Peace Leader in the time to come. This peace collaboration between India and Ukraine will take Indian diplomatic skills to the next level. Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

INDIA'S HOCKEY DOMINANCE CONTINUES

Madam—Indian hockey is on a high as exemplified by the way Manpreet Singh's men dominated the Men's Asian trophy at China's Hulunbuir. Notwithstanding the fact that India was the favourites to lift the title, the boys had to perform on the day, and they did. Although India fought hard to overcome an unexpected resistance from China in the final, the same team it had blanked in the league match, there was little doubt that it was the best team on display throughout the tournament. The 2020 Tokyo Olympics bronze medal, 2023 Hangzhou Asian Games gold medal, bronze at the recent Paris Olympics, and now Asian gold: India has had an excellent run on the astroturf for a couple of years, after a long, long period. The best part of the present Indian hockey team is the unity and spirit with which they come across the field come what may. Coach Craig Fulton's disinclination towards unnecessary and unwarranted chopping of players, in contrast to a few former coaches, has played its role. The talented players, of course, are indispensable

to Indian hockey. At the same time, it is felt that India should not rest on its laurels; 2026 World Cup in Belgium and the Netherlands should be another platform to showcase their undoubted brilliance. Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

ENCOUNTERS RAISE CONCERNS

Madam —The recent reports of police encounters resulting in the deaths of alleged criminals raise a critical question about our justice system and accountability, such as how can we allow a system where police act as judge, jury, and executioner? Does law enforcement cross the line from justice to vigilantism? The tragic killings in Badlapur, Unnao, and Chennai reveal a disturbing trend. We need to consider how we can assure accountability that seems to reward extrajudicial actions. It is imperative for supreme courts to intervene and uphold the principles of justice in democracy. Anshu Bharti | Begusarai

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FIRST COLUMN

SHARPENING THE QUAD VISION

Quad summit focused on maintaining peace in the Indo-Pacific region as its top priority



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Prime Minister Modi's high-profile visit to the US this week reiterated the salience of US-India bilateral, underscored by several key decisions with a clear focus on the future of this 21st century partnership. This visit by the Indian PM, coming after his trips to Russia and Ukraine, points towards a multi-pronged approach, where India is willing to have diplomatic engagements at the highest level, keeping its national interests sacrosanct.

That PM Modi and President Biden have found a mutual friendship framework, despite the Indian PM having held a political roadshow of sorts with his predecessor in the Oval Office, is a signal to the large world, that the US-India bilateral has bipartisan support. The Quas leaders' summit, Modi's rockstar concert-style engagement with the Indian diaspora and his meeting with top CEOs from the technology sector in the US, all point towards an escape velocity having been achieved by the US and India, with no scope of a look back.

China was the invisible elephant in the room, at the Quad leaders' summit. The statement from the Quad summit without naming an aggressive, maritime international law violator, China, mentioned "As four leading maritime democracies in the Indo-Pacific, we unequivocally stand for the maintenance of peace and stability across this dynamic region, as an indispensable element of global security and prosperity.

We strongly oppose any destabilising or unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo by force or coercion. We condemn recent illicit missile launches in the region that violate UN Security Council resolutions. We express serious concern over recent dangerous and aggressive actions in the maritime domain. 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.

We are united in our commitment to upholding a stable and open international system, with its strong support for human rights, the principle of freedom, rule of law, democratic values, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and peaceful settlement of disputes and prohibition on the threat or use of force in accordance with international law, including the UN Charter. Respect for the leadership of regional institutions, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), is and will remain at the centre of the Quad's efforts." While Quad is not a defence partnership like NATO, the presence of a global superpower, China with its coercive maneuverers in the entire Indian Ocean region, bore heavily on the leaders during the summit in Delaware. Delhi, Delaware (President Biden's hometown), Sydney, and Tokyo are keenly watching the international waters, and violations by China have been reported.

The leaders announced "Today we are announcing a new regional Maritime Initiative for Training in the Indo-Pacific (MAITRI), to enable our partners in the region to maximise tools provided through IPMDA and other Quad partner initiatives, to monitor and secure their waters, enforce their laws, and deter unlawful behavior. We look forward to India hosting the inaugural MAITRI workshop in 2025. In addition, Quad partners intend to layer new technology and data into IPMDA over the coming year, to continue to deliver cutting edge capability and information to the region." China would continue to be a key concern for Quad leaders, and would perhaps serve as the super glue closely packing these four countries, with major interest in the Indo-Pacific region in a tighter embrace. The next Quad leaders' summit is likely to be hosted by Delhi, where a new US president is likely to be the key guest of honour. Given that ex-President Trump had encouraged the Quad grouping and President Biden has elevated it to leaders summit, it is safe to assume that QUAD is here to stay.

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

Dissanayake's rise amidst Sri Lanka's political uncertainty



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

As the nation transitions under Dissanayake's leadership, questions loom about his ability to navigate the complex web of rivalries that define Sri Lanka's volatile democracy

One of the senior editors in Colombo recounted an experience he had in Parliament after a crucial debate, where he observed two politicians discussing serious issues. After the discussion, the editor remarked to one of the leaders, "Look, you always attack him in Parliament, but behind the scenes, you are so close and listen to him carefully." This leader was none other than Anura Kumara Dissanayake, the newly elected ninth Executive President of Sri Lanka and leader of the Marxist-Leninist Party Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna. The person he was listening to was his predecessor, former President Ranil Wickremesinghe, a neoliberal democrat. In response to the editor's comment, Dissanayake stated, "Whatever we say in Parliament, listening to him for five minutes behind the scenes is where we can learn a lot about politics."



Wickremesinghe embodies the craft of political manoeuvring, while Dissanayake represents an idealism that has sought to reshape politics through violent revolution, a pursuit that has, lamentably, cost over 60,000 young lives. But later, he engineered a shift among a few key party members to adopt a middle ground to attract liberal democrats through the NPP alliance. So far, it has been a successful story. The friendship between these two leaders grew for a reason: Wickremesinghe was facing serious internal rifts within his party, the United National Party, where his junior, Sajith Premadasa, was rebelling against him. The history of this party is filled with tales of internal conflicts and bitter betrayals that continue to haunt its prosperity. Nevertheless, Wickremesinghe demonstrated resilience, showing that no matter who declared a power struggle against him, he could adeptly play the game of politics.

This Machiavellian politician, well-versed in power dynamics, understands that he would never engage in a battle when it could be won through deception. The painful reality, however, is the consequences of these internal conflicts within political parties as the country enters a new era dominated by "political coalitions." In my opinion, this is not a healthy exercise for a robust democracy. The erosion of political parties, the backbone of political ideologies, inevitably paves the way for unprecedented crises and precarious social outcomes. However, few realise that the friendship between Wickremesinghe, a man from Colombo's elite and a well-established political family, played [knowingly or unknowingly] a vital role in President Dissanayake's victory. The longstanding enmity between Wickremesinghe and Premadasa was undoubtedly a significant factor in Dissanayake's success, even though many predicted that no candidate would secure the over 50 per cent of votes required to win.

The results reflect the polarised political divisions in Sri Lanka, where minority-dominated areas remarkably rejected Dissanayake, presenting a significant challenge for the forthcoming general elections, as his political alliance will need to secure over 113 seats out of 225 to establish its power in Parliament.

Erik Solheim, former Norwegian minister and climate change advisor to Sri Lanka, who has been actively involved in Sri Lankan politics since the LTTE era as



THE RESULTS REFLECT THE POLARISED POLITICAL DIVISIONS IN SRI LANKA, WHERE MINORITY-DOMINATED AREAS REMARKABLY REJECTED DISSANAYAKE, PRESENTING A SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE FOR FORTHCOMING GENERAL ELECTIONS, AS HIS POLITICAL ALLIANCE WILL NEED TO SECURE OVER 113 SEATS OUT OF 225 TO ESTABLISH ITS POWER IN PARLIAMENT

a mediator in peace talks, commented on the significance of this election, stating, "The weakness of the election winner is that his coalition has very little experience running a complicated state like Sri Lanka. They may struggle to achieve a majority in Parliament and implement their many promises in a challenging economic environment."

Despite the worldwide congratulatory messages pouring in for the new leader, I find these insights particularly useful for forecasting the future trajectory of electoral outcomes and the challenges that the island nation is likely to face. The caretaker government, appointed for just two months until 14 November, faces low expectations and should refrain from making new appointments, wisely retaining some senior ministry secretaries from the previous administration.

If the President fails to secure a majority in the House, he will need to form a coalition, but if that proves impossible, the opposition may take control of Parliament, leading to chaotic infighting—an alarming scenario for an inexperienced President unprepared for Sri Lanka's complex political landscape. This situation accentuates significant uncertainties ahead. Historical trends suggest that a President's party or coalition often secures a majority in subsequent elections; however, the recent election results, where the winning candidate failed to garner over 50 per cent of the vote amidst three main contenders, complicate this.

The strong support for Sajith Premadasa and Ranil Wickremesinghe in Tamil-dominated provinces indicates a serious challenge for the newly elected President and his coalition as they approach the upcoming par-

liamentary elections. However, what is remarkable about this election is that it was exceptionally peaceful, with no violence reported, allowing for a refreshing power transition. The commendable role played by the Elections Commission in Sri Lanka cannot be overstated. This calmness is particularly surprising in a country where people previously took to the streets, violently ousting the Prime Minister and President after experiencing a devastating economic crisis. Many find it hard to believe. Nonetheless, this should not be seen as the calm before the storm, as the country's economy remains precarious. No leader can fulfil all the promises made during the election campaign.

The responsibility now lies with the leader and his team to convince the public, fostering understanding and collaboration to overcome the challenges ahead. This is where the reality of the much-discussed "new renaissance" will be tested against the ground realities. The nation-state and its historical trajectory will provide important lessons in understanding what the future may hold. What does it mean for a nation's history to be an intricate weave of choices and consequences rather than a mere succession of events? This perspective compels us to reflect on the profound implications of individual and collective decisions on the essence of a nation. The dismissal of "what ifs" simplifies a complex reality rich with potential paths, urging us to explore the interplay between certainty and possibility.

In the post-independence landscape, missed opportunities for reconciliation and economic transformation reveal a dissonance between political aspira-

tions and societal realities. The notion of a "false renaissance" recurs throughout pivotal moments: the 1948 declaration of Independence, the 1956 Sinhala Only Act, the 1972 establishment of a republic, the 1977 shift to an open economy, the election of the first female executive president in 1994, the conclusion of the civil war in 2009, and the election of an apolitical leader (Gotabaya Rajapaksa) to overhaul the social structure in 2019—all serve as warnings against complacency born from superficial progress that obscures unresolved tensions and deep-rooted systemic issues.

Therefore, sensationalising the new leader's humble family background and expressing anger towards the "self-proclaimed elites" and their alleged corruption may not provide the sustainable answers that the nation desperately seeks. Instead, it is the collective will and the leader's capacity to engage with those who oppose him that will be essential for embarking on this new journey. While propaganda may orchestrate a false renaissance, the shimmering illusions of progress starkly contrast with the gritty ground reality, exposing a profound philosophical enigma: the allure of superficial advancement often obscures the underlying fractures of society. This compels us to confront the uncomfortable truths of our existence that we habitually choose to ignore in our quest for meaning and coherence.

This challenge now lies before the new leadership. Behold an essential, paradoxical truth: within this tranquil interlude lies the profound anticipation of the storm to come.

(The writer is a journalist and author. Views expressed are Personal)

Agri-tech 2.0 : Digital innovations paving the path to sustainable farming

By boosting productivity, promoting sustainability and reducing environmental impact, these technologies offer a pathway for sustainable future

As the global population heads toward an estimated 10 billion by 2050, the agricultural sector faces mounting pressure to significantly increase food production. For India, with its vast and diverse agricultural landscape, this presents a critical challenge. Traditional farming methods alone will not be enough to meet the needs of a growing population while also addressing the threats posed by climate change, dwindling natural resources and the imperative for sustainable practices. In this context, agri-tech, the convergence of technology and agriculture, offers a transformative pathway forward. By integrating cutting-edge digital technologies into farming, India has the potential to enhance productivity, sustain-



AUROBIND UPADHYAYA

ability, and resilience. This article explores how these emerging technologies are reshaping the agricultural sector in India, positioning it to meet the demands of the future.

Agriculture at a Crossroads: For decades, agriculture has been the backbone of India's economy, employing over 50 per cent of the workforce and contributing significantly to GDP. However, the sector is

now facing unprecedented strain. The growing population, along with environmental challenges such as erratic weather patterns, water scarcity, and soil degradation, has placed the industry at a critical juncture. The traditional methods of farming are no longer sufficient to meet the increasing demand for food while preserving the environment. This is where agri-tech comes into play, providing innovative solutions that can transform Indian agriculture by improving efficiency and promoting sustainable practices.

Precision Agriculture: Data-Driven Farming: One of the most promising advancements in agri-tech is precision agriculture, which leverages technologies such as GPS, IoT sen-

sors, and drones to optimise farming operations. By gathering and analysing real-time data on factors like soil health, weather conditions, and crop growth, precision agriculture enables farmers to make informed decisions. This approach helps in the efficient use of water, fertilisers, and pesticides, minimising waste and environmental harm while maximising crop yields.

In India, the adoption of precision agriculture is accelerating. According to the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), these techniques have the potential to increase yields by 15-25 per cent while reducing input costs by 10-15 per cent. The precision agriculture market in India is expected to grow significantly, from USD 57.6 mil-



lion in 2020 to USD 124.2 million by 2025. Government initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) for water conservation and the Soil Health Card Scheme for better fertiliser management are further driving this growth. **AI and Machine Learning:** Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) are also playing a crucial role in modernising Indian agricul-

ture. By analysing vast amounts of data from satellite imagery, weather forecasts, and historical crop performance, AI algorithms can predict potential problems like pest outbreaks and suggest the best times for planting. AI-powered platforms are already being used to predict pest infestations and optimise pesticide use, potentially reducing the need for harmful chemicals by up to 30 per cent.

Ensuring Transparency: Blockchain technology is emerging as a revolutionary tool in agricultural supply chains. By offering a decentralised ledger for recording transactions, blockchain ensures transparency, reduces fraud, and promotes fair trade practices. For farmers, suppliers, and consumers alike,

blockchain provides verifiable information about the origin and journey of food products, ensuring adherence to sustainability standards. The blockchain market in India's agriculture and food supply chain is expected to grow at a CAGR of 47.8 per cent, reaching USD 289 million by 2027.

IoT and Smart Farming: The Internet of Things (IoT) is revolutionising how farmers monitor and manage their crops. IoT devices, such as soil moisture sensors and weather stations, provide real-time data on environmental conditions, allowing for better decision-making in the field. For example, smart irrigation systems can adjust water usage based on real-time data, saving water and improving crop health. The IoT in agriculture market

in India is projected to reach USD 634.5 million by 2027, growing at a CAGR of 12.5 per cent.

Use of Drones: Equipped with high-resolution cameras and sensors, drones provide farmers with detailed aerial imagery of their fields. This helps in identifying issues such as nutrient deficiencies, pest infestations, and water stress. Farmers can then take targeted actions, reducing waste and environmental damage. The use of drones in Indian agriculture is expected to grow substantially, with the market anticipated to reach USD 108 million by 2025.

(The writer is chief growth officer with Arahas Technologies; views are personal)

Avneet Kaur's jet-setting travels from London to Greece

SHIKHA DUGGAL
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Actress Avneet Kaur chose the world's top summer vacation spots as her ideal personal getaway. From London to Paris, the Amalfi Coast to Germany, she had ticked it all!

Let's not forget, her gram posts got us all craving a vacation. So let's take you through her latest voyage.

"Oh, I was travelling with my pals over the summer from London, Paris, Amsterdam, Greece, Italy, Portofino, the Amalfi Coast, to Germany. One of the longest and most enjoyable trips I have ever had! I had always wanted to travel to Greece and now I found myself there. Travelling and experiencing what's happening outside our country is extremely important. Indeed, I would not wish to revisit the southern region of Italy. That definitely wasn't my feel," one of the busiest actresses of the hour today expresses.

Getting her to come on board for our travelogue was also one of our goals, we wanted to give our readers some homework so they could learn how their favourite actress made her overseas vacation an unforgettable experience. Oo la la! "Every country was unique. London is my home away from home because I travel there so often. In Paris, I was all business when it came to fashion! In addition, I was travelling between several climates because I had suddenly left hot Italy for cold Germany. It's summertime after all, so I purposefully picked out ensembles with lots of colour pops. I practically wore everything in style throughout this trip: maxi skirts, pastel colors, flowery jewellery. All of this eventually pales in comparison to my fascination with luxury bags! If I claim not to be infatuated with Dior and Chanel, I will be lying. I made sure that even my swimsuits

looked stylish when I got clicked," shared the *Tiku Weds Sheru* fame.

All of the places she had on her list were very different and excited her. She

states, for instance, "We tried everything lemons because the people at Mykonos were very welcoming and the other place we went after that was really famous for lemons. I developed a deep affection for Italian culture. I took part in their celebrations and dancing. Despite the fact that I was unable to locate any hidden spots there, I can tell my fans that Positano was the one destination on the trip that truly impressed me. I went to this incredibly awesome "cave party." I will always be reminded of this encounter."

Later in the chat, the *Alladdin* star recalls the journey she had with her folks and says, "We liked to pick hotels in the main areas. We reserved rooms at Mykonos' greatest and most popular hotel! It was the epitome of luxury. But not at all like our richly cultural India. Every region of our nation begs for a different narrative. While I travel the world, my own country holds the greatest personal significance for me. I also adore historical fiction! Rajasthan is the place to go for this."

In this exclusive conversation, Avneet had

a lot more to say to us besides her recent tour. Because you're probably going to see your favourite internet sensation at a hilly location in the country if she's feeling a lot more stressful in her life. She underlines that India's hill stations are already making great progress, so it's not always necessary to go outside. She could also want to try something like a spa day. In the midst of a jungle, she requests a massage! Plans that are interesting, as we must state. Conversely, she said, "I always travel by train from London to Paris; there's a particular train that runs there. It's something I recently learned about; I had no idea it ran underground. That has always seemed to stifle me a little. There's also the difference between swimming in the ocean and in a pool. This is no light undertaking! I reserve a yacht party each time I go on vacation. I generally use a floater when I jump into the ocean, but I didn't have one in Greece, which was an additional terrifying experience for me. Once I was at ease, I went snorkeling by myself. It was exciting

and risky at the same time. I was living my ZNMD moment!"

Yes, she also shared a recollection from her early years. Mussorie is where she had the best childhood vacation memories. It is unforgettable because Kullu Manali was the closest hill station to her while her family was in Punjab. "I have it all recorded on an album. Then, I found that I was now experiencing nostalgia from shooting in the North. And I have an endless wish list. I want to consider going skydiving, camping under the northern lights, having never seen Switzerland, or seeing the locations of *Twilight* or the *Game of Thrones*. Hehe." She informed us by the end of the interview about her habit of returning postcards from each nation she visited. She continues going back to see Notting Hill in London because she is so in love with it. After that, her mother insists on getting her fridge magnets from every country; presently, there isn't any room on her fridge for more magnets. Yikes!



Redefining urban living with rooftop amenities

Rapid urbanisation is stimulating the real estate market. The IBEP projects that India's urban population would grow to 542.70 million by 2025 and 675.50 million by 2035. This expansion, combined with the desire for modern living standards, has made rooftop facilities a popular trend and a wise investment for purchasers and builders. Buildings in densely populated cities with limited space only provide minimal housing and parking. However, this is changing as people want access to facilities often found in suburban townships.

In bustling city centers where high-rise and mid-rise buildings offer unmatched convenience and facilities, people often crave fresh air and outdoor tranquility, especially when navigating through traffic to reach public parks becomes daunting. To address this dilemma, rooftop amenities have surged in popularity. They offer easy access to outdoor spaces right within the building, making them a practical and appealing alternative.

ARCHITECTS' RESPONSE

Architects are also responding by integrating rooftop amenities into building designs, transforming these once utilitarian spaces into attractive lifestyle enhancers. Global trends and the economic push for uniqueness are enriching urban landscapes, making rooftop amenities a key selling point. This blend of tradition and modernity is evident in Indian architecture, where western minimalism's clean lines and functionality are embraced, especially in commercial and upscale residential projects. Furthermore, addressing climate concerns and growing emphasis on wellness, open-air gyms, yoga decks and sustainable designs, reflects broader global influences on Indian architectural practices.

ROOFTOP TYPES

Various types of rooftop facilities in a building improve the living experience through modern design and construction techniques. This includes:

Rooftop pool: Pools are universally appealing, found in resorts and multi-family communities worldwide. While not always heavily utilised, they remain a significant draw for any housing development. Well-designed pool areas serve as central community hubs and popular gathering spots and if the pools are facing towards the edges, they make fantastic infinity pools with a view of the cityscapes.

Lounge space: Rooftop lounges are always popular and when well-designed, they significantly enhance the space. Sleek, comfortable seating complemented by lighting, shade and privacy elements creates an ideal environment for relaxation and enjoyment. Adding vibrant furnishings and stylish accents makes it both inviting and distinctive. And creating seating zones around a fire pit fosters a welcoming atmosphere for people to unwind and socialize, maximising year-round use and enhancing the overall appeal.

Green space: Lush green spaces offer a serene getaway, bridging urban life with nature. They provide shade, enhance air quality and are perfect for families to unwind outdoors. Rooftop gardens, especially, offer panoramic views and natural insulation help cut down on energy use and utility bills.

Fitness area: Staying in shape is made easier with a gym that offers a rooftop track for walking or jogging, allowing individuals to exercise. The facility also includes dedicated spaces for yoga sessions, exercise classes, or individual workouts, providing the added benefit of an outdoor-like environment.

Rooftop amenities aren't just a perk for buyers—they're a strategic advantage for builders and real estate agents. These features enhance the appeal of properties by offering desirable living standards, often resulting in swift sales right from the start. In urban areas, where outdoor space is scarce, well-planned rooftop spaces boost the overall luxury appeal of the project, which can lead to higher property values over time. Rooftop amenities should also be constructed with safety in mind as well. Such eye-catching features help properties distinguish themselves in a competitive market, even attracting tenants faster and minimising vacancy periods.

However, maintenance and construction costs can pose significant challenges for both homeowners and builders. The architectural complexity and upkeep demands can strain budgets and affect financial planning in the long term. As urbanisation is driving increased investment in luxury properties featuring rooftop amenities, expected to be a lasting trend. As new urban trends emerge and densely packed buildings fill up, there is a growing inclination towards investing in vibrant, spacious environments.

(The author, Priyatham Kumar, is the founder of Homes247.)

The talented and gorgeous Avneet Kaur, who had her all-in-one travel experiences in her latest trip, speaks exclusively with *The Pioneer*, taking us through her travel diaries



LOVE, SITARA: Dysfunction never felt so right!

TEJAL SINHA
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

Love, Sitara is a new romantic drama with elements of family life revolving around the life of Sitara, played by actress Sobhita Dhulipala. In this direct-to-OTT release, she portrays the role of an interior designer. Directed by Vandana Kataria, the film is ready to be released soon.

PLOT

"Harr happy family ek jaisi hoti hai, lekin har unhappy family ek dusrae se bilkul alag hoti hai." This voiceover by Sobhita can be heard, which leads to the beginning of this slice-of-life drama.

The titular character Sitara (played by Sobhita Dhulipala) is an interior designer who is an independent woman who doesn't really believe much in the concept of marriage. However, eventually she desires to get married to Arjun (played by Rajeev Siddhartha), a passionate chef on the brink of international success, with whom, like any other modern relationship, there were breakups and patch-ups. Now they are finally getting married. Yeyyyyyy!!!! She meets her BFF Anjali (played by Tamara D'Souza) and gives her the news, which turns out to be shockingly surprising news.

HIGHLIGHTS

Love, Sitara, If you think is only about romance, well yes, it is, but let's not forget the fact that the comedy and humour that the story

DIRECTED BY: Vandana Kataria
PRODUCED BY: Ronnie Screwvala's RSVP Movies
CAST: Sobhita Dhulipala, Rajeev Siddhartha, Sonali Kulkarni, Sanjay Bhutani, B Jayashree, Virginia Rodrigues, Tamara D'Souza and Rijul Ray
WRITTEN BY: Sonia Bahl, Abbas Dalal, Hussain Dalal and Vandana
STREAMING ON: ZEE5
RATING: 3.5/5

brings in are just top-notch. The story kickstarts with how Sitara turns her own mind about getting married. But as the story progresses, there's not one but back-to-back twists that make *Love, Sitara* a must-watch 'family-terner'. The emotional aspect of this film sets it apart from other recent films. It goes beyond that as it strives to clarify how previous pains and family pressures impact love and decision-making. The chemistry between Sitara and Arjun is beyond your regular lead stars as it makes you feel much more relatable, especially in the current times.

DRAWBACKS

Love, Sitara is one of those well-executed pro-



jects, which makes it difficult for you to find anything negative. But yes, there are a few scenes that get pretty much predictable, especially in the first half. However, these are minor quibbles in an otherwise engaging series.

PERFORMANCES

Sobhita, as the titular character Sitara, is as amazing as she's always been. All of those who have loved her in *Made in Heaven* and *The Night Manager* for that matter cannot stop but fall in love with her yet again. Well, not that she's played a similar character, but the different shades that she brings to her character are fantastic. Her physique, nuanced expressions and body language bring a rare authenticity to the character, making her journey and struggles deeply compelling. What we personally love the most is also her wedding looks, be it in the golden saree paired with vibrant red blouse, paired with gajra and bindi, or her engagement look, where she opts for an orange lehenga.

Rajeev Siddhartha as Arjun is beyond just a green flag. He is a complete green forest, as they say. He inhabits the role with natural ease, making us dream of a guy as who he is. His character, Arjun, is very clear with what he wants to do in life, though he gets no support from his father. Be it as an ideal would-be son-in-law, best friend's fiancé, or Sitara's fiancé, he is a whole bunch of sweethearts who anyone would regret breaking his heart. (Ooppppssss! A small hint of what happens.)

B Jayashree as Amumma is a darling, yaa! I mean, just being the queen of the house, the savage Amumma is a love. Her dialogues and her expressions tickle your funny bones to the extent that you have tears rolling down

your eyes. She certainly wins your heart every time she speaks.

The rest of the cast, be it Sonali Kulkarni as Hema Chechi, Virginia as Latha, Sanjay Bhutani as Govind, Tamara as Anjali, or Rijul Ray as Sitara's very good old friend, all have their own importance and significantly contribute to the story. Well, here's a brownie point for you all, dear readers: Every character brings in their own twists and spice to the story.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

While the story is beyond a doubt quite engaging, let's not forget for the fact that the cinematography plays an even greater role, taking the viewers through the breathtaking views of Kerala. The camera shots become a character in themselves. The screenplay by Sonia Bahl, along with the other two writers, Abbas Dalal and Hussain Dalal, really touches the characters and makes the audience feel for them in their problems. Talking of the music, be it the fun *Ungliyon Pe* or a song that's bombarded with emotions, *Hai Dil Darya* amalgamates well with the particular scenes.

VERDICT

Love, Sitara is a must-watch, especially for lovers of deep films. Watching Sobhita in multiple shades of emotions and phases is outstanding. Whether you want a romantic story or a family saga, *Love, Sitara* is a perfect package of everything that you seek.

what's brewing?



Telangana State Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao, along with Speaker of Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly Ayyanna Patrudu and Congress leader Jana Reddy, launched the Go Vascular department by Go Hospitals, along with Telangana's first AI-Assisted Laser technology for Varicose Vein and Hypo Diagnostics, a mobile diagnostic bus.



The Smart City Living Lab, in collaboration with Silicon Labs announced the successful conclusion of the Wi-SUN Challenge. This exciting competition brought together innovators, startups and academic institutions to create cutting-edge, IoT-enabled solutions for smart cities, utilities and healthcare using Wi-SUN RF mesh technology.



Amazon India announced that it has signed a MoU with the Ministry of Labour and Employment (Ministry) to utilise the National Career Service (NCS) portal of the Ministry for facilitating posting of available work opportunities at Amazon and its staffing agencies. This will enable job seekers across India to view such working opportunities and also help Amazon India and its staffing agencies to post job openings and source candidates from the NCS portal.



Apollo Cradle & Childrens Hospitals concluded its 3rd edition of the annual conference, Optimising Fetal Outcomes in Hyderabad. The event featured speakers from CIMAR (Kochi), BN Clinic (Kolkata), PSG Medical College (Coimbatore), Wadia Maternity and Central Railway Hospital (Mumbai) and the Apollo Cradle Fetal Medicine Department, led by Dr. Amitha Indersen and her team.



Hyatt Hyderabad Gachibowli unveils the latest addition to the culinary offerings at Mrs. Mage, its beloved open-air poolside restaurant. It now introduces a new menu featuring a range of Chinese and Schezwan dishes adding an exciting twist to its already diverse offerings. This new selection continues the restaurant's tradition of delivering bold, vibrant flavours, inspired by its global culinary adventures.



Shivan and Narresh

The Hyderabad Race Club is gearing up for an extraordinary event at this year's Race2win.com Deccan Derby 2024 on October 2. For the first time ever, the world of fashion will meet the thrilling sport of horse racing, as Race2win.com proudly presents an exclusive fashion walk on the race track. This unique celebration will feature a stunning festive collection by India's celebrated designer duo, Shivan and Narresh, adding glamour and style to the prestigious racing event.



Y.Gopi Rao and R. Surender Reddy



Anushka Sen created history as she becomes the first Indian artist to perform live on stage at Times Square, New York City. The multi-faceted actor marks her debut as a singer in the West, collaborating with the UN Young Leader for SDGs 'AY Young' on his Battery Tour which aims to power 1000 concerts with clean energy.



Hyderabadis transported their taste buds to the enchanting valleys of Kashmir as Chef Aparmita Sapru brought the rich, storied flavours of this majestic region straight to Feast at Sheraton Hyderabad Hotel. Each dish was a masterpiece, designed to celebrate Kashmir's legendary culinary traditions and evoke its timeless charm.



Angad Bedi, along with his wife Neha Dhupia and the entire Bedi family, honoured the legacy of Bishan Singh Bedi, by announcing the revamp of Bishan Singh Bedi Cricket Coaching Trust (BBCCT). The evening commemorated the legendary cricketer and his enduring legacy.

The Organic World (TOW), part of the Bengaluru-based Nimida Group and India's leading Responsible Retailer announced the expansion of its store network to Hyderabad at Pragati Nagar. This development represents a significant step in TOW's strategic pan-India growth plan, marking the brand's first venture outside its home city of Bengaluru.

FUN

ARCHIE



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



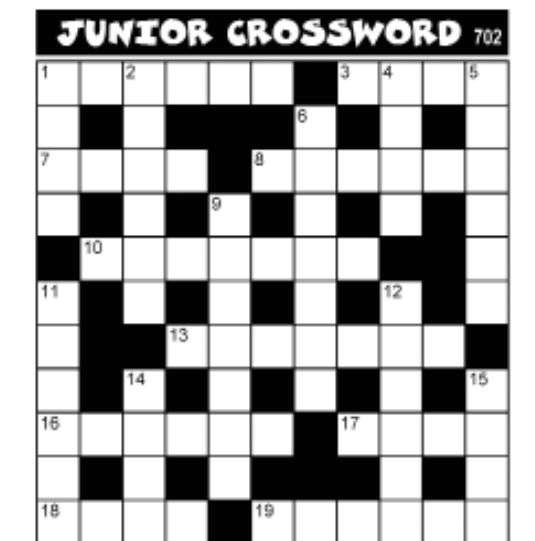
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- An archer fires these
 - Seize
 - The body's covering
 - Wanting food
 - Rich
 - Not straight
 - Best
 - The world's most eaten grain
 - Utters
 - A fire-breathing monster
- DOWN**
- Too
 - Spoiled
 - Scraps of cloth
 - Purchasing
 - A soft thing to sit on or put on a couch
 - A type of shop that sells flowers
 - High, steep rock-faces
 - Needlework
 - Jealousy
 - A blood vessel
- SOLUTION**
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- Rules**
- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
 - The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

CAN DEVARA BREAK ₹100 CRORE BARRIER ON DAY 1?

NEARLY TEN LAKH TICKETS HAVE BEEN SOLD ONLY FOR THE TELUGU VERSION SO FAR, WITH OVERSEAS PRE-BOOKINGS CROSSING THE \$2.5 MILLION MARK

The Jr NTR and Janhvi Kapoor starrer film *Devara* is poised to create history on its opening day, according to the bookings. Many multiplexes in Hyderabad and Secunderabad are screening this film as many times as possible, with almost all shows running houseful. Koratala Siva is the director, while Kalyan Ram Nandamuri and Sudhakar Mikkilineni are the producers. Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan plays the villain, with Anirudh Ravichander providing the music.

The film has done a pre-release business of nearly Rs 215 crore, the highest for Jr NTR's career. Nizam area rights alone sold for Rs 42 crore and in Andhra, it's Rs 50 crore. With ceded rights fetching Rs 23 crore, Telangana and Andhra distribution rights sold for a whopping Rs 115 crore. Interestingly, both the Andhra Pradesh and Telangana governments granted permission for extra shows and released a G.O. to hike ticket prices.

Jr NTR is currently in the USA promoting the film overseas. The overseas rights sold for Rs 30 crore, the highest for Jr NTR. Pre-bookings overseas have already crossed \$2.5 million, and it seems Jr NTR is about to create a sensation on the film's opening day.

In India, advance bookings are showing huge numbers for the first day. Some expect that the film could easily surpass Rs 100 crore gross on its first day worldwide, based on pre-bookings alone. Nearly ten lakh tickets have been sold just for the Telugu version of the film.

Jr NTR is returning to a solo film after six years, with his last being *Aravinda Sametha*. He followed it with the multi-starrer *RRR*, alongside Ram Charan, directed by SS Rajamouli. If *Devara* crosses Rs 100 crore gross on its opening day, Jr NTR will become the second actor after Prabhas to achieve this feat.



Ajay's fierce look unveiled for *Pottel*

Yuva Chandraa Krishna and Ananya Nagalla take the lead in the film *Pottel*, a rustic action entertainer directed by Sahit Motkhuri in his third directorial venture. Ajay plays a powerful role and on the occasion of his birthday on Thursday, the makers revealed a new poster showcasing him in a ferocious avatar. His salt-and-pepper look, combined with an intense gaze, heightens the character's ferocity.

Produced by Nishank Reddy Kudithi and Suresh Kumar Sadige, the film is set for a theatrical release during the Dasara festival.

The teaser and other promotional content have generated positive buzz around the film. According to the makers, *Pottel* will deliver a strong message about the importance of education. The music is composed by Shekar Chandra.



EXCLUSIVE

IS EESHA REBBA DATING? LATEST SCOOP!

Actress Eesha Rebba, known for juggling web series and films, is currently working on an untitled project helmed by director Sanjeev AR. Starring alongside Tharun Bhascker in this rural drama, the shoot is taking place in and around Rajahmundry. But here's the real scoop—according to insiders, Eesha is rumoured to be in a relationship with a director-turned-actor!

Eesha, who first grabbed the spotlight with her debut in *Anthaku Mundu Aa Tharuwatha*, directed by Indraganti Mohana Krishna, has

seen her share of media buzz linking her to prominent directors. Her filmography includes hits like *Ami Tumi*, *Aravinda Sametha* and *Raagala 24 Gantallo*, and more recently, her acclaimed role in the web series *Daya*.

Now, whispers from Film Nagar suggest the actress is getting serious with her mystery beau, who's been through a divorce and is now ready to take the plunge again. With her last film, *Mama Mascheendra*, failing to make waves at the box office, all eyes are on Eesha's personal life. Could this be the plot twist her fans didn't see coming?

FNCC donates ₹25 lakh to AP CM

The Telugu film industry continues to extend a helping hand to flood victims in Andhra Pradesh. Many film personalities have made generous donations to the AP Chief Minister's Fund, while film bodies like the Producers Council and Film Chamber of Commerce have also pitched in. The Film Nagar Cultural Club (FNCC) has joined the relief efforts, donating Rs 25 lakhs to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. FNCC president G Adishesagiri Rao, secretary Mohan Mullanpudi, and joint secretary Peddi Raju met the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu to present the cheque.

The recent floods in the Telugu states have been devastating and it's heartening to see organizations like the Film Nagar Cultural Club (FNCC) stepping up to help. According to Adishesagiri Rao, president of FNCC, the organisation has always been at the forefront of relief programs during the natural calamities.

Mohan Mullanpudi, secretary of the Film



Nagar Cultural Club (FNCC), announced that the organisation has made donations to both the Andhra Pradesh and Telangana state governments to support flood relief efforts. Expressing gratitude, he acknowledged the steadfast support of both state governments towards the FNCC, appreciating their collaborative spirit.

Wait is over! Paruchuri brothers confirm *Mr. Celebrity's* release on Oct 4



Sudarshan Paruchuri, grandson of renowned writers Paruchuri Brothers, is set to make his debut as a lead actor in the upcoming film *Mr. Celebrity*. Directed by debutant Chandina Ravi Kishore, the movie is slated for release on October 4. The film's producers, N Panduranga Rao and Chinna Reddaiah, are confident about the project's success. Paruchuri Brothers, proud grandparents, announced the release date and extended their best wishes to Sudarshan for a successful debut.

"Our grandson Sudarshan is making his debut with *Mr. Celebrity*, which is slated for release on October 4. Despite being his first film, director Ravi Kishore has crafted it impressively, and it's sure to captivate everyone," said Paruchuri Gopalakrishna.

Meanwhile, Paruchuri Venkateswara Rao said, "Our grandson Sudarshan is making his debut with *Mr. Celebrity*, which is slated for release on October 4. Despite being his first film, director Ravi Kishore has crafted it impressively, and it's sure to captivate everyone."

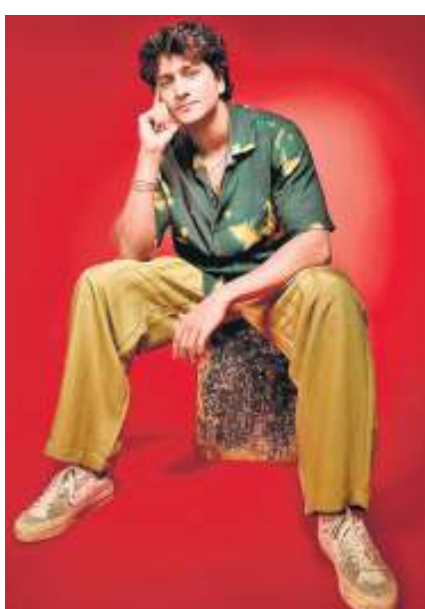
The film stars Varalaxmi Sarathkumar and Sri Deeksha as the leading ladies of *Mr. Celebrity*.

Next Kannadiga to conquer Bollywood

Kannada actor Samarjit Lankesh, the son of renowned filmmaker Indrajith Lankesh, is making waves in the film industry with speculation about his next big project. The young actor, who made his debut this year with *Gowri*, has been turning heads since being spotted outside Dharma Productions' office. His appearance has sparked rumours about his possible collaboration with the prestigious production house, known for launching new talent and backing major

Bollywood hits. Though no official statement has been made, the buzz around Samarjit's potential Dharma project has left fans eager for an announcement. Having already showcased his acting prowess in *Gowri*, Samarjit is seen as one of the most promising newcomers in the Kannada film industry, with aspirations to make a pan-Indian impact. His connection to a major Bollywood production could catapult him into the national spotlight, following in the footsteps of several South

Indian actors who have made successful Bollywood debuts. As the son of Indrajith Lankesh, Samarjit comes from a strong cinematic lineage, and his entry into the Dharma camp would mark a significant milestone in his budding career. Whether or not the rumours prove true, his presence in Mumbai and the speculation around his next project only serve to amplify the growing excitement about his future in Indian cinema. Fans and industry insiders alike are keeping a close eye on his next move.



INDIA LIKELY TO MAINTAIN SUPREMACY OVER BANGLADESH

PTI ■ KANPUR

India would want their big guns Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma to fire when the mighty hosts aim for a clean sweep against a beleaguered Bangladesh in the second and final Test starting here on Friday.

The all-round show of Ravichandran Ashwin, Shubman Gill's sublime hundred, Ravindra Jadeja's quality batting and Rishabh Pant's roaring comeback allowed India to script a comfortable victory in Chennai despite being put under pressure by the Bangladesh pacers on day one. The way India bounced back in the game reaffirmed their supremacy in Test cricket, especially at home where they are on course for a record extending 18th consecutive series win. Having made a successful return in white-ball cricket, it was time for Pant to show that it is the Test arena where he can make the maximum impact. It seems he has even added one more dimension to his game: curbing his aggressive instinct

if the situation demands, making him even more dangerous. However, both Rohit and Virat's bats remained silent in the series-opener as Bangladesh pacers — Hasan Mahmud and Taskin Ahmed — bowled probing lines on a supportive track and were rewarded. With a long Test season ahead of them, the two premier batters must be itching to get back among the runs. Playing his first Test at home since March 2023, Kohli did not look at his sharpest and one can trust him to not go for expansive cover drives at the start of his innings.

CHANGE IN COMBINATIONS: The Green Park wicket has traditionally been a low and slow track that assists spinners. While it is expected to offer some assistance to the fast bowlers initially, the basic nature of the pitch, prepared with black soil brought from Unnao, is not expected to change much. The wicket will become slower as the game progresses. It means, India can field three spinners instead of three



pacers. If that is indeed the case, Akash Deep could make way for Kuldeep Yadav. If India think they need more cushion with the bat, then Axar Patel might just pip hero

hero Kuldeep, who has performed exceptionally over the last 18 months. In the last Test played at Green Park in 2021, India had fielded three spinners — Ashwin,

Jadeja and Axar — in a game that ended in a thrilling draw with New Zealand. Interestingly, the 2021 contest and the one before that in 2016 (also against New Zealand)

lasted five days. On the other hand, Bangladesh, who failed to apply themselves with the bat in the series opener, are expected to make changes to

their playing eleven. They struggled against a high-quality Indian pace attack in their first essay in Chennai and then could not handle Ashwin and Co while chasing an improbable target. The team management has given contrasting statements on Shakib Al Hasan's availability. While a selector had said that he is doubtful due to a finger injury he suffered while batting in Chennai, chief coach Chandika Hathurusinghe said he is eligible for selection. Bangladesh can bring left-arm spinner Tajul Islam in place of lanky pacer Nahid Rana. They also have an option in off-spinner Nayeem Hasan.

A SPLENDID DOUBLE AWAITES JADEJA: In 73 Tests, Ravindra Jadeja has taken 299 wickets and scored 3122 runs. He needs to add just one more scalp to his kitty to become the second-fastest player in Test history to complete the double of 300 wickets and 3000 runs. England great Ian Botham had achieved the feat in 72 matches.

CONDITIONS CHALLENGING: The muggy weather will

pose a huge challenge for the players. The humidity has been very high in the city in the last few days. The Indian team made Thursday's practice optional, saying it needs to save players from searing heat. The match may see interruptions on first and third day with weather forecast predicting rain. India have not lost a Test to Bangladesh till date and the visitors will need a special effort to reverse that statistic.

TEAMS (FROM):
India: Rohit Sharma (C), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, KL Rahul, Sarfaraz Khan, Rishabh Pant (WK), Dhruv Jurel (WK), R Ashwin, R Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohd Siraj, Akash Deep, Jasprit Bumrah, Yash Dayal.
Bangladesh: Najmul Hossain Shanto (C), Mahmudul Hasan Joy, Zakir Hasan, Shadman Islam, Mominul Haque, Mushfiqur Rahim (wk), Shakib Al Hasan, Litton Kumer Das, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Tajul Islam, Nayeem Hasan, Nahid Rana, Hasan Mahmud, Taskin Ahmed, Syed Khaled Ahmed, Jaker Ali Anik.

Shakib retires from T20Is, says Kanpur Test will be his last if no farewell at home

PTI ■ KANPUR

accused in a murder case back home during the political unrest that led to the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. He was a member of Parliament from her party, the Awami League. Shakib made the announcement while interacting with Bangladeshi media but spoke in English following a request from the Indian journalists. In an unexpected turn of events, Shakib was named in an FIR in a murder case related to the civil protests in Bangladesh last August. The case pertains to the death of garment worker Mohammed Rubel, whose father, Rafiqul Islam, filed the complaint on August 7.

The 37-year-old Shakib indicated that he may not travel back home after the current series in India, if he can't be promised safety. "Going back to Bangladesh is not a problem but leaving is. My close friends and family members have concerns (about my safety), I hope things are better, well and there should be a solution to it." In January, Shakib had won an uncontested election to become a member of parliament for the then-ruling Awami League party. He was criticised for not speaking up for the student community during the protests. Many Bangladeshis reportedly raised slogan against Shakib when he played in Pakistan. Even non resident Bangladeshis hurled abuses during a private T20 league, the video of which became viral on social media. "I have 8 games to go in ODIs, and the Champions Trophy will be my last."

India is capable to make a strong impression in women's T20 WC: Sthalekar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Australian captain Lisa Sthalekar said India have the all-round depth to grab an elusive ICC title during the upcoming women's T20 World Cup. The global showpiece will be held in the UAE from October 3 and India's best effort in the event remains a final berth in 2020, where they lost to Australia. "I can see Australia in the semifinals as they are aiming to win their fourth (title) in a row. England too had a strong pre-tournament build-up. India's chances are also very high and I expect them to be in the semifinals, if not in the finals," Sthalekar told a select group of journalists at the ABC — International Development's five-day cricket commentary and mojo programme at the Australian High Commission. The former Australian skipper validated her argument citing good options through India's line-up. "India has got power, depth, decent bowlers and if their 4-7 number batters can score at a good strike rate, they will be in a good position. They need a good start from the openers. "Jemimah Rodriguez did well in the West Indies (in the CPL) recently. It will be fascinating to see how she performs in the WC," she said. Delving further deep into the chances of the Harmanpreet Kaur-led side, Sthalekar said India have the wherewithal to beat Australia, their nemesis in global events over the years. "For example, in the 2020 T20 WC, Poonam Yadav took four wickets in the first game and

Pujara was backbone of Indian batting on last two Aus tours, he will a big miss this time: Vihari

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As another Border-Gavaskar Trophy is on the horizon, Vihari wondered who can play Pujara's role this time around. "Pujara will a big miss. He was the backbone of the batting line-up in the last two series for Team India. He took blows, he batted time, he stayed there for a long time, he saw the new ball, he got runs. He made the job easier for the other batters coming in," Vihari told PTI in an interaction arranged by JioCinema. "So that kind of role...Who will play is a question mark for me. Currently I would say we have an attacking mode of a batting line up (the top six). All like to play their shots. Virat is the only one I feel in that batting line up who can be like a glue to the other batters. "He can stay on and bat the most number of overs and you know batting in Australia

India U20 face stern Iran test in AFC Qualifiers

PTI ■ VIENTIANE (LAOS)

India will be looking to iron out the rough edges before facing Iran in their next Group G game of the AFC U20 Asian Cup 2025 qualifiers here on Friday. India put up a good show to register a 4-1 victory against Mongolia in their first Group G match but there is still a lot of work to be done. "The last match was a big motivation for our team. I've always maintained that winning the first match of a tournament is crucial, and the boys stuck their heads in and played extremely well against Mongolia," said Ranjan Chaudhuri in a release. "But we cannot rejoice in the victory just yet. We must immediately begin preparations for the next game. We missed a lot of chances against Mongolia, and that is something we cannot afford against Iran. "They are an extremely good side, but we have made our plans according to their game

Man United stunned 1-1 by Dutch club Twente in revamped Europa League

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag questioned his players' killer instinct after they were held to a 1-1 draw by his old club FC Twente in the revamped Europa League. Sam Lammers capitalised on a mistake by Christian Eriksen in the second half at Old Trafford and raced away to fire an equalizer for the Dutch underdog. "You saw that was the game of their life. They fought for every yard and we didn't," Ten Hag said. "99% is not enough, You have to give 100%. You have to kill the game. You have to finish it off." Eriksen had put United ahead with a stunning first-half strike but was caught in possession by Lammers, whose goal secured an unexpected point for the visitors. Ten Hag had spoken before the game of his affection for the team he supported as a boy in the Netherlands and represented as a player. He said it was "not nice to have to hurt something you love." Instead it was United fans left in pain, despite Eriksen seemingly putting the home team on course for victory. United has won just three of

Shakib retires from T20Is, says Kanpur Test will be his last if no farewell at home

PTI ■ KANPUR

accused in a murder case back home during the political unrest that led to the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. He was a member of Parliament from her party, the Awami League. Shakib made the announcement while interacting with Bangladeshi media but spoke in English following a request from the Indian journalists. In an unexpected turn of events, Shakib was named in an FIR in a murder case related to the civil protests in Bangladesh last August. The case pertains to the death of garment worker Mohammed Rubel, whose father, Rafiqul Islam, filed the complaint on August 7.

The 37-year-old Shakib indicated that he may not travel back home after the current series in India, if he can't be promised safety. "Going back to Bangladesh is not a problem but leaving is. My close friends and family members have concerns (about my safety), I hope things are better, well and there should be a solution to it." In January, Shakib had won an uncontested election to become a member of parliament for the then-ruling Awami League party. He was criticised for not speaking up for the student community during the protests. Many Bangladeshis reportedly raised slogan against Shakib when he played in Pakistan. Even non resident Bangladeshis hurled abuses during a private T20 league, the video of which became viral on social media. "I have 8 games to go in ODIs, and the Champions Trophy will be my last."

Pujara was backbone of Indian batting on last two Aus tours, he will a big miss this time: Vihari

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As another Border-Gavaskar Trophy is on the horizon, Vihari wondered who can play Pujara's role this time around. "Pujara will a big miss. He was the backbone of the batting line-up in the last two series for Team India. He took blows, he batted time, he stayed there for a long time, he saw the new ball, he got runs. He made the job easier for the other batters coming in," Vihari told PTI in an interaction arranged by JioCinema. "So that kind of role...Who will play is a question mark for me. Currently I would say we have an attacking mode of a batting line up (the top six). All like to play their shots. Virat is the only one I feel in that batting line up who can be like a glue to the other batters. "He can stay on and bat the most number of overs and you know batting in Australia

India U20 face stern Iran test in AFC Qualifiers

PTI ■ VIENTIANE (LAOS)

India will be looking to iron out the rough edges before facing Iran in their next Group G game of the AFC U20 Asian Cup 2025 qualifiers here on Friday. India put up a good show to register a 4-1 victory against Mongolia in their first Group G match but there is still a lot of work to be done. "The last match was a big motivation for our team. I've always maintained that winning the first match of a tournament is crucial, and the boys stuck their heads in and played extremely well against Mongolia," said Ranjan Chaudhuri in a release. "But we cannot rejoice in the victory just yet. We must immediately begin preparations for the next game. We missed a lot of chances against Mongolia, and that is something we cannot afford against Iran. "They are an extremely good side, but we have made our plans according to their game

Man United stunned 1-1 by Dutch club Twente in revamped Europa League

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag questioned his players' killer instinct after they were held to a 1-1 draw by his old club FC Twente in the revamped Europa League. Sam Lammers capitalised on a mistake by Christian Eriksen in the second half at Old Trafford and raced away to fire an equalizer for the Dutch underdog. "You saw that was the game of their life. They fought for every yard and we didn't," Ten Hag said. "99% is not enough, You have to give 100%. You have to kill the game. You have to finish it off." Eriksen had put United ahead with a stunning first-half strike but was caught in possession by Lammers, whose goal secured an unexpected point for the visitors. Ten Hag had spoken before the game of his affection for the team he supported as a boy in the Netherlands and represented as a player. He said it was "not nice to have to hurt something you love." Instead it was United fans left in pain, despite Eriksen seemingly putting the home team on course for victory. United has won just three of

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