



# the pioneer

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

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

**Jr NTR compliments Janhvi on HER WORK**

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**

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

— Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs

**DON'T MISS...**

**Minister Nimmala recalls...**

Water Resources Development Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu paid tribute to renowned engineer Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya on his birth anniversary in Palakollu on Sunday. September 15 is celebrated as Engineers' Day in honour of Visvesvaraya. A programme was organised in Palakollu to mark the 57th Engineers' Day. Minister Ramanaidu honoured Visvesvaraya by garlanding his portrait. Speaking at the event, the Minister highlighted that Engineers' Day is celebrated to inspire young engineers, acknowledge...

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**Replacing rice with other crops...**

Replacing about 40 per cent of the area sown with rice with other crops could help recover 60-100 cubic kilometres of groundwater lost since 2000 in north India, a study has found. Current cropping patterns — dominated by rice, which relies heavily on groundwater for irrigation — could result in a loss of about 13-43 cubic kilometres of groundwater if warming of the planet continues, a team of researchers, including those from the Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar, Gujarat, said. The researchers...

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**90 pc of financial institutions...**

Ninety per cent of Indian financial institutions are focusing on artificial intelligence (AI) and GenAI (Generative Artificial Intelligence) as the primary technology enablers of innovation, according to a PwC India report. As per the PwC India report titled, 'Mapping the FinTech innovation landscape in India' data analytics also continues to emerge prominently across nearly 74 per cent responses, underscoring its integral role in driving insights and decision-making within the financial services (FS) sector. It said that 31 financial...

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**Khawaja relishes his on-field...**

Australian opener Usman Khawaja has over the years relished his on-field battles with star Indian spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, who according to the southpaw is a man who always has a plan up his sleeve. Ashwin (39 wickets) is the third-highest wicket-taker among Indian bowlers in Test matches in Australia, only behind Anil Kumble (49) and Kapil Dev (51) apart from topping the charts across all bilateral series (home and away) with 114 scalps which also includes seven five-for. 'Ravi is a very good bowler...

-SPORTS

**'HARASSMENT' OF MODEL**

## 3 senior AP IPS men axed

Govt issues orders suspending P Sitharama Anjaneyulu, Kranti Rana Tata & Vishal Gunni

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government on Sunday issued separate orders suspending three senior IPS officers, including a DG rank, for their alleged involvement in 'hastily arresting' and 'harassing' a Mumbai-based actor-cum-model without proper investigation in a case filed against her.

Former intelligence chief P Sitharama Anjaneyulu (DG rank), former Vijayawada Police Commissioner Kranti Rana Tata (IG rank) and Vishal Gunni (SP rank), then Deputy Commissioner of Police (Vijayawada) were suspended after an inquiry revealed their role in the alleged harassment of the model.

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

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



- The officers are accused of hastily arresting and harassing a Mumbai-based actor-cum-model without proper investigation.

- The model alleged that she was threatened with dire consequences by the police if she did not withdraw a previous case she had filed against a top Mumbai executive.

- The FIR against the model was registered on February 2, but the instructions for her arrest were given on January 31, before

- the FIR was filed
- The model claimed the case against her was fabricated and that she faced harassment.

- The AP government, based on an inquiry report, decided to suspend the officers for their alleged grave misconduct and dereliction of duty.

- The three officials were also among 16 IPS officers required to mark attendance twice daily at the DGP's office without assigned posts.



P Sitharama Anjaneyulu



Kranti Rana Tata



Vishal Gunni

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

The model was arrested earlier this year during the previous regime based on a complaint by a YSR Congress leader who accused her of cheating.

The then intelligence chief,

instructed the two other officials to arrest her, although no crime was registered against her as of that date.

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## Narayana assures fairness in support to flood victims

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA & UD), P Narayana, reaffirmed the State government's commitment to fairness and transparency in supporting victims of the recent floods. He stressed that the government aims to "do justice to the last mile" by preparing detailed and accurate reports on the damage caused by the floods.

This process, which includes re-verification and supervisory checks, was discussed during a meeting chaired by the minister at the NTR district collectorate in Vijayawada on Sunday. The meeting focused on ensuring that reports detailing the losses sustained by flood victims were prepared with full transparency and accountability.



Key officials present at the meeting included Municipal Administration Department Director M Harinarayanan, Disaster Management Organisation MD Ronanki Kurmanath, District Collector Dr G Srijana, Joint Collector Dr Nidhi Meena, and Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner HM

Dhyanaachandra. Minister Narayana underlined the importance of commitment at the field level in the re-verification process, stating that the enumeration of approximately 1,75,000 households in Vijayawada's urban areas, conducted by 4,036 enumerators, had been carried out without errors. He stressed that re-ver-

## AP turns a role model in 'UJALA' scheme under CM Naidu's leadership

LED street lights to be installed in villages soon

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has been recognised for his leadership in energy efficiency and environmental protection. Under his guidance, Andhra Pradesh has become a model for India in implementing the UJALA scheme.

The current NDA coalition government is working to revive the LED street lights project in villages, which was funded by the previous YSRCP administration. The government is considering settling outstanding bills and transferring responsibility to the central government-run Energy Efficiency Services Corporation (EESL). EESL CEO Vishal Kapoor met with CM Chandrababu last month and expressed readiness to resume maintenance of the street lights. Recently, officials from the Chief Minister's Office reviewed the project's status with the State Panchayat Raj Department.

During the TDP government's



tenure from 2014 to 2019, the LED street lighting project was initially piloted in the East Godavari district and later expanded across all districts. By 2019, EESL had installed and maintained 2.364 million LED streetlights, while the State Renewable Energy Development Corporation had installed another 159,000. This system led to significant electricity savings—Rs 173 crore worth of electricity from Rs 280 million units. Of the savings, 80% was allocated to maintenance organisations, and 20% to Gram Panchayats, a system in place from 2017 to 2019.

Continued on Page 2



**Ex-MP Nandigam Suresh taken into police custody**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Senior YSRCP leader and former MP Nandigam Suresh was taken into custody by the Mangalagiri police on Sunday. The court has remanded him for two days in connection with the attack on the TDP central office. The police submitted a petition to the Mangalagiri court requesting custody for further questioning in the case. Following a medical examination, the former MP was brought to the Mangalagiri police station, where security has been heightened.

The police will investigate the rural station from Sunday afternoon until Tuesday afternoon, focusing on the attack on the Telugu Desam Party central office. The court has instructed Nandigam Suresh to cooperate with the investigation during his two-day remand. **Continued on Page 2**

## 47 DSPs transferred in Andhra

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a major reshuffle, 47 Deputy Superintendents of Police (DSPs) across Andhra Pradesh were transferred on Sunday. The Director General of Police, Ch Dwaraka Tirumala Rao, issued the transfer orders under Rc No 992/G2/2024.

ABG Tilak, previously serving as DSP in the CID, has been transferred to the post of SDPO, Kasibugga. In contrast, B Rajasekhar, DSP, who had been attached to the ANTF, has been posted to the Women's Police Station, Srikakulam. Among other transfers, DNV

Prasad, DSP on the waiting list, has been posted as DPTC, Srikakulam. M Srinivasa Rao, previously DTC, Anakapalli, has been transferred as SDPO, Vizianagaram, and S Raghavulu, DSP, Intelligence, has been assigned to Cheepurupalli as SDPO. M Rambabu, DSP, Intelligence, is now SDPO, Palakonda, while S Appala Raju, DSP on the waiting list, has been posted as ACP, North, Visakhapatnam City.

D Srihari Raju, DSP, ACB, has been appointed as SDPO, Peddapuram, and Y Govinda Rao, from the Women's Police Station, Konaseema, has been posted as

SDPO, Kothapeta. D Viswanath, DSP, CID, has been posted as SDPO, Tadepalligudem, replacing DSRVSN Murthy, who has now been assigned as DSP, ACE.

K Latha Kumari, SDPO, Peddapuram, will report to the Police Headquarters. Ch GV Prasada Rao, DSP on the waiting list, has been posted as DTC, Eluru. Dr K Sravanthi Roy, ACP, CCS, Vijayawada, has been transferred to ACP, North Vijayawada, while U Bangar Raju, DSP, ACE, will take charge as ACP, South Vijayawada.

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**Enthusiasm marks Ganesh idols immersion P2**

## Akshaya Patra provides 15L food packets in city

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

After the unexpected flood hit Vijayawada following the breach of the Budameru canal, over 17 divisions in the city were inundated, leaving more than 100,000 families without food and water in the pitch darkness. Within hours, the Akshaya Patra Foundation, a subsidiary of the Hare Krishna Movement Charitable Foundation, rose to the occasion to address the hunger of the affected people from September 1. Following government instructions, the foundation has provided food to over 1.5 million people from day



"We are preparing food for 250,000 flood victims daily. More than 1.5 million food packets, including breakfast, lunch, and dinner, have been served so far as of Monday, September 11."

one. Starting on September 1, the foundation began distributing food packets. On the first day, they supplied approximately 60,000 packets, and by evening, this number had doubled, reaching around 200,000 packets per day. The

organisation operated tirelessly from its food preparation centre near Mangalagiri, which can prepare rice for 65,000 people in two hours. The centre is designed for mass production and timely delivery of meals including sambar rice, tomato rice, pongal, and curd rice.

The government requested the foundation's assistance to pro-

duce as much food as possible to feed the flood-affected population. Akshaya Patra's centralised kitchen at Mangalagiri can cook 100 kilograms of rice in just 10 minutes and 15,000 servings of sambar rice in 90 minutes, helping to meet the enormous demand. Every four hours, the organisation is capable of preparing enough food for hundreds of

thousands of people. Vamsidhara Dasa, president of the Andhra Pradesh Central Region, praised the efforts of the NGO, government, and donors. He stated, "We are preparing food for 250,000 flood victims daily. More than 1.5 million food packets, including breakfast, lunch, and dinner, have been served so far as of Monday, September 11." He noted that around 350 workers have been working round the clock to prepare food for the needy. Despite the limited staff, they continued to deliver meals to canteens and flood victims with the help of volunteers, including students and teachers from nearby villages. The government has deployed Anganwadi workers and SHG members for packing, which has been crucial during this critical time, said Vamsidhara.

## Divi's Labs donates Rs 15 cr to Telugu States for flood victims

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Divi's Laboratories Managing Director, Murali Divi, announced that in response to the appeals made by the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to support flood relief efforts, the company has donated Rs 15 crore to assist the people affected by the recent floods in the Telugu states.

Of this, Rs 5 crore was donated to the Akshaya Patra Foundation to provide immediate relief and distribute 16 lakh food parcels to flood victims in Vijayawada and surrounding areas. Kiran Divi handed over the cheque to Andhra Pradesh's Education and IT Minister, Nara Lokesh, at his residence in Hyderabad on Sunday.

Speaking on the occasion, Murali Divi noted that Divi's Laboratories



has consistently extended support during natural disasters in the Telugu states. He emphasised that, in the face of such calamities, it is everyone's responsibility to offer humanitarian aid. **Continued on Page 2**

# Monday Mirchi

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

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

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

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

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

## A LETTER TO PM THAT SHOCKED THE CMO

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

## AKUN SABHARWAL AT HOME AS ITBF IG NE FRONTIER

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

--Yours truly

# Enthusiasm marks Ganesh idols immersion

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The immersion of Lord Ganesh idols in the Krishna River at Seethamma Vari Padalu Ghat, downstream of the Prakasam Barrage, continued with devotion and enthusiasm on Sunday, the 9th day. The district administration had made extensive arrangements to ensure a smooth and safe process. Two large cranes were stationed at the ghat to lift and immerse the idols in the river's waters, with staff from the Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Response and Fire Services overseeing the event to prevent any accidents.

A large number of small and medium-sized idols were brought to the river by devotees in tractors and other vehicles. After performing the necessary rituals and pujas, the idols were immersed in the waters. This year, the Krishna River had sufficient water inflow from the upstream reservoirs, and floodwaters were released from the Prakasam Barrage, facilitating the immersion process. The Vijayawada Municipal Corporation deployed workers



A Vinayaka idol being immersed in River Krishna downstream of the Prakasam Barrage in Vijayawada on Sunday.

to clean the site, removing leaves, flowers, and other waste left behind during the immersion. Vinayaka Chaviti, celebrated on September 7, marked the start of the immersion process, but it was delayed due to heavy flood inflows in the Krishna River.

Now that the flood discharge from the Prakasam Barrage has decreased, district authorities permitted the immersion to proceed.

In addition to Seethamma Vari Padalu Ghat, idol immersions were also taking place in

other parts of the district, including the upstream areas of the Prakasam Barrage and the mandals of Ibrahimpatnam, Kanchikacharla, Jaggayyapet, and Nandigama.

Coastal villages in Bandar and other mandals also saw large numbers of devotees participating in the immersion ritual. District officials had earlier inspected the ghat and issued guidelines to the Ganesh Committees to ensure compliance with safety regulations.



After winning the auction for the 'laddu prasadam', Singamreddy Pradeep Reddy carried the sacred offering on his head in a display of devotion at Nunna, near Vijayawada, on Sunday.

## NUNNA 'LADDU' AUCTIONED FOR RS 26 LAKH

For the first time in NTR district, the 'laddu prasadam' (sacred offering) of Lord Ganesh fetched an impressive Rs 26 lakh in an auction held at Sri Sai Balaji Enclave in Nunna, near Vijayawada, on Sunday. This event took place on the final day of the Vinayaka Chavithi festival, a significant occasion for

devotees. The 10 kg 'laddu prasadam' was secured by Singamreddy Pradeep Reddy, Managing Director of Vipoda Finespire Solutions Private Limited, through the auction. The large sum raised highlights the devotion and enthusiasm surrounding the festival and the auction tradition in the region.

## Botsa vows to fight against VSP privatisation

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Leader of the Opposition in the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council, Botsa Satyanarayana, has vowed to fiercely oppose any move to privatize the Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (Visakhapatnam Steel Plant). Speaking to the media on Sunday, Botsa emphasized the plant's significance, asserting that it is "not just a regional asset; it is a matter of deep sentiment for the entire state of Andhra Pradesh." He further declared, "We will go to any lengths to ensure it remains under public ownership for the benefit of our people."

Botsa underscored the historical importance of the steel plant, recalling the sacrifices made during its establishment. "The sacrifices of 32 individuals and the efforts of leaders like Tenneti Viswanatham are etched into the history of this plant. Farmers contributed 32,000 acres of land to build this plant. It symbolises their trust and faith in the government," he stated. The steel plant, which underwent a significant expansion in 2008 with an investment of ₹1,000 crore, is central to the region's identity. Botsa criticized the current NDA government's push towards privatization and invoked the past efforts of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy to resist such



attempts. "In the past, Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy visited the plant, engaged with workers' unions, and wrote to the central government to halt privatisation efforts. We will continue to fight for the plant's future," he noted.

Expressing concern over the uncertainty surrounding the plant's future, Botsa called for transparency from the central and state governments. "We demand that both the central and state governments come clean on their intentions. The Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister must address this issue publicly," he urged. Warning of the consequences of privatization, Botsa declared that it would be a betrayal of public trust.

"This issue transcends politics; it's about public sentiment and self-respect. We will not let the government sacrifice the plant's future for their own interests," he affirmed.

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP president and former chief minister, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, has urged the TDP-led coalition government to immediately reconsider its plans to privatise medical colleges and withdraw the letter sent to the National Medical Commission (NMC), which could potentially result in a reduction of medical seats in the State.

In a message on the social media platform 'X', the YSRCP leader called on the TDP to prioritise public healthcare by completing the pending works in these institutions, ensuring quality medical education and providing free healthcare for the underprivileged. He cautioned that failing to act responsibly could trigger widespread public discontent against the government's actions.

He strongly criticised the TDP coalition, headed by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, for undermining the state's progress in medical education and public healthcare. He condemned the government for rejecting additional MBBS seats offered by the central government, describing it as a self-destructive move that deprived aspiring students of the chance to pursue medical education. He noted that while



neighbouring states were enhancing their medical infrastructure, Andhra Pradesh lost a valuable opportunity due to the TDP's adverse stance.

YS Jagan emphasised that providing quality education and healthcare is a fundamental responsibility of any government. He highlighted that during the previous YSRCP regime, groundbreaking reforms were initiated in the healthcare sector, including the establishment of 17 new medical colleges with an investment of Rs 8,480 crore.

The goal was to have a medical college in every parliamentary constituency, thereby increasing the number of healthcare professionals across the state.

He also pointed out that five of these colleges had already

commenced classes for the 2023-24 academic year, adding 750 MBBS seats to the state's capacity.

He further criticised the TDP's recent decisions to limit the number of seats in newly established medical colleges. He questioned the reduction of seats at the Paderu and Pulivendula medical colleges and alleged that such moves were part of a broader plan to privatise these institutions, which could lead to public harm and potential scams. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the YSRCP government has invested Rs 2,403 crore in medical infrastructure and prepared five more colleges to begin teaching activities.

YS Jagan reiterated the importance of government medical colleges in providing free super-specialty services to the poor and in guiding other healthcare institutions, such as area hospitals, community health centres (CHCs), and primary health centres (PHCs). He warned that the privatisation of these institutions would disproportionately harm underprivileged students and local communities, as it would result in exorbitant fees due to reduced competition in the healthcare sector.

## AP turns a role...

Continued from Page 1

The EESL and State Renewable Energy Development Corporations invested over Rs 1,000 crore without additional government or Panchayat funds, replacing traditional tube lights with LEDs. However, after the YSRCP came to power, concerns about the maintenance of LED streetlights led to an investigation, which eventually halted the project.

Maintenance issues resulted in a decrease in working street lights from 95-99% to 60% under the previous YSRCP government. In March 2021, the YSRCP government transferred maintenance responsibilities from EESL and state renewable energy companies to village secretariats.

## 3 senior AP IPS...

Continued from Page 1

According to the GO, as per the records, the FIR was registered against the model on February 2 at 6.30AM, whereas Anjaneyulu passed on instructions to Kanthi Rana Tata and Vishal Gunni on January 31 well before registering the FIR. She recently complained to some police officials alleging that a false case was foisted against her and that she was subjected to harassment.

Based on her complaint with AP police, the state government suspended two officials. The three officials were among those 16 IPS officers who were issued a memo directing them to mark their 'attendance' in DGP's office twice a day, without any post. During the Assembly poll campaign in April, the TDP pointing fingers at Anjaneyulu, alleged that the previous YSR Congress government was tapping the phone of its general secretary Nara Lokesh, using Pegasus spy software.

## Ex-MP Nandigam Suresh...

Continued from Page 1

Authorities will be investigating those responsible for the attack. The court has mandated that no physical force, verbal abuse, or intimidation should occur during the investigation. However, Suresh's legal team has requested that their lawyers be allowed to be present during questioning. The court has indicated it will review this request and make a decision accordingly.

In a separate matter, Nandigam Suresh faces charges related to incidents involving boats hitting the Prakasam barrage gates. Additionally, YSRCP leaders and MLCs were questioned by the police on Saturday regarding the vandalism of the TDP central office and Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's residence. The Supreme Court has ordered YCP MLCs Lella Appireddy, Talashila Raghuram, former minister Jogi Ramesh, and YSRCP leader Devineni Avinash, along with their lawyer Oggu Gavaskar, to surrender their passports to the investigating authorities within 48 hours.

## Divi's Labs donates..

Continued from Page 1

He also praised the steps taken by the Andhra Pradesh government to help flood victims return to normalcy, calling it a commendable effort. He encouraged others to contribute financially to the government's efforts to assist those in need. Murali Divi further mentioned that Rs 5 crore had also been donated to the Telangana government, with the cheque handed over by CEO Dr Kiran Divi to the state's Chief Minister, Revanth Reddy.

## 5 fishermen rescued after boat catches fire offshore

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A dramatic rescue operation was carried out by the coast guard on Sunday, after a fishing boat caught fire approximately 35 nautical miles offshore. The boat, owned by Vasupalli Appayamma, was engulfed in flames, forcing five fishermen to jump into the sea to save their lives.

"The fire spread so fast, we didn't have time to save anything. We jumped into the sea as soon as we could. We're extremely grateful to the coast guard for their timely intervention," said one of the rescued fishermen.

The coast guard personnel swiftly responded to the emergency, rescuing the fishermen and transferring them to another



boat before bringing them back to shore. Although the fishermen were rescued safely, the boat, valued at approximately Rs 35 lakh, was destroyed in

the incident.

Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries K Atchannaidu expressed concern over the accident and emphasized the impor-

importance of safety education for fishermen. "I have been informed by the Visakha Fisheries Department that all five fishermen are safe, which is a relief. However, the damage to the boat is significant, amounting to around Rs 35 lakh."

Minister Atchannaidu further highlighted the need for awareness programs to prevent such incidents in the future. "We need to implement awareness programs to ensure that such accidents are minimized in the future. Fishermen must be educated about safety measures to prevent such incidents." The incident serves as a reminder of the risks faced by fishermen and the importance of prioritizing their safety and well-being.



## Kejriwal to seek 'certificate of honesty'

Says he will resign as CM in two-days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced on Sunday that he would resign after two days and sought early polls in the national capital while vowing not to sit in the chief minister's chair till people give him a "certificate of honesty". The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) described the AAP supremo's move as "drama" and a "confession of crime" and wondered whether he has offered to quit because of infighting within his party.

Kejriwal said he would hold a meeting of the AAP MLAs in a couple of days and one of his party colleagues would take over as the chief minister. The AAP national convener said he would become the chief minister and Manish Sisodia his deputy "only when people say that we are honest". Sisodia got bail in the excise policy case last month.

The Delhi Assembly's term ends on February 23 next year and the polls are expected to be held sometime early February.

## Sub-Registrar offices set...

Continued from Page 1

The transformation aims to foster a sense of equality, with Sub-Registrars no longer occupying a special podium or having a red cloth on their table. Instead, they will use standard seating similar to other officers, according to RP Sisodia. Sisodia has instructed that there should be no partitions separating the Sub-Registrar from the public, with only a table between them. Previously, individuals seeking registration would stand in front of the Sub-Registrar's elevated podium. While land registrations generate revenue for the government, Sisodia emphasised that the primary goal is to ensure that the public receives the highest level of respect.

Additionally, a memo has been issued to enforce courteous behaviour in Sub-Registrar offices. Sub-Registrars are to arrange sufficient seating for those undergoing registration, allowing them to sit during the process. This change is expected to eliminate the need for people to wait while their registrations are completed, as they can now complete their transactions seated in the presence of the Sub-Registrar.

The decision follows a recent visit by Special Chief Secretary RS Sisodia and Minister for Stamps and Registrations Anagani Satya Prasad to Sub-Registrar offices. The changes were influenced by observations of British administrative practices, to enhance efficiency and public service.

## 47 DSPs...

Continued from Page 1

NSVK Durga Rao, DSP, Intelligence, has been transferred as ACP, West Vijayawada, and Y Prasad Rao, DSP, Intelligence, is now ACP, Mylavaram. Sk Abdul Azeed, DSP, DSRP Guntakal, has been posted as SDPO East Guntur, and M Ramesh, DSP on the waiting list, has been transferred to Traffic Guntur. M Hanumantha Rao, DSP, PCS&S, has been posted as SDPO Sattenapalli, replacing G Gurnadha Babu, who will report to the Police Headquarters. Several other officers, including U Naga Raju, M Maheswara Rao, and P Sridhar, have also been assigned new postings across various districts. The concerned officers are instructed to report at their new postings immediately and notify the Police Headquarters upon assuming their duties.

# An actress' epic showdown with Andhra's lawmakers

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

Naidu has initiated an investigation, acting swiftly on Jethwani's online complaint. However, the incident also reveals a disturbing trend where political connections can give room for influencing legal processes, compromising the very foundations of justice.

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

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu

As Jethwani navigated these murky waters, she reported

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

being illegally detained by the Andhra Pradesh Police under the previous YSRCP regime. She alleges she was coerced to drop her sexual assault case. If true, these actions of the police not only undermine the rule of law but also reflect a broader issue within the force—an alarming willingness to prioritize political loyalty over constitutional duties.

When police officers, who are supposed to protect citi-

zens, instead become instruments of oppression, the safety and security of individuals, especially the vulnerable, are severely compromised.

The Andhra Pradesh Police's decision to investigate these allegations against their own officers is a critical move toward restoring public trust. By appointing a special team to handle the inquiry, the police force acknowledges that the misconduct of a few can tarnish the entire institu-



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

tion's reputation. However, the real test will be ensuring that this investigation is conducted with transparency and impartiality, free from political interference. The public's trust in law enforcement depends on their ability to act without bias and uphold jus-

tice above all else.

Jethwani's case has attracted significant media attention, drawing both public interest and scrutiny. As this case continues to unfold, it is crucial for the media to report responsibly and present the facts accurately. Sensationalism should not cloud the truth; the focus must remain on the core issues—the protection of individuals and the integrity of the justice system.

The implications of this case go beyond Jethwani's personal ordeal, raising broader concerns about the relationship between politics and law enforcement in India. If police officers, entrusted with the impartial administration of justice, succumb to political pressure, it sets a dangerous precedent. Corruption and abuse of power can become rampant,

undermining democracy and the rule of law. When those in positions of authority prioritize political allegiance over their duty to the public, the most marginalized and vulnerable are left unprotected.

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

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

## GANESH IDOL IMMERSION

# Collector orders security measures

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna District Collector DK Balaji has instructed the officials concerned to take precautionary steps to avoid untoward incidents during the immersion of Ganesh idols in the Bay of Bengal, River Krishna and various irrigation tanks in the district. "The police should make necessary security arrangements at idol immersion points," he said.

In view of the Ganesh idol immersion, the Collector convened a tele-conference with all district-level officers includ-



ing the police from his chamber on Sunday.

Immersion will be held at Manginapudi, Tallapalem, Satrayapalem, Pedapatnam, Srikakulam, Tadigadapa, Yanalamalakuduru etc. Officials should deploy rescue teams at all immersion points. Floodlights should be set up, he said.

Further, he said the police should be vigilant and make adequate security arrangements for the smooth conduct of the ritual. Maintain law and order in the district. Particularly, special teams should be formed to prevent any kind of nuisance at the time of idol immersion, he added.

Krishna District Superintendent of Police (SP) R Gangadhara Rao, DPO Nageswara Naik, District Fisheries Officer Chandrasekhar, Fire Officer Yesuratnam, and several DSPs and Municipal Commissioners attended the tele-conference.

**In view of the Ganesh idol immersion, the Collector convened a tele-conference with all district-level officers including the police from his chamber on Sunday**

# Open Heart Trust continues supporting flood victims

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The volunteers of the Open Heart Trust actively participated in the distribution of food, water bottles, bread, biscuits and clothes to the flood victims of Ajith Singh Nagar, Rajiv Nagar, Vambay Colony, Rajarajeswaripeta, UDA Colony, Paipula Road, Vaddera Colony and other areas. The volunteers have continued their support for the flood victims for the past 10 days.

According to founder trustee Rasamsetti Nanda Kishore and president Tanuja Rani, food packets, water bottles, biscuits, breads etc. were distributed during the floods.

The flood has receded and in the past five days, however, they continued distributing clothes, blankets, sarees, and other essential goods to



Open Heart Trust founder trustee Nanda Kishore distributing essential goods to the flood victims at Rajiv Nagar in Vijayawada on Sunday

those who have lost everything.

They gave a call to the people to support the flood victims. No one had thought the

city would witness such a calamity, they added. Also, they expressed gratitude to those who stood in support of the flood victims.

# 14,00,415 MT of sand available in AP: MK Meena

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Principal Secretary of the Mines and Excise Department, Mukesh Kumar Meena, has said that as of Monday, 14,00,415 metric tonnes of sand is available at 24 stock points across Andhra Pradesh. He mentioned that on Sunday, 282 people applied for 1,665 metric tonnes of sand, and all applicants received their supplies.

Meena noted that due to adverse weather conditions and flood-affected areas across the state, sand reserves have been decreasing, but assured that there will be no shortage once the monsoon season ends. He added that road damage in



several areas has created difficulties in transporting sand, urging consumers to cooperate with the authorities.

Meena further stated that the supply of sand has been halted from several reaches, but once the rains subside and transportation conditions improve, sand will be available in full once again.

# 5KM Marathon Red Run-2024 tomorrow

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Following the directive of the National Aids Control Society, the Andhra Pradesh State Aids Control Society (APSACS) will organise 5KM Marathon Red Run-2024 in Vijayawada on Tuesday. The event will be taking place on the Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) Road at Satyanarayanapuram in Vijayawada, for promoting awareness of HIV/AIDS.

According to a press release from the APSACS, Society State Project Director Dr A Siri will inaugurate the 5KM Red Run-2024 at 6 am. Many college

students, besides Red Ribbon Club members in the age group of 17-25, will participate in the event, the press release said.

Those who perform well at the district-level can participate in State-level competitions. Also, the first two place winners will get a chance to participate in the National Marathon Red Run, they added.

Prize money will be presented to the first three place winners at the State-level competition. Those who qualify to take part in the National Marathon Red Run-2024 should submit the consent form, the press release said.

# New insecticide introduced

PNS ■ GUNTUR

There is good news for the farmers cultivating maize and soybean as a new effective protection for all kinds of caterpillars, especially Spodoptera like fall armyworms, is available in the market. Crystal Crop Protection Limited has launched Proclaim XTRA, its latest insecticide specifically formulated for maize and soybean will ensure prolonged crop safety and help farmers to maximise yield during the crop cycle. This innovative solution promises to enhance crop health and productivity, contributing to the success and sustainability of farmers' produce.

MD Ankur Aggarwal said: "Crystal's mission to work closely with the farming community and improve farm profitability and sustainability in crop protection stands at the core where we conceived Proclaim Xtra. This unique formulation not only controls a wide array of caterpillars but will contribute to ensure a better yield for soybean and maize farmers. Proclaim Xtra is an amplification for our efforts to build profitable farms for all. Crystal's legacy of innovative R&D capability is committed to provide sustainable farming solutions to Indian farmers and Proclaim Xtra establishes our endeavour further.

# MLA seeks bus service from Avanigadda to Amaravati

## Flags off 8 new RTC bus services from Avanigadda Depot

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Avanigadda MLA and former Deputy Speaker Mandali Buddha Prasad has asked the APSRTC officials to operate a bus service from Avanigadda to the State capital Amaravati. It will be convenient for the passengers to Amaravati from this region, he said.

At a programme held at the Avanigadda RTC Bus Depot, MLA Buddha Prasad flagged off eight new RTC bus services to various areas on Sunday. They include two buses to Hyderabad, four services to Vijayawada and another two Palle Velugu services.

A public meeting was held at the bus depot. While addressing the gathering, Buddha Prasad said that the APSRTC is operating many bus services for public convenience regardless of profit and loss. He requested the public to encourage the RTC by choos-



Avanigadda MLA Buddha Prasad flagging off new RTC bus services at the depot on Sunday

ing it for transportation. He said many RTC bus routes in the district have not gained even maintenance, so the authorities cancelled such routes. He requested the officials to continue those services and create awareness among the people. At the same time, he asked the bus commuters to support the RTC to run more bus services in future.

"Many people Avanigadda go to the secretariat for various purposes. First, they have to go to Vijayawada and then take a bus to Amaravati. The RTC officials should examine the possibilities of running special bus services to Amaravati," he said.

Krishna District Public Transport Officer A Vani Sri, Avanigadda MPP Tungala Sumati, Depot Manager Kokkiligadda Hanumanth Rao, Manadali Venkatram and others were present.

# AP govt should pressurise Centre to halt VSP privatisation: CPI

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

K Ramakrishna, the State Secretary of the Communist Party of India (CPI), has strongly demanded that the Andhra Pradesh government exert pressure on the Union government to halt its plans to privatise the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP). In a letter addressed to Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Ramakrishna expressed deep concern over the Central government's move, which he

described as part of a larger conspiracy to sell off valuable assets, including the plant's land, to corporate entities.

Ramakrishna pointed out that despite the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant previously achieving profits the Narendra Modi-led government has deliberately driven the plant into losses to justify its privatisation. He further alleged that the government has already shut down two plants and is planning to cease production in two more. Ramakrishna stated

that privatising the VSP will severely affect the livelihoods of 25,000 employees.

He criticised Prime Minister Modi's disregard for the ongoing protests by employees and trade unions that have been consistently fighting against the privatisation move. Ramakrishna called upon the State government to take urgent steps, not only to prevent the plant's privatisation, but also to ensure the allocation of iron ore to support its development.

# Vande Bharat Express to Nagpur from Sept 19

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

South Central Railway (SCR) will organise an inaugural launch of Vande Bharat service between Nagpur and Secunderabad on Monday and the regular services of the train will commence on September 19, 2024. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the train virtually.

The train will cover a distance of 585 kms between

Nagpur and Secunderabad in seven hours 15 minutes. It consists of two executive class coaches and 18 chair car coaches with a combined seating capacity of 1,440 seats. The train provides convenient timings facilitating day time travel from Nagpur, Balharshah and other towns to reach Secunderabad. Accordingly, the Train No. 20101 Nagpur - Secunderabad

will depart from Nagpur at 5:00 am and arrive at Secunderabad at 12:15 pm. Train No. 20102 Secunderabad - Nagpur will depart Secunderabad at 1 pm and will arrive at Nagpur at 8:20 pm. In between, the train stops at Sevagram, Chandrapur, Balharshah, Ramagundam and Kazipet railway stations in both directions.

# YSRC Doctors' Wing demands withdrawal of GO 85

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The YSR Congress Doctors Wing has called for the withdrawal of GO 85, which reduced reservations in PG medical seats, and urged the government to increase the number of seats in PG medical admissions. Dr Ambati Naga Radhakrishna, leader of the YSRC Doctors Wing, stated that GO 85 negatively impacts Dalit, tribal, and other weaker sections by reducing the availability of PG medical seats.

Dr Radhakrishna explained that the government had introduced the in-service PG quota to appoint specialist doctors in government hospitals, particularly in rural and tribal areas. However, since private specialists were reluctant to work in these areas, the initiative did not succeed. The in-service quota offered 30% reservation in clinical branches and 50% in non-clinical branches for doctors employed in government institutions.

He further noted that the recent GO 85 reduces the existing reservation to a maximum of 15% in clinical branches and 30% in non-clinical branches. He criticised

this decision, stating it is unjustified, especially given the ongoing shortage of specialist doctors in the state. A recent notification invited applications for 488 specialist positions, underscoring the need for more doctors.

Dr Radhakrishna condemned the government's decision, warning that it would lead to reduced access to quality medical education for marginalised communities, a shortage of specialist doctors in rural and tribal areas, and an inequitable distribution of healthcare services. He demanded the cancellation of the new order and a return to the previous reservation policy.

# Fake loan offer: Woman loses Rs. 96,000

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A spate of cyber fraud cases has been reported in Visakhapatnam, with multiple residents losing money to scams involving fake instant loan offers on social media platforms. A recent victim, a woman from Madhurawada, lost Rs. 96,000 to cybercriminals posing as bank representatives. "I thought I was getting a legitimate loan. They seemed so professional at first," she said, requesting anonymity. "They even spoke in Telugu, which made me feel more comfortable. But after paying nearly one lakh, I realised I had been cheated."

Similarly, a 26-year-old staff nurse from Ramnagar narrowly avoided losing money after

growing suspicious of repeated fee requests. "I was initially convinced because they spoke confidently and claimed they were following RBI guidelines. But once they started asking for more fees, I knew something was wrong," she said.

Cybercriminals are exploiting financially distressed individuals through fake ads on Facebook and other platforms. These scams promise quick loans, request personal details, and then demand payment for registration fees or other charges. "These scams are becoming a serious concern in the city," said a senior Visakhapatnam Cyber Crime Police official. "The fraudsters are highly organised, often operating from abroad, and employ people fluent in mul-



tiple languages to seem legitimate."

Many victims hesitate to report these incidents, fearing reputational damage. "Most people don't come forward because they're embarrassed,"

the official added. "But reporting these crimes is essential to catching the culprits and preventing further fraud."

In response, police have taken swift action, freezing bank accounts linked to the

scams and investigating cases. Investigations reveal many loan apps are managed from abroad, with fraudsters recruiting local-language speakers to avoid suspicion. "Recently, we freed hundreds of victims from AP and Telangana who had fallen prey to a similar scam led by a gang operating out of Cambodia," the official confirmed.

As cybercrime rises, authorities urge caution. "We advise people not to trust unsolicited loan offers online," warned the cybercrime unit. "Always verify the source and consult with authorities before sharing personal or financial information." Residents are advised to remain vigilant, and authorities emphasize cybercrime's growing threat.

ENGINEERS' DAY CELEBRATED

# Minister Nimmala recalls contributions of Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Water Resources Development Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu paid tribute to renowned engineer Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya on his birth anniversary in Palakollu on Sunday.

September 15 is celebrated as Engineers' Day in honour of Visvesvaraya. A programme was organised in Palakollu to mark the 57th Engineers' Day. Minister Ramanaidu honoured Visvesvaraya by garlanding his portrait. Speaking at the event, the Minister highlighted that Engineers' Day is celebrated to inspire young engineers, acknowledge the achievements of engineering experts, and promote technological development in India and the state. He praised Visvesvaraya as a great engineer, whose contributions continue to inspire future generations.

The Minister noted that the Central government declared 15 September as Engineers' Day in 1968. Visvesvaraya served as Chief Engineer for the Mysore Krishnaraja Sagar project and designed several projects across



the Moosi River, which helped save Hyderabad from flooding, Ramanaidu added.

He also emphasised that Visvesvaraya constructed numerous irrigation projects at a time when technology was limited. He reminded the audience that the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, was conferred upon Visvesvaraya. Ramanaidu lamented that the previous government, led by Jagannathan Reddy, had failed to commemorate the birth

**September 15 is celebrated as Engineers' Day in honour of Visvesvaraya. A programme was organised in Palakollu to mark the 57th Engineers' Day**

anniversaries of prominent engineers such as Sir Arthur Cotton, KL Rao, and Shivarama Krishnaiah.

Ramanaidu criticised the YSRCP regime, saying the condition of irrigation projects in Andhra Pradesh during their tenure would have pained the souls of these esteemed engineers. He accused the YSRCP government of neglecting all sectors, including irrigation, and shared that Rs 40 crore had been allocated to repair the breaches in the Budameru

bund and strengthen the embankments.

"The negligence of the YSRCP regime in maintaining the irrigation projects led to breaches in the Budameru bund, causing severe flooding that affected over six lakh people," Ramanaidu alleged. He also criticised Jagannathan Reddy for politicising the issue by making false claims during the floods. The Minister expressed confidence that the people would hold Reddy accountable. Ramanaidu reaffirmed his commitment to leading the state towards development with the support of the Modi-led Central government.

Earlier, the Minister garlanded the statue of Sir Arthur Cotton and planted saplings at the Irrigation Office premises. He also felicitated senior and retired engineers, recognising their efforts in addressing the Budameru breaches.

MLC Angara Rammohan, Irrigation SE CH Dev Prakash, EE M Dakshna Murthy, Drainage EE P Subramanyeswara Rao, and DE CH Satyanarayana were present at the event.

# Collector asks people to utilise subsidised solar power scheme

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector Chadalavada Nagarani has called upon people to utilise the subsidised solar power scheme launched by the Central government.

The Collector said that solar power connections are being provided on subsidy under Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Yojana. Through this scheme, household consumers can pay very low electricity bills, with a roof area of at least 10 sq. meters or 100 sq.

The Collector stated that a solar rooftop can be set up with a capacity of 1 kilowatt in a square foot of space, adding that a solar rooftop plant can be set up with a capacity of 1 to 2 kilowatts, 2 to 3 kilowatts or more.

The Collector revealed that the government is extending a subsidy of Rs 30,000 to Rs

78,000 on the subsidised solar scheme, adding that this scheme is very useful and one can get profit for years after installing a solar rooftop.

to take advantage of this, the Collector said.

"If consumers currently pay an electricity bill of Rs 1000, if they avail the solar power, they will get a bill of only Rs 338. They can call 1912 toll-free numbers for installing solar rooftops and solving electricity problems," the Collector told the people of the district.

The Collector advised to apply through [www.pmsurya.gov.in](http://www.pmsurya.gov.in) or the PM SuryaGhar portal. To create awareness about the scheme, she directed the officials to conduct door-to-door campaigns and distribute leaflets in villages and towns. Collector Nagarani asked the officials to ensure that the people of the district utilise the subsidised solar power scheme in every household to ensure a safer power tariff.



Collector Nagarani asked people to increase solar power and help environmental protection. Under this scheme, bank loans are also provided with low interest and people are advised

# Safety measures to be strengthened at water bodies

PNS ■ PADERU

In response to the recent rainfall and drowning of two tourists at Sarayu Waterfalls in Ananthagiri mandal, District Collector AS Dinesh Kumar has mandated strict security measures to improve safety at the district's water bodies.

"The recent rains have significantly increased the risk of accidents at our water bodies," the Collector stated. "We must take every precaution to ensure the safety of both residents and visitors."

On Sunday, Kumar issued a statement emphasising the urgency of the situation. "We

have alerted police and revenue officials and instructed



them to implement strict safety protocols. Our main prior-

ity is to prevent any future accidents." To address the safety concerns, the Collector has directed the installation of warning boards at several critical locations, including Sarayu Waterfalls, Chaparai Waterfalls, Pittala Borra, Gadigummi, Erravaram, Dhoni Gummala, Suvvapu, and Rampachodavaram waterfalls.

"It is crucial that we inform visitors about the potential hazards associated with these locations. While the warning boards are an important step, we must also ensure that our message reaches all visitors effectively," he added.



# 39 quintals PDS rice seized; one arrested

PNS ■ KAKINADA

The vigilance officials and the police seized 39 quintals of rice meant to be distributed under the Public Distribution System at Z Ragampet village in Gandepalli mandal on Sunday.

MSO Krishna told the media that on a tip-off, the vigilance conducted checking of vehicles. They found 39 quintals of PDS rice were being transported in a lorry illegally. The police seized the rice and the vehicle worth Rs 11 lakh.

The officials said that the rice was purchased from a rice mill located at Geneda village in Kirlampudi mandal being transported to Rajanagararam.

Meanwhile, in a similar raid by the vigilance officials in NTR district, 600 bags of PDS rice were seized by the officials in Sri Lakshmi rice mill at Paritala village in Kanchakarla madal.

A vigilance and police team led by SI Bonagiri Raju conducted a raid on the rice mill. The mill management purchased the rice from the ration card holders and stocked it in the rice mill to be exported to other countries. The police held one person in this connection. The ration rice is recycled and blended in Samba Masuri varieties of rice and sold at higher price, the police said.

# One drowned during Ganesh immersion



PNS ■ KAKINADA

The devotional Ganesh idol immersion turned tragic as one of the devotees drowned in the Yeleru canal at Palem village in Kirlampudi mandal.

Kirlampudi CI Lakshman Rao said during the immersion of Ganesh's idol, the deceased entered the canal. He slipped and drowned. He was identified as Ganesh and the body was fished out from the canal. The Ganesh immersion organizers alleged that the officials and the police did not make arrangements to immerse the idols safely in the canal.

# Minister flags off 6 new RTC buses

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

Minister for Transport Ramprasad Reddy has made it clear that some more electric buses will be inducted into the fleet of APSRTC buses.

The Transport Minister inaugurated six new buses in Dharmavaram on Sunday.

Speaking on the occasion, Ramprasad Reddy said that better roads would be built in the state and more RTC electric buses as well as conventional buses would soon be inducted for the convenience of the people of the state. The NDA-led AP government would always give priority for public welfare and enhance facilities, he observed.

The YSRCP government merged the APSRTC into the state government but it failed to resolve many issues that emerged with the merger, the Minister criticised. He also pointed out that the previous YSRCP regime had

mortgaged the RTC premises.

Minister Ramprasad Reddy said that within 90 days of the coming to power of the NDA government, three new buses were introduced every day, adding discussions are being held with the Chief Minister to induct 5,000 new buses in the next five years.

The Transport Minister revealed that out of 1400 buses inducted so far, 600 buses are already running in various parts of the state. The state has begun achieving progress under the leadership of Chandrababu Naidu and Pawan Kalyan, Ramprasad Reddy observed.

"Efforts are being made to reconstruct the damaged roads and carry out repairs to other roads. The Center has approved many national highway projects in the state but the previous YSRCP did not acquire lands for the roads," the Minister alleged.

# 700 litres of jaggery wash destroyed

PNS ■ ELURU

The police conducted a raid and destroyed 700 litres of jaggery wash meant to brew illicit liquor and seized 30 litres of country-made liquor at Kukkunur village on Sunday.

Kukkunur Inspector M Ramesh Babu told the media that a police team led by SI Ramakrishna conducted a raid at Kukkunur agency areas. They found brewing of illicit liquor by some people and destroyed 700 litres of jaggery wash which was stored in drums to distill illicit liquor. The police team also found 30 litres of country-made liquor and seized the same.

CI Ramesh Babu told the media that they would oppress the illicit liquor menace with an iron hand and take string-



gent action against the illicit liquor brewers. He said that brewing, selling and consuming illicit liquor are grave offences. He asked people to inform the police about the brewing of illicit liquor by calling 100 and 112.

# Political row over Telangana Liberation Day

**If Sardar Patel belongs to Congress, why Liberation Day not celebrated: Sanjay**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Asking the Congress to answer why "If Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel belonged to the Congress, why was Telangana Liberation Day not celebrated," Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar criticised the Congress for saying that the BJP has 'no right' to observe Telangana Liberation Day.

"If the Congress only has that right, why was Telangana Liberation Day not celebrated till now? Congress ruled the

state for 50 years as part of united Andhra Pradesh. Why was it not celebrated then? Why not remember the Telangana fight-



ers of yesteryears? Ever remember Sardar Patel who conducted Operation Polo to liberate Telangana? When the Congress

and the BRS are not in power, they say one thing about Telangana Liberation Day. When they lose power, they say something else. This is the way of the Congress and the BRS. One party says 'Integration Day on September 17,' Sanjay said.

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

# Doctor held for misbehaving with minor girls

**Alleged sexual misconduct took place during a counselling session**

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A doctor from a mental hospital in Madhurawada, Visakhapatnam, has been arrested on charges of sexual misconduct with two minor girls, aged 15 and 16. The incident occurred at Midhilapuri Vuda Colony. Dr. Satish Kumar is the accused.

The alleged sexual miscon-

duct took place during a counselling session, where the doctor is said to have used indecent toys to engage in inappropriate behaviour with the girls. The PM Palem Police Station registered a case under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act based on the parents' complaint.

"We trusted this doctor to help our daughter," the father

of the girls said, "but he betrayed our trust in the most horrific way." The mother added, "When we learned about what happened, we were devastated. Our daughters have been traumatised by this incident."

"We will ensure that justice is served and the perpetrator is held accountable for his heinous actions," said a police official.

# 38 red sanders logs seized; 3 smugglers arrested

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The Red Sanders Anti Smuggling Task Force team seized 38 red sander logs and arrested three smugglers.

Police said that under the direction of district SP L Subba Rayudu and supervision of Task Force SP P Srinivas, a task force team led by RI (Operations) Suresh Kumar Reddy conducted combing in the Seshachalam forest area on the night of Saturday.

The task force personnel saw some smugglers loading the



red sander logs into a vehicle.

On noticing the task force personnel, the smugglers started fleeing. However, the task force personnel chased and apprehended three of them.

Two of the arrested belong to Chennai and another to Tiruvannamalai. The police seized 38 red sanders logs, a car and two motorcycles. CI Suresh Kumar Reddy registered a case.

# TTD presents silk robes to deity at Kanipakam temple

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Executive Officer J Syamala Rao on Sunday presented 'Pattu Vastrams' to Kanipakam Varasiddhi Vinayaka temple.

In a tradition, TTD has been presenting the silks to this famous temple located in Chittoor district on the occasion of the celestial Kalyanam of the deities at the temple on Sunday evening as a part of Vinayaka Chavithi festivities. On his arrival, TTD EO was received by the Kanipakam temple EO Guruprasad, AEO Vidyasagar Reddy, archakas and Veda pundits.



After the presentation of silks, TTD EO along with the Tirumala temple Deputy Executive Officer Lokanatham had the darshan of the presid-

ing deity followed by Veda Aseervachanam by the temple priests. Later, the Puthalapattu legislator Murali Mohan also felicitated EO on the occasion.

# South Coast Railway Zone project fails to take off

**Railway authorities describe land allotted by GVMC as 'unsuitable for construction'**

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The much-anticipated South Coast Railway Zone in Visakhapatnam has failed to take off, despite being announced three years ago. Land availability and bureaucratic red tape have emerged as major roadblocks. Railway authorities refused to commence construction on the 52 acres of land allotted by the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) in Mudasarlova, citing land suitability concerns.

"When the railway authorities pointed out squatters were occupying the land, we promptly evacuated them," said a senior GVMC official. However, they later claimed that half of the land fell within a water catchment area, deeming it unsuitable for construction, and requested alternative land.

Despite these claims, GVMC officials insist that 90 per cent of the allotted land is fit for construction. "These are not water bodies, but lands belonging to GVMC's Water Works," clarified a senior official. He further added, "Railway authorities have now agreed to proceed with the land, and steps will be taken to construct the railway zone office."

There are concerns that

resistance from railway officials in Bhubaneswar, who oppose separating the Waltair Division and Visakhapatnam from the East Coast Zone, is contributing to the delay. "Their belief is that this move will reduce the zone's income," said a source. Allegations also suggest that the Railway Minister, hailing from Odisha, is influencing officials to resist the separation.

Visakhapatnam residents question why the railway zone project is not following a model used by other Central institutions like the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Visakhapatnam and the Central Tribal University. Both

institutions began operations in temporary rented buildings while their permanent campuses were being constructed.

"IIM-Visakhapatnam operated out of a rented building at Andhra University from 2015 until its permanent shift to Gambhiram in 2022," said an Education Department official. Similarly, the Tribal University, which was allocated more than 500 acres of land, started classes on a transit campus in China Madapalli while waiting for its permanent campus to be completed. The AP Medtech Zone also followed a similar model, operating from Symbiosis Campus in

Rushikonda IT Park for two years before shifting to its Aganampudi site once construction was completed.

Residents and officials are questioning why the South Coast Railway Zone has not adopted this strategy. "If the railway zonal office needs to accommodate 1,000 to 1,200 people, there's no need to appoint all the staff at once. A building for 500 people could be rented initially, while the permanent office is constructed on a fast track," said a senior railway official. Locals are urging the MPs of the region to bring the matter to the attention of the Railway Minister.

ACROSS THE STATES



President greets citizens on eve of Milad-un-Nabi

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

Bangladeshi, Rohingya infiltration major threat to Jharkhand: PM

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

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

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

"Bangladeshi and Rohingya infil-

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

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

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



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

PNS ■ NAGPUR

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

Addressing a gathering after inaugurating a digital tower at Ramdeobaba University in Nagpur, Dhankhar asserted that education is service and not commerce.

"The quality education defines democracy and the quality education you are getting defines development which will fast-track our attainment of a fully

developed nation by 2047," he said.

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

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

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



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

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

Fire breaks out at shoe factory in Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Police said that they got information about the fire and teams were immediately rushed to the spot to maintain law and order.

We sent PCR, ambulances and additional force at the spot to keep onlookers at the bay.

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

PNS ■ BHAGALPUR

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

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

off ceremony of a Vande Bharat Express train to Howrah.

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

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

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

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

year, hit the three countries.

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

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

A C-130J military transport



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

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

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



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

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

Never aspire to be CM of Maharashtra: Uddhav



PNS ■ AHMEDNAGAR

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday said he didn't harbour aspirations to become Maharashtra CM, a remark coming against the backdrop of MVA allies' reluctance to face assembly polls with a CM face.

Addressing protesters in Ahmednagar, Thackeray said he didn't aspire to become the chief minister in (November) 2019 also.

"Whether I am in power or not, I feel empowered by the

support of the people. Balasaheb (Thackeray) never held a position of power but all powers were wrested with him because of people's support," Thackeray said.

He was addressing state government employees protesting for the restoration of the Old Pension Scheme.

Notably, Thackeray had last month asked NCP (SP) and Congress to decide on a chief ministerial face for the Maha Vikas Aghadi but failed to get a positive response.

EARLY POLLS Delhi govt may have to tell EC reasons: Experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal pitches for early assembly polls in Delhi, experts on Sunday said the city government may have to write to the Election Commission giving reasons behind the demand.

The final decision will, however, rest with the poll panel on when to hold the polls. The term of the Delhi Assembly ends on February 23 next year and the polls are expected to be held sometime early February.

Kejriwal on Sunday demanded that polls in Delhi be held in November alongside Maharashtra.

The term of the Maharashtra Assembly ends on November 26.

One who is generous, shows goodwill is a Hindu : RSS chief

PNS ■ JAIPUR

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Sunday said being Hindu means to be generous and show goodwill to everyone, regardless of their religious beliefs, caste or dietary practices.

In a release in Hindi, he said the Hindu society is the "karta-dharta" of the country. "If something goes wrong in this nation, then it affects the Hindu society because it is the karta-dharta of the nation but if anything good happens in the country, it adds to the glory of Hindus," he said.

Bhagwat explained that what is commonly referred to as the Hindu religion is, in essence, a universal human religion. "It embodies a global ethos focused on the well-being of everyone. To be Hindu means to be the most generous person in the world, one who embraces all, shows goodwill

towards all, and descends from noble ancestors," he said.

"Such a person does not use education to sow discord but to share wisdom, does not use wealth for indulgence but for charity and employs power to protect the vulnerable," Bhagwat said. Anyone who lives by these values and culture can be considered a Hindu, regardless of whom they worship, the language they speak, their caste, region or dietary practices, the RSS chief said.

Bhagwat noted that while the Sangh was once not known by many, it is now widely recognised and respected even by those who might outwardly oppose it.

"Despite their objections, they secretly acknowledge its significance. Therefore, it is now crucial to safeguard Hindu religion, culture and society to ensure the comprehensive development of the nation," he said.

Replacing rice with other crops could help recover groundwater

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Replacing about 40 per cent of the area sown with rice with other crops could help recover 60-100 cubic kilometres of groundwater lost since 2000 in north India, a study has found.

Current cropping patterns -- dominated by rice, which relies heavily on groundwater for irrigation -- could result in a loss of about 13-43 cubic kilometres of groundwater if warming of the planet continues, a team of researchers, including those from the Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar,

Gujarat, said.

The researchers proposed shifting from existing cropping habits by cutting down on cultivating rice as a potential solution for sustaining the fast-depleting resource in a warmer world that threatens food and water security.

"Replacing 37 per cent area of rice with other crops can recover 61 to 108 cubic kilometres groundwater compared to 13 to 43 cubic kilometres with current cropping pattern under the 1.5-3 degrees Celsius global warming levels," the authors wrote in the study accepted for publication in the journal



Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) Nexus.

Compared to current cropping trends, the benefits of switching crops in saving groundwater are more during the prolonged dry periods

predicted under global warming, the researchers said

According to the 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC's) Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius, if current trends

continue, global warming is likely to reach 1.5 degrees Celsius between 2030 and 2050 and could reach 3 degrees Celsius by 2100.

Changing crop patterns can be substantially beneficial -- particularly for the states of Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh -- for ensuring groundwater sustainability and farmers' profitability, the authors said.

They also found that switching of crops did not substantially impact groundwater levels where recovery rates were low such as in the states of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Jharkhand.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On the completion of its 40 years, the All India Mahila Congress on Sunday launched a nationwide online membership campaign and announced a special leadership training programme for members.

Addressing a press conference at the AICC headquarters, Mahila Congress chief Alka Lamba said, "Today, on the foundation day of the Mahila Congress, we are going to launch the website of the Mahila Congress. The All India Mahila Congress is going to start a nationwide online membership campaign for the first time. So now, sisters from all over the country who used to ask 'how to join Mahila Congress', it has become easier for them now."



"Along with launching our website, today we are also going to start a nationwide membership campaign of the Mahila Congress for the first time. With one click, all the sisters of the country will become members of the All India Mahila Congress," she said.

She also appealed to women of the country to join the Mahila Congress and strength-

en the organisation.

"We assure you that if you are facing any kind of injustice or atrocities, if you need any kind of help, the All India Mahila Congress is standing with you with full strength," Lamba said.

She also announced the start of a special leadership training programme for women members.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## India inundated

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

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



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

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

## PICTALK



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

PTI

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

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

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



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

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

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

## The art of problem solving

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

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

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



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



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

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

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



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## BAIL IS THE RULE, NOT EXCEPTION

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

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

## PORT BLAIR IS NOW SRI VIJAYA PURAM

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

## CAGED PARROTS

Madam — The Supreme Court's scathing

## India's booming bioeconomy



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Avinash Godbole | Dewas

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

## SPORTS BOOST MENTAL HEALTH

Engaging in sports strengthens emotional stability and cognitive growth



SAKSHI SETHI

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

Engaging in various physical activities increases the production of neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine, which play a crucial role in regulating the mood and emotions of an individual and being consistent in sports routine can lead them to a more stable mood, thereby helping them in reducing symptoms of depression and promoting overall emotional well-being. Furthermore, achieving personal goals in sports, such as running a faster mile or mastering a new skill, provides a sense of accomplishment that boosts not only self-esteem but also confidence to a large extent. Sports such as basketball, soccer or tennis that involve strategy, coordination as well as decision-making require quick thinking and concentration can help improve cognitive skills over time. Studies too have shown that regular physical activity can enhance memory, problem-solving abilities as well as attention span, which are all critical components of mental health. By keeping the brain active and engaged, sports help in maintaining cognitive function and prevent age-related decline. Moreover, they also teach individuals how to handle failures, manage stress and push through adversity—skills that are invaluable in everyday life. Whether it is dealing with a loss, overcoming an injury or working hard to achieve a goal, sports challenge individuals to grow stronger



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

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

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)



VARADA MADGE

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

Assessment Report, shifts in economic, social, and food systems triggered by climate change will lead to long-term mental health impacts, including rising levels of anxiety, depression, and stress. One of the most alarming consequences of climate change on mental health is the rise of "eco-anxiety."

Defined as a persistent worry about the current environmental crisis and the bleak future it suggests, eco-anxiety is affecting millions globally, especially the younger generation. A study by The Lancet across ten countries, including India, surveyed 10,000 young adults aged 16-25 years. The results were sobering: over half of the participants reported feeling 'sad', 'anxious', 'angry', 'powerless', 'helpless', 'insecure', and

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



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

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

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

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

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



GOURAV VALLABH

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



The Prime Minister of India attending a Ganesh Pooja at the residence of the Chief Justice of India (CJI) is an act that should be seen as a symbol of respect and unity rather than an event warranting criticism. In the complex structure of Indian governance, where the judiciary and the executive function as distinct but interdependent pillars, such gestures are appropriate and reflective of the harmony essential for the nation's progress. To criticise this act would be to adopt a narrow-minded approach, ignoring the more profound significance of the occasion. The judiciary and the executive are two of the most important pillars of Indian democracy. While they are distinct in their functions, they share a common purpose: the preservation of the Constitution and the welfare of the people. The Prime Minister, as the head of the executive, and the Chief Justice of India, as the head of the judiciary, embody the leadership of two vital branches of government. Their personal or religious event participation reflects mutual respect and understanding of their respective roles in the country's governance. The Ganesh Pooja, a significant religious event in India, represents the invocation of wisdom, prosperity, and the removal of obstacles. By attending such an event together, the two leaders are sending a message that they are united in their goals for the nation, seeking divine blessings for the common good. To view this act as inappropriate would be to overlook the fact that it is not merely a personal gathering but a reflection of shared responsibility in upholding the constitutional fabric of India. Critics of the Prime Minister's participation in the Ganesh Pooja at the Chief Justice of India's residence should remember that performing the Ganapati Pooja is not a crime, but a deeply ingrained part of India's cultural and historical heritage. The significance of Ganesh Pooja, especially when viewed through the lens of its revival by the great freedom fighter Bal Gangadhar Tilak, is a reminder of its deeper objectives—unity, nationalism, and collective strength. In this context, the Ganesh Pooja is not just a religious ceremony but a powerful cultural symbol that has historically promoted social



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

cohesion, unity, and nationalism. By criticizing such an event, the critics undermine the values that Tilak sought to instil through this festival. In Indian tradition, the term "Karta" refers to the head or manager of a family, responsible for the well-being of the entire household. Similarly, the Prime Minister and the Chief Justice act as the 'Kartas' of their respective domains: the executive and the judiciary. While their roles are different, their objectives often align, especially concerning matters of national interest, law, and justice. By coming together at a religious event, they demonstrate that despite their institutional separation, they work towards the same larger and greater goal—the welfare of the people and the strengthening of Indian democracy. As the Karta of the executive, the Prime Minister is responsible for running the government, implementing laws, and ensuring the country's development. The Chief Justice, as the Karta of the judiciary, ensures that justice is upheld and that the laws are interpreted and applied in a fair and just manner. These roles complement each other, and public gestures of respect and unity, such as attending a religious event together, only strengthen the understanding and coordination between these two pillars of governance. Only a narrow-minded perspective would find fault in the Prime Minister's attendance at the Ganesh Pooja. Such criticism is often rooted in a limited understanding of the executive and judiciary's roles in the country's broader governance. Criticizing such gestures of goodwill and unity overlooks the significance of collaboration between these branches, which is essential for a well-functioning democracy. By attending the Ganesh Pooja, the Prime Minister and the CJI are reinforcing their commitment to work together for

the nation's greater good. It is well-known that Congress, during its tenure in power, had multiple instances where it was accused of attempting to influence or interfere with the independence of the judiciary. One such example that comes to the mind of every informed citizen is when Chief Justice S.M. Sikri retired on April 25, 1973, the day after the Supreme Court's landmark Kesavananda Bharati judgment, which ruled that Parliament could not alter the "basic structure" of the Constitution. Displeased by this limitation on her plans for constitutional amendments, Indira Gandhi swiftly responded by superseding three senior judges—Justices K.S. Hegde, J.M. Shelat, and A.N. Grover—on April 26. Justice A.N. Ray, who was less critical of the government's stance, was appointed Chief Justice. This supersession sent a clear message, influencing the Supreme Court's subsequent ruling in the ADM Jabalpur case (also known as the Habeas Corpus case). During the Emergency declared on June 25, 1975, which suspended fundamental rights including the right to life and personal liberty, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court heard challenges to the presidential order. Attorney General Niren De argued that no judicial remedy could be sought during the Emergency. Justice Khanna questioned the Attorney General about remedies for severe abuses, like police killings, during the Emergency. The Attorney General admitted there would be no judicial recourse during this period. Despite this troubling admission, the majority ruled that citizens had no right to life or personal liberty during the Emergency. Justice Khanna dissented but was later superseded by Justice M.H. Beg as Chief Justice in January 1977. In November 1976, Congress passed the 42nd

Amendment, aiming to undermine judicial independence and establish a more authoritarian regime. The Prime Minister's participation in Ganesh Pooja at the Chief Justice of India's residence underscores mutual respect and recognition of each other's roles and powers. Unlike Congress, which historically attempted to undermine judicial independence, this gesture reflects a healthy relationship between the executive and judiciary. It demonstrates that both leaders acknowledge and uphold the boundaries of their respective roles, ensuring a collaborative rather than confrontational dynamic in governance and judicial matters. The Prime Minister's attendance at a religious function does not imply interference in the judiciary's functioning or decision-making. There is a significant difference between engaging in respectful cultural or religious participation and attempting to subvert judicial independence for political gains, as seen during the Congress era. To equate the two is to distort history and misrepresent the present. The Prime Minister performing Ganesh Pooja at the Chief Justice's residence is an act that reflects India's values of cultural unity, mutual respect, and inclusiveness. Only those with a narrow-minded view or divisive political motives would criticize such a gesture. This event represents the healthy relationship between the judiciary and executive, reaffirming their shared commitment to upholding the Constitution and promoting the welfare of the nation. Rather than being a cause for criticism, it should be seen as a celebration of the harmony and unity at the heart of India's democratic and cultural ethos. (The writer is professor at XLRI and a BJP Leader; views are personal)

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

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

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



VARADA MADGE

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

Assessment Report, shifts in economic, social, and food systems triggered by climate change will lead to long-term mental health impacts, including rising levels of anxiety, depression, and stress. One of the most alarming consequences of climate change on mental health is the rise of "eco-anxiety."

Defined as a persistent worry about the current environmental crisis and the bleak future it suggests, eco-anxiety is affecting millions globally, especially the younger generation. A study by The Lancet across ten countries, including India, surveyed 10,000 young adults aged 16-25 years. The results were sobering: over half of the participants reported feeling 'sad', 'anxious', 'angry', 'powerless', 'helpless', 'insecure', and



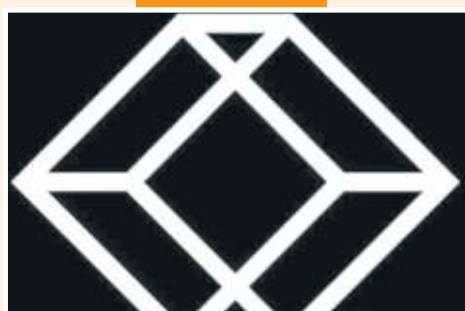
ing year. India has already witnessed numerous climate-induced disasters that have exacerbated mental health issues. According to the National Institute of Disaster Management, India experienced 1,058 climate-related events, including floods, cyclones, droughts, cold waves, and heatwaves between 1995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

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

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

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

IN BRIEF



Black Box to increase biz share, hire 400 people

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



JSW Energy arm commissions 300 MW wind project

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



Polymatech to set up semiconductor in Bahrain

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

REPORT BY OCT 30

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

Currently, 18 per cent of Goods and Services Tax



(GST) is levied on insurance premiums.

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

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

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

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

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

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

FUTURE CASH NEEDS

RBI plans to revamp currency management infrastructure

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

The creation of greenfield currency management centres, the introduction of warehouse automation, the installation of security and surveillance systems, an inventory management system, and a centralised command centre are being mooted to modernise the existing infrastructure, according to an RBI document.

The expected timeline for the whole project is 4-5 years, according to the expression of interest (EoI) issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for procurement of consultancy and project management ser-

vices for the modernisation of currency management infrastructure.

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

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

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



India is 'very important market': Malaysia Airlines

PNS ■ KUALA LUMPUR

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

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

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

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

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

aircraft.

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

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

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

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

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

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

CEA: Banks need to remain competitive

PNS ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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

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

Panel to ensure compliance by online gaming platforms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Investors to focus on US Fed interest rate decision

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"The outlook for the market

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

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

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

India seeks investments, tech transfer from SK, Japan

PNS ■ GOA

India is seeking investments and technology transfer from South Korea and Japan to establish shipbuilding and ship repair clusters, he said.

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

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

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

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



90 pc of financial institutions focusing on AI, GenAI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Collaborative innovation is now seen as a key driver for

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

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

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





## Alia-Diljit reunite for Chal Kudiye

Alia Bhatt recently released a sneak peek of her upcoming song, *Chal Kudiye*, from the film *Jigra*. Continuing their partnership after their previous collaboration on *Ikk Kudi*, Alia teams up with Punjabi singer-actor Diljit Dosanjh in their latest track.

The preview suggests that the song will explore the difficulties encountered by Alia's character in the movie.

Sharing the video on Instagram, Alia wrote, "It's yours soon. #ChalKudiye @diljitdosanjh #Jigra in cinemas 11th October (sic)." Both fans and celebrities showed their excitement for the song in the comments section.



## Here's why Kourtney's Ozempic-style vitamins might be terrible idea!

Kourtney Kardashian Barker has recently grown her wellness brand Lemme by launching a new plant-based supplement named GLP-1 Daily, created as a natural substitute for medications such as the well-known Ozempic. This release is a result of the increasing discussions regarding GLP-1 drugs, which are becoming more popular for their effects on weight control and managing diabetes. GLP-1 Daily capsules, made from plant extracts, can be purchased without a prescription, unlike medication such as Ozempic. The formula focuses on three main plant

components: Eriomin lemon fruit extract, Supresa saffron extract, and Morosil red-orange fruit extract.

Kardashian was initially surprised by the public's demand for this product. "If you told me when I launched the brand that this would be a product we were making, I wouldn't believe you," she said to Vogue. "But GLP-1 medications have been helpful to so many people. The drug has so many benefits, but it also has a lot of side effects." She states that her team was encouraged by the high number of individuals seeking substitutes for GLP-1 medications, with a large portion facing disagreeable side effects from the artificial drug, such as common problems like nausea and digestive issues. This input helped her and her team of medical advisors to investigate alternatives that could provide the same advantages without any side effects in a more natural way.

"Eriomin is a flavonoid found in lemons and other citrus fruits. It has been studied for its potential anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. Saffron contains compounds like crocin and safranal, which have been associated with potential mood-boosting as well as antioxidant effects. Generally considered safe when taken in recommended doses. Additionally, Morosil is a citrus fruit extract rich in polyphenols, particularly hesperidin. It has been studied for its potential to reduce body fat and improve metabolic health. Now while the individual ingredients in GLP-1 Daily—eromin, saffron, and Morosil—are generally considered safe when taken as directed, it's important to remember that individual responses to supplements can vary. Despite some preliminary research, more rigorous clinical studies are needed to fully understand their long-term benefits and potential risks.

Therefore, it's advisable to consult with a healthcare professional before starting any new supplement regimen."

Ozempic's capacity to help with weight loss has caused ripples in the fashion and film industries, but there are serious worries about its growing use among influencers and celebrities. People who require insulin for managing their diabetes are suffering from shortages as demand for its off-label use soars. Ozempic also carries a number of possible adverse effects, such as weariness, nausea, and more significant health hazards such thyroid problems.



## Kate Winslet opens up about testosterone therapy

Kate Winslet is discussing how she regained her libido as she neared her late forties. The famous *Titanic* actress openly talked about her experience with testosterone replacement therapy in a recent podcast interview. Winslet, who is 48 years old now, offered guidance to someone dealing with a similar problem, suggesting that decreases in sex drive may be connected to hormonal imbalances.

"Sometimes women have a real dip in libido because there might be stuff going on with their thyroid," the *Heavenly Creatures* fame said on the episode of the *How to Fail with Elizabeth Day* podcast. "There could also be stuff going on with your level of testosterone," she added while offering advice to one of the listeners curious about reigniting her sex life.

"A lot of people don't know this, but women have testosterone in their bodies and when it runs out—like eggs—it's gone," Winslet explained after the listener raised concerns about losing her sex drive with her long-term boyfriend. "Once it's gone, you have to replace it and that is something that can be done. You'll feel sexy again ... I know," she added.

## STANDALONE

Amazon MGM Studios, Excel Entertainment and Tiger Baby Production stole the spotlight at the 49th edition of the *Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF)* with the highly anticipated world premiere of its Original movie, *Superboys of Malegaon*. Produced by Excel Entertainment The film was met with an enthusiastic reception and also underscores Amazon MGM Studios' continued commitment to producing diverse and compelling global content.



## MASABA GUPTA THINKS OF RACISM TOWARDS HER UNBORN CHILD

Masaba Gupta has frequently been open about her issues with racism. During an interview with Faye D'Souza, she discussed the challenges her father, renowned West Indies cricketer Vivian Richards, has faced with the same issue.

"Now I know why my father felt so strongly about it (racism) for so many years. Till today, if you ask him, he'll have tears in his eyes or he'll have this rage in him, where he will answer with a lot of pride. He grew up in the worst of times. He played professional cricket in a time where the colour of your skin came in the way of your ability to move ahead in the world. It's there, everywhere. It'll keep being spoken of until we fight for it and it's only going to happen if everybody fights for it," said Masaba. Masaba admitted to seeking pregnancy guidance on delivering a child with less weight. "It happened to me just yesterday that somebody who came up to me for some prenatal something told me, 'You must eat a rasgulla every day' because your kid has to turn out lighter than you. And then, 15 days before that, I was getting another prenatal massage, because that's what I do, and she (her masseuse) said to me, 'Aap na doodhi liya karo (you must consume milk). Saawla nahi hona chahiye, nahi honi chahiye, whatever (your child must not turn out dusky)'. It was said with so much innocence. You have no choice—what can I do? Punch my masseuse? No," she added.

## FUN

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



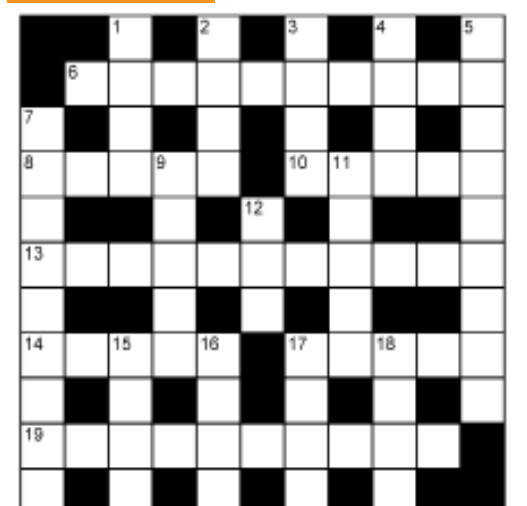
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### NANCY



### SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

### ACROSS

- A maker of horseshoes
- Wanders
- Office tables
- He wrote the play "Romeo and Juliet"
- Gets closer to
- Go by bike
- Somewhere to go out to for a meal
- Manufacturer
- The other side in a war
- Something left after a fire
- As well
- Male deer
- Be concerned
- Metal containers for drink, food

### DOWN

- This bites a dog
- Divisions in a play
- Second-hand
- Comes first in a race
- Spoke very quietly
- People in jail

SOLUTION

L	E	T	T	E	R	S	I	M
K	I	S	H	O	D	I	E	
F	E	S	T					
A	U	G	H	I	O	N		
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D	E	G	R	E	E			

## From indie beats to industry feats:

# Saloni Batra rocks *Khalbali Records*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



EVENT COVERAGE



## Brewing towards a pro-caffeinating week!

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Unlocking potential, transforming India's employment growth

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



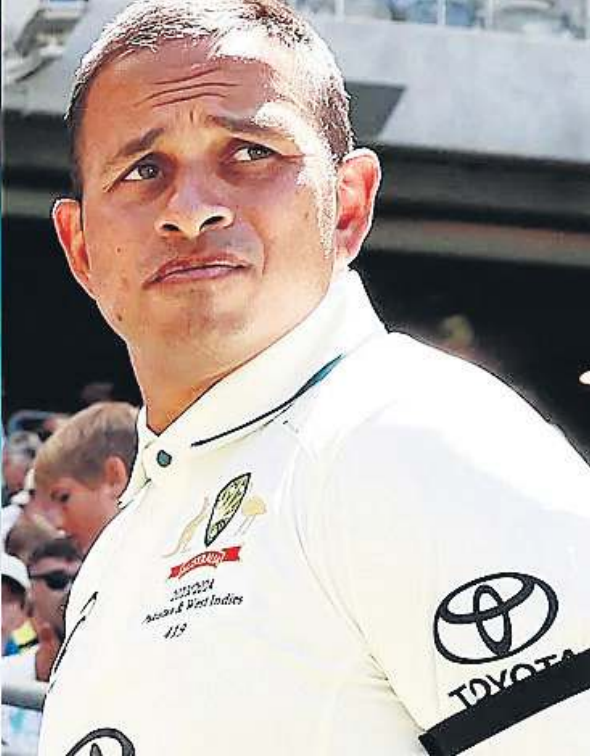
# Khawaja relishes his on-field battles with Ashwin

PTI ■ MELBOURNE,

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

(a) lot," he told Star Sports. "And, I guess the last couple of years I've been in nice form. So yeah, being able to play well, it's always nice."

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

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

"They're extremely difficult but it's been nice to play well in a couple of games and looking forward to preparing well and being ready to go. And hopefully, I can contribute to what's a successful summer for us," he added. The two teams will lock horns in the upcoming five-Test series in Australia starting November 22, as India defends the Border-Gavaskar Trophy it has won over past four bilateral engagements (home and away).



# Ramkumar-Balaji pair loses must win doubles

PTI ■ STOCKHOLM

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

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

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

India will now compete next year in Play-offs to keep place in World Group I.

The Indian pair had its first chance in game three in the opening set on Goransson's serve. Balaji and Ramkumar pocketed four straight points to earn a breakpoint but the home team averted the danger.

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

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

Bergevi though surprisingly struggled with his first serve as he committed two double faults to be at 30-all.

Sensing a chance, Ramkumar attacked Bergevi's second serve but could respond only with a feeble shot on the Swede's widehand cross court return. Standing at the net, it was an easy put away for Goransson.

Balaji was under pressure in the next game.

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

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

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

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



PTI ■ ANANTAPUR

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

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

India D, out of title race after two successive defeats, will be up against second-placed India B, who have 7 points.

On a pitch that gave copious assistance to the spinners, the 'D' batters needed to show tremendous application to hang around. But apart from Bhui none really showed the stomach for a fight.

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

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

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

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

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

# Bangladesh arrive in Chennai, Shanto confident of good show

PTI ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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

"After a good series (vs Pakistan) there is definitely an extra confidence in the team, in the people of the country. Every series is an opportunity.

"We will play to win both matches. The things that matter to win, the process matters... Our aim will be to do the work properly. Good results are possible if we do our job properly," the Bangladesh captain added.

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



skipper believed that it will all boil down to how they perform during those five days and the result can come even in the last session.

"If you see the ranking, they are much ahead of us," Shanto noted. "We have been playing well lately. We have had a good series. Our aim will be to play well for five days."

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

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

Adequate security cover for the visitors in Chennai

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

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

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

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



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

PTI ■ JALANDHAR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ CHICAGO

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Niemann's one-shot advantage entering the day was erased in their first eight holes.

Playing in the same group for the second consecutive day, Rahm was 3 under while Niemann was 2 over.

At one point late in the round, Rahm was five strokes ahead of Niemann.

But Niemann fought back down the stretch with birdies in three of the final four holes to shoot a 2-under 68 and stay within striking distance.

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

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

First-round leader Brooks Koepka followed his opening bogey-free 8-under 62 with a 73 that included five bogeys in his first 12 holes.

But he made two late birdies and finished at 5-under and solo third. Team Cleeks are in the lead.

# I was inspired by Sunil: Comedian Satya

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Jr NTR compliments Janhvi on her work

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

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

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

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

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

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



## LAGGAM LOCKS RELEASE DATE!

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

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

## Director Kranthi Madhav is back

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

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

## Dasara, Baby and Hi Nanna sweep SIIMA awards



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

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

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

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

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

*Hi Nanna*, was awarded the Best Music Director Award. At the event, several actresses like Neha Shetty, Shanvi Srivatsava, Shriya, Faria Abdullah and more showcased their performances. The Kannada Film Awards were also unveiled on the opening day. Nani was observed wearing black clothes while observing *Ayyappa*

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